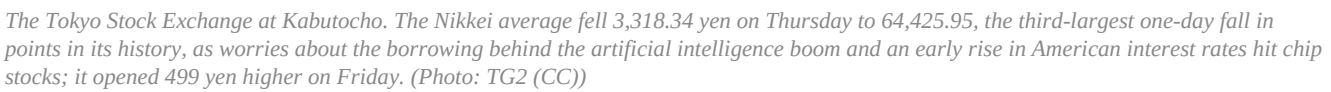


By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor



CoreWeave's shares fell again before the opening in New York on Thursday, amid concern over its debt burden and rising bond yields, according to the American financial site TheStreet. For Tokyo, where many of the most valuable companies sell the

New York calmed later in the day. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 556.21 points to 52,177.69 on Thursday, its first gain in three days, as buying of retailers and other consumer stocks, led by Nike and Home Depot, offset continued concern about the debt burden of AI companies. The Nasdaq Composite edged up 20.16 points to 26,713.03, its first rise in four sessions. Treasury bonds were bought and yields

POLITICS

The six-term Hokkaido lawmaker, a former agriculture vice-minister and son of an LDP secretary-general, promises a fair and transparent ministry; the opposition demands that the prime minister answer for the appointment that failed

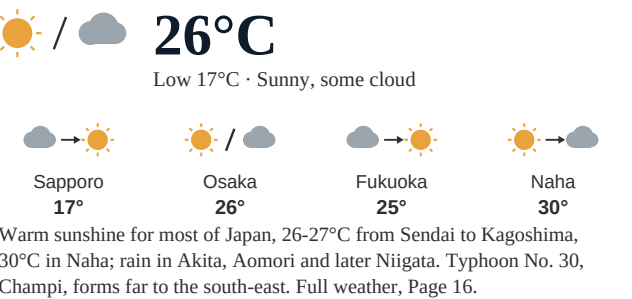
By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The opposition says the prime minister must answer for the appointment. The Diet affairs chiefs of six opposition parties in the lower house agreed on Thursday to demand a special session of the Budget Committee attended by Ms Takaichi, and to take the same line in the upper house.

TODAY'S INDEX

Typhoons	3-4
Politics	2-8
Diplomacy	5
International	8-10
Economy	2-11
Business	11
Technology	12-15
Society	15-19
Sports	19-22
Culture	20-22
Editorial & Opinion	23-26
Crossword	21
Weather	16

WEATHER — TOKYO



TODAY IN BRIEF

- Markets: the Nikkei plunges 3,318 yen, its third-largest fall, on AI debt fears; Friday's open is 499 yen higher.
- Cabinet: Arata Takebe becomes farm minister and promises a fair and transparent ministry.
- Okinawa: Governor Koja accepts the Ospreys at Futenma, calling withdrawal unrealistic.
- Typhoon: No. 30, Champi, forms near the Marshall Islands; Guam is in the storm-wind zone by Sunday.
- Time: the leap second is abolished; a leap hour takes over in May 2027.
- Sport: DeNA lead Hanshin 2-1; SoftBank are one win from the Japan Series.

THE ROUT

- Nikkei -3,318: third-largest fall.
- Three chip stocks: 2,100 yen.
- Kospi down about 8%.
- Friday: opens 499 higher.

TODAY

- Upper house Budget Committee.
- Climax Series Game 3, 6 p.m.
- Asian Para Games begin.
- Tokyo 26, sunny, some cloud.

MARKETS

Nikkei 225 (Thu)	64,425.95 ▼ 3,318.34
Nikkei (Fri open)	64,925 ▲ 499
Dow (Thu)	52,177.69 ▲ 556.21
Nasdaq (Thu)	26,713.03 ▲ 20.16
WTI crude	\$97.97 ▲ 2.88
Yen	about 158.0 per \$
BOJ policy rate	1.25%

INSIDE

- Typhoon No. 30 forms, Page 3.
- Takebe's priorities, Page 6.
- Okinawa accepts Ospreys, Page 5.
- Yalu bridge opens, Page 9.
- U.S. wholesale prices, Page 10.
- SourceNext leak, Page 12.
- Leap second abolished, Page 12.
- Onagawa to shut down, Page 18.
- DeNA 1, Hanshin 0, Page 20.
- Editorial: the first relay, Page 23.

THE WEEK

- Sun. 18: Champi near Guam.
- Mon. 19: Keen Sword begins.
- Thu. 22: baseball draft.
- Sat. 24: Japan Series.

THE TROPICS

- Champi: 998 hPa, Marshalls.
- Very strong typhoon by Tue.

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.

Continued on Page 2

Continued on Page 2

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

FROM PAGE 1

Nikkei Plunges 3,318 Yen, Its Third-Largest Fall on Record, as Fears Over AI Debt and an Early U.S. Rate Rise Sweep Through Chip Stocks

Continued from Page 1

fell, with the ten-year yield near 5.09 per cent in the afternoon.

West Texas Intermediate crude for November rose \$2.88 to \$97.97 a barrel, its sixth straight gain, after American inventories fell by more than expected and fighting between Yemen's Houthis and Saudi Arabia and the sinking of a cargo ship in the Strait of Hormuz added to worries about supply. In New York the dollar ended at 157.94 to 158.04 yen.

A bounce on Friday

Tokyo recovered some ground at Friday's opening. The Nikkei started at 64,925, up 499 yen, the Nikkei reported, and Kyodo said the gain topped 1,000 yen at one point during the morning as investors bought back stocks that had been sold hard the day before.

The Bank of Japan's view

The sell-off came as policymakers on both sides of the Pacific signalled more tightening. In a speech in Kumamoto on Thursday morning, Bank of Japan board member Junko Koeda said there was no need

to be "excessively cautious" about raising interest rates. The bank lifted its policy rate to about 1.25 per cent in September and meets next on October 29 and 30.

At the Group of 20 meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors in Bangkok, which ended on Thursday without a joint statement, participants shared serious concern about inflation driven by high oil prices. Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama said Japan would watch currency markets "with a high sense of tension".

Brokers said Friday's bounce did not mean the danger had passed. The questions that drove Thursday's selling, about how the AI boom is being paid for and how high American rates must go to bring prices down, remain unanswered, and the next American inflation and earnings figures are likely to set the tone for Tokyo as much as anything that happens in Japan.

FROM PAGE 1

Takaichi Names Arata Takebe Farm Minister to Steady Her Government After Yana's Exit

Continued from Page 1

The Liberal Democrats and the Constitutional Democratic Party agreed to hold the House of Councillors Budget Committee today and on Monday, as originally planned, on condition that the opposition's share of questioning time is increased.

The change comes as the government heads into a contentious stretch of the extraordinary Diet session. Its priority bills would cut the consumption tax on food and reduce the number of seats in the lower house, and both face resistance. Ministers hope a steady hand at the farm ministry will stop the Yana affair from overshadowing them.

Mr Takebe also inherits a full in-tray: high rice prices, the government's plan for rice paddies due in mid-November, and American pressure to open Japan to fresh potatoes from the United States, a sensitive issue in his home island, which grows most of the country's crop.

ECONOMY

The Nikkei's Biggest One-Day Falls, in Points and in Percentages

By the Data Desk

- AUGUST 5, 2024: down 4,451.28 yen, or 12.4 per cent, to 31,458.42, after a weak American jobs report and a sharp rise in the yen following a Bank of Japan rate increase.
- OCTOBER 20, 1987: down 3,836.48 yen, or 14.9 per cent, the day after Black Monday on Wall Street. It remains the largest fall in percentage terms.
- OCTOBER 15, 2026: down 3,318.34 yen, or about 4.9 per cent, to 64,425.95, on worries about the financing of artificial intelligence and an early rise in American interest rates.
- JUNE 26, 2026: down 3,005.46 yen, or about 4.2 per cent, to 69,360.88, a day after the index had risen more than 3,100 yen to a then-record close of 72,366.34.

OTHER NOTABLE DAYS: October 16, 2008, eighteen years ago today, down 1,089.02 yen, or 11.4 per cent, in the global financial crisis; March 15, 2011, down 1,015.34 yen, or 10.6 per cent, four days after the Great East Japan Earthquake; April 7, 2025, down 2,644.00 yen, or 7.8 per cent, amid the turmoil over American tariffs.

POINTS AND PERCENTAGES: Because the index now stands far higher than in the 1980s, a fall of a given number of yen is a much smaller share of its value. Thursday's drop was the third-largest in points but well outside the ten largest in percentage terms.

WHAT FOLLOWED BEFORE: On August 6, 2024, the day after the record fall, the Nikkei rose 3,217.04 yen, its largest gain in points at the time.

THURSDAY'S DETAIL: Morning close down 3,255

yen; intraday low more than 3,500 yen below Wednesday's close; Topix down 97.44 to 3,999.34; about 3.03 billion shares traded.

THE SIXTH FALL: The Nikkei has now fallen for six sessions in a row. It closed at 67,744.29 on Wednesday after a fifth straight fall of 33.23 yen.

FRIDAY: Opened at 64,925, up 499 yen; up more than 1,000 yen at one point during the morning.

SOURCES: Nikkei Inc., Kyodo News, Japan Exchange Group.

ECONOMY

Why a Fall in One American Company's Bonds Shook Tokyo: CoreWeave and the Borrowed Money Behind the AI Boom

The computing-rental firm has grown at breakneck speed on loans and bonds; when lenders flinch, chip-equipment makers feel it first

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

Few Japanese investors had heard of CoreWeave a few years ago. On Thursday a sharp fall in the price of its bonds was cited by the Nihon Keizai Shimbun as the trigger for the third-largest fall in the Nikkei's history.

CoreWeave is an American company that buys large numbers of advanced graphics processors, mostly from Nvidia, installs them in data centres and rents out the computing power to companies developing artificial intelligence. It began as a cryptocurrency mining business and turned to AI computing as demand exploded.

Growth on credit

The company listed its shares on the Nasdaq market in New York in March 2025, with Nvidia among its backers, and has signed contracts worth billions of dollars with large AI developers, including OpenAI and Meta. To meet that demand it has borrowed heavily, through loans secured on its chips and through bonds sold to investors.

That model works as long as customers keep paying and lenders keep lending. It becomes fragile if either changes, because the chips that back the loans lose value quickly as newer models arrive, and interest costs rise when rates go up.

What a bond price says

When investors grow worried that a borrower may struggle to repay, they sell its bonds, pushing their prices down and the yields they offer up. A sharp fall in a company's bond prices is therefore read as a warning from the people who lend it money, often before the warning shows up in its shares.

On Thursday, that warning was taken as a sign that what the Nikkei called the credit of the AI sector was deteriorating. CoreWeave's shares fell again before the opening in New York, amid concern over its debts and rising bond yields, TheStreet reported.

Why Tokyo is exposed

Japan's stock market is unusually sensitive to the AI building boom. Tokyo Electron and Advantest make the equipment used to manufacture and test advanced

chips, and SoftBank Group has placed huge bets on AI, including in OpenAI. All three carry heavy weightings in the Nikkei, and together they accounted for more than 2,100 yen of Thursday's fall.

If lenders become more cautious about financing data centres, the orders that flow through to equipment makers could slow. Investors tend to sell first and wait for the evidence later, which is why the fall was so steep.

Higher rates make it harder

The other half of the story is interest rates. American inflation figures this week were higher than expected, raising the possibility that the Federal Reserve will lift rates sooner. Higher rates increase the cost of rolling over debt for companies that borrow heavily, and they reduce the value investors place on profits expected far in the future, a double blow for AI stocks.

Not everyone sees a bubble about to burst. Demand for AI chips remains strong: Taiwan's TSMC reported record profit on Thursday, and its chairman said it could not build capacity fast enough. But the sell-off showed how much of Tokyo's recent gains rest on the assumption that the money for the AI boom will keep flowing.

ECONOMY

From Washington to Kabutocho: How a Hotter Inflation Report in America Ends Up Knocking Thousands of Yen Off the Nikkei

Consumer prices up 3.7 per cent, wholesale prices up 6.3 per cent and the prospect of a Federal Reserve rate rise all feed through to Tokyo

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

The week's American data have been unkind to anyone hoping that inflation in the United States was under control. On Wednesday the Labor Department reported that consumer prices rose 3.7 per cent in September from a year earlier. On Thursday it said wholesale prices, the prices producers charge, rose 6.3 per cent, the fastest pace since December 2022 and a full percentage point above forecasts.

Energy is the main culprit. Wholesale energy prices were up 35.4 per cent from a year earlier, a result of the high cost of crude oil linked to the conflict in the Middle East. But the core index, which excludes food and energy, also rose 5.0 per cent, a sign that higher costs are spreading.

The Fed's next move

Higher inflation raises the likelihood that the Federal Reserve will lift its policy rate again to cool demand. The Fed's own survey of regional business conditions, the Beige Book published on Wednesday, found that the pace of price increases was accelerating in four of its 12 districts, with diesel costs rising across supply chains.

Three channels to Tokyo

The first channel is valuation. Investors value shares by estimating future profits and discounting them back to the present. Higher interest rates mean heavier discounting, which hurts most the companies whose profits are expected furthest in the future, such as those tied to AI.

The second is credit. Companies that have borrowed to build data centres face higher costs to refinance, and lenders become choosier. That is the worry investors seized on with CoreWeave this week.

The third is currency. Higher American rates tend to strengthen the dollar against the yen, which flatters the profits of Japanese exporters but raises the cost of imported energy and food. On Thursday the dollar ended in New York at about 158 yen.

Not all bad news

The same data carried some comfort. American retail sales rose 0.8 per cent in September, more than expected, suggesting that consumers are still spending despite higher prices. That helped consumer stocks in New York on Thursday, when the Dow recovered 556 points.

Japan's own rates

The Bank of Japan is raising rates too, for its own reasons. Board member Junko Koeda said on Thursday that there was no need to be overly cautious about further increases, and that the neutral rate, at which policy neither stimulates nor restrains the economy, was "considerably above 1 per cent". The bank's policy rate is about 1.25 per cent.

For Tokyo investors, the next test comes at the end of

the month, when the Bank of Japan meets on October 29 and 30. Until then, the American figures are likely to keep setting the mood.

Economists note one more complication. The Group of 20 finance ministers agreed in Bangkok that central banks must raise rates "without missing the right timing" to curb inflation. That means tighter money around the world at the same time, which tends to make markets jumpier.

POLITICS

The Potato Question: Why American Pressure to Sell Fresh Potatoes to Japan Lands on the New Minister's Desk First

Japan has allowed only chip-making potatoes from the United States since 2006; farmers in Hokkaido, which grows about 80 per cent of the crop, fear pests

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Arata Takebe's home district in eastern Hokkaido is potato country, and one of the first questions put to him as agriculture minister on Thursday was about potatoes from the United States.

Japan already imports large quantities of frozen and processed potatoes from many countries, including the French fries served in fast-food chains. Fresh American potatoes are a different matter. Since 2006 Japan has allowed them in only for processing into potato chips, under strict conditions. Other fresh potatoes from the United States remain banned.

Washington's request

Japan began considering a wider opening in 2020 after an American proposal. The agriculture ministry has completed the second of three procedural stages and is expected to move to the final one. When a senior ministry official visited the United States in September, the Department of Agriculture and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative raised the issue and asked Japan to speed up, Kyodo News reported.

Earlier this month Kyodo reported that bringing the opening forward had been floated, against a background of pressure from the Trump administration. Officials have said the process is still expected to take several years.

Twenty-one pests

The ministry has listed 21 pests and diseases that require quarantine measures to be negotiated with the American authorities before fresh potatoes could be imported. Among them is the potato cyst nematode, a microscopic worm that can persist in soil for years and is very hard to eradicate once established.

Hokkaido accounted for about 80 per cent of Japan's potato harvest in 2024. Farmers there worry that a pest arriving on imported potatoes could cripple production that has taken decades to protect.

Japan knows what such pests can cost. A potato cyst nematode was first found in Japan in Hokkaido in 1972, and a second species, the pale cyst nematode, was confirmed in the country for the first time in 2015, in fields in Abashiri on the Okhotsk coast, setting off years of eradication work.

Closed-door briefings

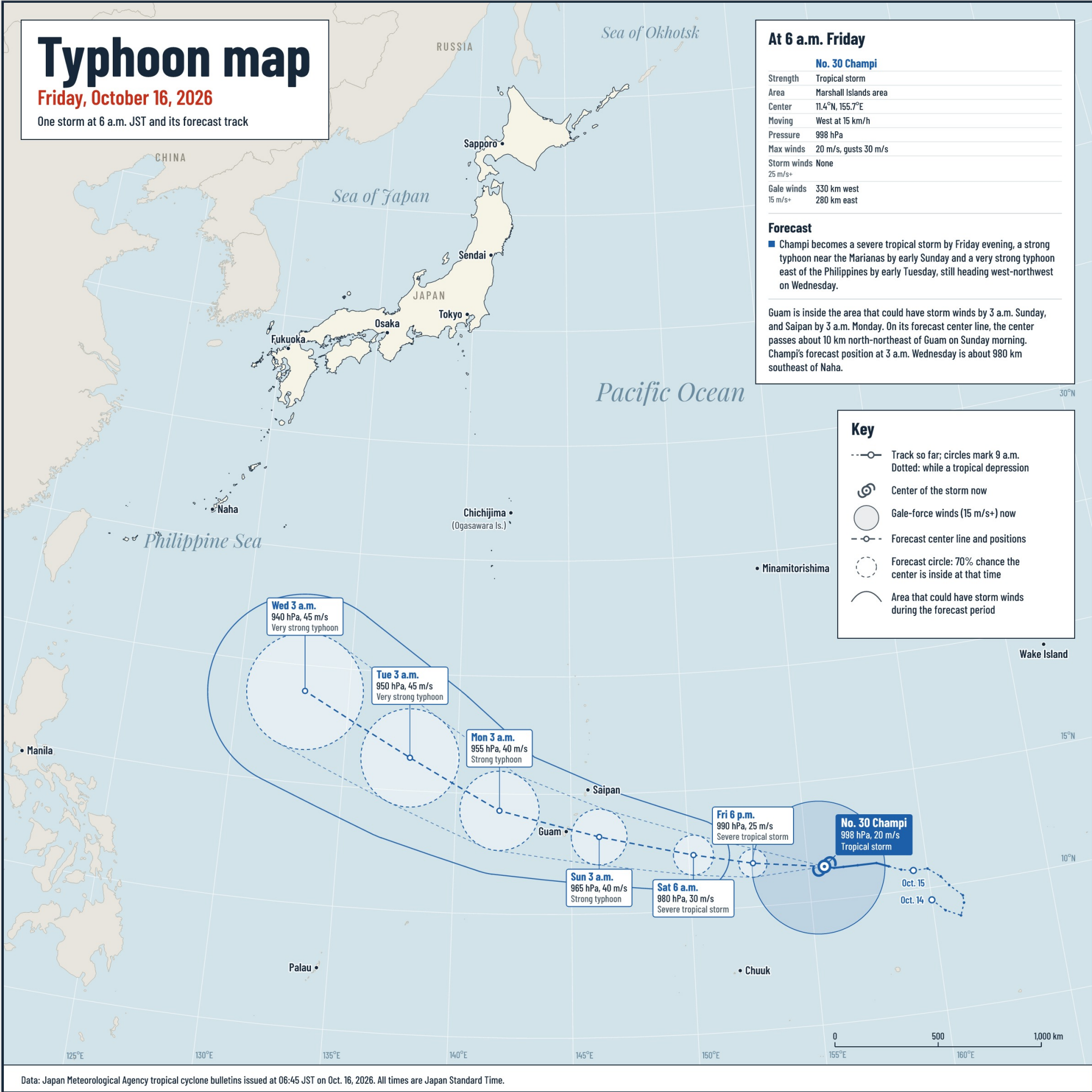
The ministry held its first briefing for producers in Sapporo on September 1, behind closed doors, followed by meetings in Ibaraki, Chiba, Nagasaki and Kagoshima, and a nationwide online briefing on September 18. Hiroyuki Yamaguchi, secretary-general of the Hokkaido Farmers Union, said after the Sapporo meeting that the risk "cannot be wiped out" and that there was a prevailing mood against lifting the ban.

The minister's answer

Mr Takebe said on Thursday that he understood the expectations and requests of the other side, but that talks would continue in order to stop harmful pests and diseases from entering Japan. He acknowledged that concerns had been raised from the field and said he recognised that the issue was at an important juncture.

For a minister from the Okhotsk coast, the question is unusually personal. It is also a test of how Ms Takaichi's government balances its alliance with the United States, and the trade commitments that come with it, against the farmers who form part of the Liberal Democrats' base.

TYPHOONS



Typhoon No. 30, Champi, at 6 a.m. on Friday and its forecast track, in the map supplied for this edition: a tropical storm of 998 hPa at 11.4N, 155.7E in the Marshall Islands area, moving west at 15 km/h with maximum winds of 20 m/s. It is forecast to become a severe tropical storm on Friday evening, a strong typhoon of 965 hPa near the Mariana Islands by 3 a.m. Sunday and a very strong typhoon of 950 hPa east of the Philippines by 3 a.m. Tuesday, and to lie about 980 km south-east of Naha at 3 a.m. Wednesday at 940 hPa. 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 by early Sunday and Saipan by early Monday. (Data: Japan Meteorological Agency bulletins issued at 6:45 a.m. on October 16)

TYPHOONS

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, Forms Near the Marshall Islands and Is Forecast to Become a Very Strong Typhoon After Passing Close to Guam

The first season to reach 30 storms since 2013; the centre is forecast to pass about 10 km from Guam on Sunday morning and to lie about 980 km south-east of Naha by Wednesday, but its path after the Marianas is highly uncertain

By the Weather Desk

The tropical depression that had been strengthening near the Marshall Islands became a tropical storm at 3 p.m. on Thursday and was named Typhoon No. 30, Champi, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. It is the first time since 2013 that a season has produced 30 storms.

At 6 a.m. on Friday Champi lay at 11.4 degrees north and 155.7 degrees east, about 1,210 kilometres east of Guam, moving west at 15 kilometres an hour. Its central pressure was 998 hectopascals and its maximum sustained winds were 20 metres a second, with gusts of 30. Gale-force winds of 15 metres a second or more extended 330 kilometres to the west of the centre and 280 kilometres to the east. It had no storm-force winds yet.

Rapid strengthening

The agency's forecast, issued at 6:45 a.m., has the storm deepening quickly over warm water. It is expected to become a severe tropical storm by Friday evening, with a central pressure of 990 hectopascals and winds of 25 metres a second, and to reach 980 hectopascals and 30 metres a second by 6 a.m. on Saturday.

By 3 a.m. on Sunday Champi is forecast to be a strong typhoon near the Mariana Islands, with a pressure of 965 hectopascals and winds of 40 metres a second. By 3 a.m. on Tuesday it is expected to be a very strong typhoon east of the Philippines, at 950 hectopascals with winds of 45 metres a second, and at 3 a.m. on Wednesday it is forecast to be at 940 hectopascals, still heading west-north-west, about 980 kilometres south-east of Naha.

Guam and Saipan

Guam lies inside the area that could have storm-force winds of 25 metres a second or more by 3 a.m. on Sunday, and Saipan by 3 a.m. on Monday. On the agency's forecast centre line, the centre passes about 10 kilometres north-north-east of Guam on Sunday morning, which would bring the strongest winds directly over the island.

Both islands are popular with Japanese holidaymakers. Travellers due to fly there this weekend should check with their airline before leaving home, and visitors already on the islands should follow the advice of local authorities and their hotels.

And Japan?

Where Champi goes after the Marianas is the big question. Weathernews says its path next week is highly variable. If it turns north and then north-east, as late-season storms often do when they meet the westerly winds, it could affect Japan; if it carries on west towards the South China Sea, the impact on Japan would be smaller.

The company says the storm could approach the south-western islands next week or later, but stresses that there is considerable uncertainty and no official forecast of a direct hit on Honshu. It also notes that the trends in conventional physics-based computer models and in newer forecasts produced by artificial intelligence differ.

A long season

Late-October typhoons have reached Japan before. In October 2017 Typhoon Lan came ashore in Shizuoka Prefecture, and in October 2004 Typhoon Tokage made landfall at Tosashimizu in Kochi Prefecture, one of the deadliest storms of recent decades. The agency's track forecasts extend five days ahead, and forecasters advise checking them each day.

The last season to produce 30 storms was 2013. Its Typhoon No. 30 was Haiyan, which struck the central Philippines that November and left more than 6,000 people dead. That season ended with 31 storms. The average for a year, based on the three decades to 2020, is 25.1.

Japan today

At home, Friday is mostly fine. Rain falls in Akita and Aomori this morning and reaches Niigata in the afternoon, while the rest of the country is sunny with some cloud and highs of 26 to 27 degrees from Sendai and Tokyo to Kagoshima, and 30 in Naha. Inland San'in had its coldest morning of the season on Thursday, with lows of 6 degrees in Iinai, Shimane Prefecture, and Nichinan, Tottori Prefecture.

A front is expected to bring rain to some areas from Saturday, according to Weathernews. In Chiba Prefecture, meanwhile, the cost of Typhoon No. 25 is still being counted: damage to agriculture, forestry and fisheries has reached 25.6 billion yen, the prefecture said.

TYPHOONS

Champi at a Glance

By the Data Desk

FORMED: 3 p.m. Thursday, October 15, as a tropical storm; Typhoon No. 30 of 2026.

POSITION AT 6 A.M. FRIDAY: 11.4N, 155.7E, Marshall Islands area, about 1,210 km east of Guam.

PRESSURE: 998 hPa. MAXIMUM WINDS: 20 m/s, gusts 30 m/s. MOVEMENT: west at 15 km/h.

GALE-FORCE WINDS (15 M/S OR MORE): 330 km to the west, 280 km to the east. STORM-FORCE WINDS (25 M/S OR MORE): none yet.

FRIDAY 6 P.M.: 990 hPa, 25 m/s, severe tropical storm.

SATURDAY 6 A.M.: 980 hPa, 30 m/s, severe tropical storm.

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

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

TUESDAY 3 A.M.: 950 hPa, 45 m/s, very strong typhoon, east of the Philippines.

WEDNESDAY 3 A.M.: 940 hPa, 45 m/s, very strong typhoon, about 980 km south-east of Naha, heading west-north-west.

GUAM: Inside the possible storm-wind area by 3 a.m. Sunday; on the centre line, the centre passes about 10 km to the north-north-east on Sunday morning. SAIPAN: Inside the area by 3 a.m. Monday.

THE NAME: Champi, contributed by Laos; it refers to a red jasmine.

SOURCE: Japan Meteorological Agency bulletins issued at 6:45 a.m. Friday.

TYPHOONS

How to Read the Typhoon Map: Forecast Circles, Storm-Warning Areas and What 'Strong' and 'Very Strong' Mean

The dashed circles show where the centre is likely to be; the solid line shows where storm-force winds could blow

By the Weather Desk

The typhoon map in today's edition follows the conventions used by the Japan Meteorological Agency, and a few of them are easy to misread.

The forecast circles

Each dashed circle marks where the centre of the storm is expected to be at the stated time, with a probability of 70 per cent. The circles grow larger the further ahead the forecast looks, because the uncertainty grows. A large circle does not mean the storm itself is getting bigger.

The dashed line joining the centres of the circles is the forecast centre line. It is a convenient reference, but the storm can follow any path through the circles, and three times in ten it will be outside them.

The storm-warning area

The solid line enclosing the circles marks the area that could experience storm-force winds, of 25 metres a second or more, during the forecast period if the centre follows a path within the circles. Guam lies inside that line from early Sunday and Saipan from early Monday.

Gale-force winds

The shaded circle around the storm's present position shows the area currently experiencing gale-force winds, of 15 metres a second or more. For Champi on Friday morning it extended 330 kilometres to the west and 280 kilometres to the east.

Strength and size

The agency describes a typhoon's strength by its maximum sustained winds. A storm with winds of 33 to 44 metres a second is called strong; 44 to 54 metres a second is very strong; and 54 or more is violent. Champi is forecast to be strong by Sunday and very strong by Tuesday.

Size is described separately, by the radius of gale-force winds. A storm whose gale-force winds extend 500 to 800 kilometres from the centre is large, and one beyond 800 kilometres is very large. Champi does not yet fall into either category.

Pressure and wind

Lower central pressure generally means a stronger storm. The forecast fall from 998 hectopascals on Friday to 940 by Wednesday reflects the strengthening the agency expects over the warm

TYPHOONS

waters east of the Philippines.

The agency updates its track forecast every few hours while a typhoon is active, and its latest bulletins are published on its website.

TYPHOONS

From Koguma to Champi: How the 14 Members of the Typhoon Committee Name the Storms, and Why Some Names Are Never Used Again

A rotating list of 140 names contributed by countries and territories around the western Pacific; Japan's entries come from the constellations

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The storm now heading for the Mariana Islands has two identities. In Japan it is Typhoon No. 30, the 30th storm of the year to reach tropical storm strength. Internationally it is Champi, a name contributed by Laos that refers to a red jasmine.

Since 2000, storms in the north-western Pacific and the South China Sea have been named from a list of 140 names drawn up by the Typhoon Committee, a regional body of 14 members: Japan, China, both Koreas, Hong Kong, Macao, the Philippines, the United States, Micronesia and five other countries of South-East Asia. Each member contributed ten names.

In strict rotation

The names are used in order, one after another, regardless of the year. When the end of the list is reached, it starts again from the beginning. That is why this season has moved from Koguma, the previous storm, to Champi, and why the next will be In-fa, a name from Macao.

The order follows the members' names in English, so a storm named by Japan is followed by one named by Laos, then Macao, Malaysia and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Japan's constellations

Japan chose the names of constellations for its ten contributions. Koguma, the name of Typhoon No. 29, which became an extratropical low on Wednesday, is the Japanese name for the Little Bear.

Other members drew on flowers, animals, food, rivers and mythology. Hong Kong's entries include Choi-wan, meaning colourful clouds; Macao's In-fa means fireworks.

Retired names

When a storm causes great loss of life or damage, the member affected can ask for its name to be retired, and a replacement is chosen. Haiyan, the 30th storm of 2013, which devastated the central Philippines, was retired. So was Hagibis, the storm that caused deadly flooding across eastern Japan in October 2019; it was replaced by Ragasa.

Numbers at home

In Japan the agency's number is used far more often than the name in weather reports, and many people never learn a storm's name at all. The numbering restarts each January 1, and a storm keeps its number even if it weakens and later strengthens again.

Thirty storms by mid-October is a busy season. The last time it happened, in 2013, the year produced 31. The record is 39, set in 1967.

TYPHOONS

Supercomputers and Machine Learning Disagree on Champi's Path: What the Two Kinds of Forecast Model Do, and How Forecasters Use Them

Weathernews says physics-based and AI-based guidance point in different directions next week; the official forecast still comes from the meteorological agency

By the Weather Desk

One detail in Weathernews's assessment of Typhoon No. 30 says a good deal about how weather forecasting is changing. The company says the trends shown by conventional physics-based computer models and by forecasts generated by artificial intelligence differ for the storm's path next week.

The traditional way

For decades, weather forecasts have rested on numerical weather prediction. The atmosphere is divided into a three-dimensional grid, and supercomputers solve the equations of physics that govern how air moves, warms, cools and holds water, stepping the whole system forward in time from the

latest observations.

The Japan Meteorological Agency runs its own global and regional models in this way, as do the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts and the national weather services of the United States and other countries. Forecasters compare them, and run each many times with slightly different starting conditions to see how much the results spread.

The new way

AI models work differently. Rather than solving the equations directly, they are trained on decades of past weather data and learn the patterns by which one state of the atmosphere tends to follow another. Once trained, they can produce a forecast in minutes on far less computing power.

Several have attracted attention since 2023, including GraphCast, developed by Google DeepMind, and Pangu-Weather, developed by Huawei. In February 2025 the European Centre began running its own AI-based system operationally alongside its traditional model.

Why they diverge

For typhoon tracks, which depend on the steering winds around the storm, AI models have performed well in research comparisons. But they can struggle with unusual situations that rarely appear in their training data, and they are less transparent: forecasters cannot always tell why a model has produced a particular answer.

Physics-based models, for their part, are sensitive to small errors in the starting conditions, which grow over several days. When the two approaches disagree, as they appear to now, forecasters treat it as a sign that the track is genuinely uncertain.

What it means for readers

The disagreement concerns the storm's path after it passes the Mariana Islands, roughly from the middle of next week. Until then, the forecasts broadly agree that it will move west-north-west and strengthen.

The official forecast for Japan comes from the meteorological agency, which issues typhoon track forecasts up to five days ahead and warnings for each region. Private forecasters such as Weathernews offer their own analysis, but evacuation decisions are based on official warnings and on instructions from local governments.

TYPHOONS

If Champi Turns North: What Residents of Okinawa and the South-Western Islands Can Do Now, While the Storm Is Still Far Away

The track is uncertain, but a week's warning is a gift; officials advise checking supplies, hazard maps and the five-level alert system

By the Weather Desk

Champi is still more than 3,000 kilometres from Okinawa, and the official forecast has it heading west-north-west towards the sea east of the Philippines next week. Weathernews says it could approach the south-western islands next week or later, while stressing that the uncertainty is considerable.

That leaves time to prepare without haste, which is exactly what disaster officials recommend.

Supplies

The government advises households to keep at least three days' supply of drinking water and food, with more recommended for those on remote islands, where ferries and flights stop well before a storm arrives and shops can empty quickly.

A battery-powered radio, torches, spare batteries and a charged power bank for mobile phones are useful in a long power cut. Medicines and copies of important documents should be kept where they can be taken quickly.

Around the house

Objects that can be blown away, such as flower pots, bicycles and laundry poles, should be brought inside or tied down well before winds strengthen. Gutters and drains should be cleared, and windows can be reinforced with shutters or film.

Know the alert levels

Under the five-level alert system, in its revised form since 2021, evacuation information is issued in stages. At Level 3, older people and others who need

time to move should begin evacuating. At Level 4, an evacuation instruction, everyone in the area at risk should leave. Level 5 means a disaster may already be happening and people should take whatever action they can to save their lives.

Hazard maps published by local governments show which areas are at risk of flooding, landslides and storm surges. Checking the nearest evacuation site and the route to it now saves time later.

Travel plans

Air and sea links to the islands are often suspended a day or more before a typhoon arrives. Anyone with travel plans in the region next week should keep an eye on the forecast and on announcements from airlines and ferry operators.

Keep checking

The Japan Meteorological Agency issues track forecasts up to five days ahead, so the outlook for the middle and end of next week will become clearer over the weekend. Local governments announce evacuation information through their websites, community radio and emergency alerts on mobile phones.

For now, Champi is a storm to watch rather than one to fear.

POLITICS

Arata Takebe at a Glance

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

BORN: July 20, 1970, in Shari, on the Shiretoko Peninsula in eastern Hokkaido. Age 56.

EDUCATION: Sapporo Minami High School; Faculty of Law, Waseda University; master's degree in public policy from the University of Chicago, 2003.

BEFORE POLITICS: Joined the Industrial Bank of Japan after university; left in 2000 to study in Chicago; became secretary to his father in 2003.

ELECTED: House of Representatives, Hokkaido 12th district, first in December 2012, and re-elected in 2014, 2017, 2021, 2024 and the general election of February 2026, a total of six terms.

GOVERNMENT POSTS: Parliamentary vice-minister for the environment and the Cabinet Office, 2017, in the third Abe cabinet; senior vice-minister of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, 2021, in the first Kishida cabinet; senior vice-minister of education, 2024, in the first Ishiba cabinet.

FAMILY: Son of Tsutomu Takebe, born in Shari in 1941, who served in the Hokkaido assembly and then 26 years in the House of Representatives. The elder Takebe was agriculture minister under Junichiro Koizumi from April 2001 to September 2002 and the party's secretary-general from 2004 to 2006, during Mr Koizumi's postal privatisation election.

THE DISTRICT: Hokkaido 12th takes in the Okhotsk coast, including Abashiri and Kitami, a centre of potato, onion, wheat and sugar beet farming.

APPOINTED: October 15, 2026, succeeding Kazuo Yana, who resigned on October 14 after 28 days.

FIRST WORDS AS MINISTER: "I want to advance agriculture, forestry and fisheries administration that the public can trust."

THE PRIME MINISTER'S VERDICT: "Well versed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries administration. He can contribute at once, including in the Diet."

POLITICS

"Production in Line With Demand": The Rice Policy Phrase the New Minister Repeated, and Why It Carries So Much Weight

After two years of shortages and soaring prices, Takebe says everyone involved must share a strong sense of crisis

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Asked about rice at his first news conference on Thursday, Arata Takebe used a phrase that has become a political marker in Japanese farm policy: production in line with demand.

He said everyone involved in the rice business needed to share a strong sense of crisis and to produce according to demand, and that he would carry on the agricultural policy he had inherited rather than change course.

Two years of turmoil

The words matter because rice has been one of the most sensitive issues in Japanese politics since 2024,

when shortages and sharply higher prices set off what became known as the Reiwa rice crisis. Supermarket shelves emptied, prices roughly doubled and the government released rice from its emergency stockpile.

The crisis cost an agriculture minister his job before. In May 2025 Taku Eto resigned after saying he had never had to buy rice because supporters gave it to him. His successor, Shinjiro Koizumi, sold stockpiled rice directly to retailers to bring prices down.

Output and price

For decades the government steered rice farmers away from overproduction, paying them to grow other crops so that prices would hold up. Critics say that system, combined with poor harvests and rising demand, left too little rice when it was needed.

"Production in line with demand" describes a middle course: farmers decide how much to grow based on forecasts of what consumers will buy, rather than the government either setting targets or pushing for maximum output. Supporters say it protects farm incomes; critics say it risks leaving prices high for consumers.

A plan due next month

The government is due to set out its policy on rice paddies in mid-November, and the new minister's choice of words suggests no sharp change of direction. Farm organisations, which welcomed the continuity, will watch closely how the ministry handles prices that remain high for households.

Mr Takebe served as senior vice-minister of agriculture under Fumio Kishida, so the policy debates are familiar to him. What has changed is the political temperature: after the Yana affair, any misstep on rice would land on a government already under pressure.

He also stressed raising productivity and value added to strengthen the country's ability to supply food, citing a sharp fall in the number of farmers and an unstable world.

How he squares those goals with consumers' wish for cheaper rice will be the first measure of his tenure.

POLITICS

Who Said What on the New Minister

By the Political Desk

PRIME MINISTER SANAE TAKAICHI: "He is a person well versed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries administration. He can be an immediate asset, including in dealing with the Diet."

ARATA TAKEBE, AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE: "I want to advance agriculture, forestry and fisheries administration that the public can trust."

MR TAKEBE, AT HIS FIRST NEWS CONFERENCE: "To strengthen food security, we will expand demand at home and abroad." And: "The situation is changing greatly, with instability in the world and a sharp fall in the number of farmers."

ON FRESH POTATOES FROM THE UNITED STATES: "We will continue talks to stop the entry of harmful pests and diseases." He said he recognised that the issue was at an important juncture.

CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY MINORU KIHARA: "We take the situation seriously. We will fulfil our responsibility by producing results on important issues one by one."

AN AGRICULTURE MINISTRY OFFICIAL, ON THE CANCELLED HANDOVER: "Mr Takebe is already well versed in farm policy, and officials will brief him, so there is no practical problem."

THE OPPOSITION: The Diet affairs chiefs of six opposition parties agreed to demand a special Budget Committee session with the prime minister present, to question her responsibility for appointing Kazuo Yana.

A LAW PROFESSOR: Hiroyuki Kamiwaki of Kobe Gakuin University announced that he had filed complaints against Mr Yana and others with the Utsunomiya prosecutors over free buses for voters.

THE NEXT STEP: The House of Councillors Budget Committee meets today and on Monday, the first chance for the opposition to question Ms Takaichi since the resignation.

WHAT THE MINISTER PROMISED ABOUT HIS PREDECESSOR'S CASE: To run the ministry "with fairness and transparency".

DIPLOMACY

DIPLOMACY

The Reporter Held in Russia: The Third Day

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

THE CASE: A male correspondent of the Hokkaido Shimbun based in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk has been detained by Russia's Federal Security Service, the FSB, on espionage charges. Russian authorities say he acted on the instructions of a Japanese intelligence agency.

THE PRIME MINISTER: Asked on Thursday whether the Japanese government engages in such espionage, Sanae Takaichi said: "There is no such fact." She said the details of Russia's allegations were unknown and that Japan would "firmly convey its position".

THE GOVERNMENT: Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said there had still been no contact with the reporter, and that the government would do everything possible to arrange a consular visit "as soon as possible" to check his health, including by making further representations to Russia.

THE RULING PARTY: Takayuki Kobayashi, the Liberal Democrats' policy chief, called the detention "absolutely unacceptable" and said the party protested strongly. He asked the Foreign Ministry to seek the reporter's early release "persistently".

THE NEWSPAPER: In its Friday morning edition the Hokkaido Shimbun published a statement by its editor-in-chief, Takeshi Yamamoto: "The Hokkaido Shimbun is a news organisation independent of the government. It does not carry out reporting or gather information on the government's instructions."

THE VISA: The paper said its correspondent held a Russian journalist's visa, that press freedom and reporting "should be respected", and that it could not accept the release of video of his detention.

PRESS FREEDOM GROUPS: The Committee to Protect Journalists, based in New York, called the detention extremely alarming and demanded his immediate release. Its Europe and Central Asia programme head, Fiona O'Brien, said the footage was strikingly reminiscent of the case of a Wall Street Journal reporter held in Russia on espionage charges, which the group called fabricated. "Journalists must not be used as bargaining chips in geopolitical conflicts," she said.

THE NUMBERS: According to the committee, at least 30 journalists are currently held in Russia in connection with their work.

A SEPARATE PROTEST: Mr Kobayashi also condemned a visit by a delegation from China's Heilongjiang province to Etorofu, one of the Russian-held Northern Territories, calling the island "Japan's inherent territory" and the visit "absolutely unacceptable".

WHAT TO WATCH: Whether Russia grants consular access, and whether a court in Russia orders the reporter held in pre-trial detention for an extended period.

POLITICS

The Week Ahead

By the News Desk

FRIDAY, OCT. 16: House of Councillors Budget Committee; Climax Series Game 3 in both leagues, with SoftBank able to clinch with a win or a draw; competition begins at the Asian Para Games in Aichi and Nagoya; CEATEC closes at Makuhari Messe.

SATURDAY, OCT. 17: The Kawagoe Festival, Saturday and Sunday; the gymnastics world championships open in Rotterdam.

SUNDAY, OCT. 18: Opening ceremony of the Asian Para Games; the Shuka Sho, a Grade 1 race for three-year-old fillies, at Kyoto; Typhoon No. 30 is forecast to pass close to Guam.

MONDAY, OCT. 19: Upper house Budget Committee; the Keen Sword joint exercise with American forces begins; first meeting of the National Police Agency's expert panel on stalking.

THURSDAY, OCT. 22: Professional baseball draft; the Jidai Matsuri and the Kurama Fire Festival in Kyoto.

SATURDAY, OCT. 24: The Japan Series opens at the home ground of the Central League's representative; the last day of competition at the Asian Para Games.

SUNDAY, OCT. 25: Fukushima gubernatorial

election.

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

NOV. 3: American midterm elections.

NOV. 6 TO 8: National nuclear disaster drill at the Tomari plant in Hokkaido.

FURTHER AHEAD: Taxi and bus terms allowing drivers to refuse abusive passengers take effect on December 1; the leap hour replaces the leap second on May 20, 2027.

POLITICS

Komeito Proposes Paying Every Resident About 80,000 Yen Over Two Years Instead of the Government's Cut in the Tax on Food

The party calls the consumption tax cut inefficient; the Democratic Party for the People wants about 50,000 yen for low and middle earners

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Komeito, the former coalition partner of the Liberal Democrats, has proposed paying every resident about 80,000 yen over two years as an alternative to the government's plan to cut the consumption tax on food.

Komeito left the coalition in October 2025, ending an alliance with the Liberal Democrats that dated back to 1999.

The party's policy research council approved the plan at a general meeting on Thursday. It is a direct challenge to the government's flagship measure against rising prices, which would cut the tax rate on food and non-alcoholic drinks from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years.

Why a payment

Komeito argues that a cut in the consumption tax is an inefficient way to help households, according to reports. A tax cut benefits people in proportion to how much they spend, so wealthier households, which spend more on food, gain more in yen terms. It also requires shops and their suppliers to change prices and systems twice, once when the rate falls and again when it rises.

A flat payment, by contrast, gives the same amount to everyone and can be delivered through existing systems, although critics say it is less visible to consumers at the till and can be saved rather than spent.

A rival plan

The Democratic Party for the People has drawn up its own package, people familiar with it said on Thursday. At its core is a payment of about 50,000 yen, mainly for people on low and middle incomes, together with subsidies for electricity and gas bills during the current fiscal year, which runs to March 2027, and the waiver of the basic charge on water bills.

The government's position

The government has made the food tax cut a priority for the extraordinary Diet session, and the ruling parties hope to begin debate on the bills soon. It is also considering a separate support payment for working households that could reach about 20 million people, an idea modelled on refundable tax credits abroad.

Komeito's plan gives the government a choice: hold firm on the tax cut, or look for a compromise that could win support from parties that prefer direct payments. The governing Liberal Democrats and their coalition partner, the Japan Innovation Party, will need to decide how far to accommodate their rivals.

The cost question

No official cost estimate for the Komeito plan was published on Thursday. A payment of 80,000 yen to every resident would cost several trillion yen a year, a sum comparable to the revenue lost through the food tax cut, and both approaches would add to a public debt that is already the largest among major economies relative to the size of the economy.

The debate comes as prices continue to rise and as the Bank of Japan raises interest rates, which increases the cost of government borrowing. Fiscal hawks in all parties have warned that temporary measures have a habit of becoming permanent.

Which approach prevails may become clearer when the lower house begins its deliberations, expected later this month.

POLITICS

Okinawa's Governor Accepts the Ospreys at Futenma, Saying Withdrawal Is Unrealistic, in a Reversal of the Prefecture's Long Opposition

Genta Koja links the decision to his acceptance of the Henoko relocation; two American Ospreys land on Miyako for the first time, and the government plans the first Okinawa policy council since 2013

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Okinawa Governor Genta Koja has accepted the deployment of the U.S. Marine Corps' MV-22 Osprey aircraft at Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, reversing a position the prefectural government has held since before the aircraft arrived in 2012, the Sankei Shimbun and Kyodo News reported.

"More than ten years have passed since the deployment," Mr Koja told reporters at the prefectural office. "Considering that the Self-Defense Forces also operate the aircraft, withdrawing the deployment or its use is not realistic."

The Henoko link

The governor said the Ospreys' functions at Futenma would move to Henoko in Nago when the air station is relocated there. Rejecting the aircraft while accepting the relocation, which he does, would be inconsistent, he argued.

On safety, which has been questioned after a series of accidents, he said concerns had "not been dispelled" and that he wanted the aircraft to fly only after safety had been carefully confirmed.

First visit to Miyako

The shift was visible on Thursday. Two American MV-22s landed at Miyako Airport in Miyakojima on Thursday afternoon, at about 2:35 p.m. and 3 p.m., the first time American Ospreys had visited the island, according to the prefecture. They carried supplies and personnel in preparation for Keen Sword, a large joint exercise with the Self-Defense Forces that begins on Monday.

The prefecture has opposed the use of Ospreys by both the American forces and the Self-Defense Forces, but it did not ask for the flights to be called off this time. A Ground Self-Defense Force V-22 also landed at the airport the same day.

A new relationship with Tokyo

Mr Koja took office this autumn, succeeding a governor who had opposed the Henoko relocation, and works in step with the national government on the plan. The government is arranging to hold the Okinawa Policy Council, which brings together cabinet ministers and the governor to discuss reducing the burden of American bases and promoting the economy, within this month, people familiar with the plan said. It would be the first meeting since 2013.

The prefecture hopes the council will lead to more money. Okinawa's promotion budget has stayed below 300 billion yen for years. Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara met Yuko Obuchi, who chairs the Liberal Democrats' research council on Okinawa's development, and its secretary-general, Aiko Shimajiri, at the prime minister's office on Thursday to discuss the council.

Opposition in the prefecture

The reversal is likely to anger residents and local politicians who have campaigned against the Ospreys for more than a decade, arguing that the aircraft are dangerous to fly over a densely populated city. Futenma sits in the middle of Ginowan, surrounded by homes and schools.

Japan and the United States agreed in 1996 to return the land, which covers about a quarter of the city, once a replacement facility was ready. Three decades on, the air station is still in use.

For the government in Tokyo and for Washington, the change removes a long-standing source of friction. Alliance officials have long argued that the Osprey's speed and range are essential for moving Marines quickly across the islands of the south-west, where the Self-Defense Forces are building up their presence.

How the governor's supporters in the prefectural assembly respond, and whether the policy council delivers a larger budget, will determine whether his gamble on co-operation pays off.

POLITICS

Government Will Not Write a 3.5 Per Cent of GDP Defence Target Into the New Security Documents, Despite American Demands, Asahi Reports

Washington wants the higher level within five years; Tokyo is wary of committing to a figure it cannot yet fund

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The government will put off spelling out a target of spending 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product on defence in the three national security documents it is revising, the Asahi Shimbun reported on its front page on Friday, even though the United States has demanded that Japan reach that level within the next five years.

The three documents are the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy and the Defense Buildup Program. The current versions, adopted in December 2022, committed Japan to raising spending on defence and related areas to 2 per cent of GDP by fiscal 2027. The government intends to revise them by the end of this year.

The 2022 documents set aside about 43 trillion yen for defence over the five years to fiscal 2027 and committed Japan to acquiring counterstrike capabilities, the means to hit missile launch sites in enemy territory, including American Tomahawk cruise missiles. The 2 per cent target also covers related spending, such as research and the coast guard's budget.

Where 3.5 per cent comes from

The figure echoes the target agreed by NATO members at their summit in The Hague in June 2025: 5 per cent of GDP by 2035, made up of 3.5 per cent for core defence and 1.5 per cent for related spending such as infrastructure and resilience. American officials have since urged allies in Asia, including Japan, to reach the same core level.

For Japan, 3.5 per cent of GDP would mean roughly 20 trillion yen a year, more than double the current level, the Hokkaido Shimbun has reported.

Caution in Tokyo

The Liberal Democrats' own recommendations to the government, drawn up in the spring, also stopped short of a numerical target, saying only that the scale of the increase should be considered. Lawmakers worried about how to pay for it, and some urged caution.

Funding is the sticking point. Japan's spending is already rising steeply under the current plan, which is financed partly by tax increases whose timing has been repeatedly debated, and a target far above 2 per cent would require new sources of revenue or more borrowing at a time of rising interest rates.

The alliance dimension

Avoiding a number could create friction with Washington, which has made allied spending a central theme of its diplomacy. Not writing a figure into the documents does not by itself mean that spending will stop rising; the question is whether Japan can satisfy its ally with the substance of its plans rather than a percentage.

In her first policy speech as prime minister, in October 2025, Sanae Takaichi brought the 2 per cent goal forward to fiscal 2025, two years ahead of schedule, and said the three documents would be revised early.

Ms Takaichi has made strengthening defence one of her priorities and has said Japan should decide its defence needs on its own initiative. The question is whether Washington will accept that answer without a number attached.

What comes next

The government plans to finalise the revised documents by the end of the year, together with the budget for fiscal 2027. How it describes the spending path, and whether it offers the United States any figure at all, will be watched closely in Washington and in neighbouring capitals.

Japan's security environment has not grown easier. A Chinese aircraft carrier passed between Okinawa and Miyako this week and conducted flight operations in the Pacific before heading for the South China Sea, the Defense Ministry said.

POLITICS



Arata Takebe, the six-term member of the House of Representatives for Hokkaido's 12th district, who became agriculture minister on Thursday after Kazuo Yana resigned. At his first news conference he promised to expand demand for Japanese food at home and abroad and said talks on American potatoes must keep out harmful pests. (File photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

New Farm Minister Sets Out His Priorities: Food Security, Demand at Home and Abroad, and Caution on American Potatoes

At his first news conference Takebe says farming faces great change as the number of farmers falls sharply; he will keep the rice policy of production in line with demand and promises a fair and transparent ministry

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Arata Takebe began work as agriculture minister on Thursday evening with a news conference at the ministry in Kasumigaseki, hours after the attestation ceremony at the Imperial Palace that completed his appointment.

His message was continuity, delivered with an eye on the reasons he had the job at all. "To strengthen food security, we will expand demand at home and abroad," he said, adding that the world of agriculture, forestry and fisheries was "changing greatly, with instability in the world and a sharp fall in the number of farmers".

Supply and productivity

Mr Takebe said he would strengthen the country's ability to supply food by raising productivity and the value of what farmers produce. Japan's farming population has been shrinking and ageing for decades, and the government has made food security a central theme of its farm policy since revising the basic law on food, agriculture and rural areas in 2024.

Expanding demand abroad means more exports of Japanese food, which the government has promoted for years with targets for sales of farm and fishery products overseas. At home, it means encouraging consumers and food companies to buy domestic produce.

Rice

On rice, the new minister said everyone involved needed to share a strong sense of crisis and to pursue production in line with demand. He said he would carry on the existing policy. The government's plan for rice paddies is due in mid-November.

Potatoes

The question with the most local resonance came from his own district on the Okhotsk coast of Hokkaido, which is potato country. Asked about American requests for Japan to open its market to fresh potatoes, he said he understood the expectations and requests of the other side, but that talks would continue in order to keep out harmful pests and diseases.

He said concerns had been raised by farmers and that

he regarded the issue as being at an important juncture. The agriculture ministry has listed 21 pests and diseases that require quarantine measures to be agreed with the United States before fresh potatoes could be imported.

A clean break

Mr Takebe's predecessor, Kazuo Yana, left office on Wednesday after 28 days, over a remark about cutting road budgets for local governments and allegations about free buses for supporters. The new minister did not dwell on the case, but promised to run the ministry "with fairness and transparency".

There was no handover ceremony. Ministries normally hold one when ministers change, but the agriculture ministry said Mr Yana had no plans to visit. When Taku Eto resigned over his remark about rice in 2025, he did hand over to his successor, Shinjiro Koizumi.

The prime minister's instructions

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi instructed Mr Takebe to strengthen food security, among other tasks, the Yomiuri Shimbun and the Asahi Shimbun reported. She described him as well versed in farm policy and able to contribute at once in the Diet, where opposition parties are preparing to question her about the appointment of his predecessor.

Mr Takebe served as senior vice-minister of agriculture under Fumio Kishida and has worked on farm policy in the Liberal Democrats' party organs. His father, Tsutomu Takebe, held the same ministerial post under Junichiro Koizumi.

Farm groups have broadly welcomed the choice of an experienced hand. The harder test will come in the Diet, where he will be asked about rice prices that remain high for households and about the American pressure on potatoes, and where any slip will be magnified by the circumstances of his appointment.

make the same demand.

The upper house goes ahead

The Liberal Democrats and the Constitutional Democratic Party, the largest opposition party, agreed to hold the upper house Budget Committee today and on Monday, as originally planned. The opposition won a concession in return: a larger share of the questioning time.

Today's session will be the first chance for opposition lawmakers to question Ms Takaichi directly since Mr Yana's resignation. They are expected to press her on how he was chosen, whether the government knew of the allegations about free buses for supporters at his campaign rallies, and why it took two days of questioning in the committee for him to go.

Sticking to the schedule

The ruling parties are determined to keep the Diet timetable on track, according to reports on Friday, and are wary of letting the Yana affair delay the

government's main bills. These include legislation to cut the consumption tax on food to 1 per cent for two years and a bill to reduce the number of seats in the lower house.

Ms Takaichi has said that responsibility for the appointment rests with her. The opposition wants more than that. Several opposition leaders said on Wednesday that doubts about Mr Yana had not been dispelled and that he should explain himself even after resigning.

A complaint to prosecutors

The pressure grew on Thursday when Hiroyuki Kamiwaki, a constitutional law professor at Kobe Gakuin University known for filing complaints over political funding, said he had sent complaints to the Utsunomiya District Public Prosecutors Office accusing Mr Yana and others of breaching the Public Offices Election Act.

He alleges that about 100 voters were carried free of charge by shuttle bus to campaign launch rallies in Otawara, Tochigi Prefecture, at the start of the October 2024 general election and again in February this year, benefits he put at about 180,000 yen and about 230,000 yen.

A new minister in the chair

The government hopes the swift appointment of Arata Takebe, an experienced farm policy hand, will limit the damage. Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said the government would fulfil its responsibility by delivering results on important issues.

Whether the opposition can turn the affair into a broader challenge to the government will depend partly on whether new facts emerge. For now, the two sides have agreed on a timetable, and the questioning begins this morning.

POLITICS

Talks on Cutting 45 Proportional Seats Stay Deadlocked as the LDP Floats Tougher Rules for Candidates Revived on Party Lists

The parties aim to conclude by the end of the month; Komeito calls the cut completely unacceptable

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

Talks between the ruling and opposition parties on reforming the electoral system for the House of Representatives made no progress on Thursday, with the ruling side again calling for 45 seats to be cut from the proportional representation section and opposition parties again saying no.

Lower house members are elected under a mixed system that combines single-member districts with regional proportional lists. Many candidates stand in both, so a candidate who loses a district race can still win a seat if he or she ranks high enough on the party's list, a practice known as revival.

A partial reform

At the meeting the Liberal Democrats proposed tightening the conditions under which such dual candidates can be revived, for example by requiring them to have won a larger share of the vote in their district. Some opposition parties said they could support the idea.

The parties agreed to try to reach a conclusion by the end of the month and are expected to meet again next week.

The positions

Keisuke Suzuki of the Liberal Democrats said an agreement that did not include a conclusion on the number of seats was hard to imagine. Ryuna Kanemura of the Japan Innovation Party, the Liberal Democrats' coalition partner, said he wanted to settle the matter by addressing the seat count directly.

Motohisa Furukawa of the Democratic Party for the People said the reform was a stopgap before a fundamental overhaul and that the current number of seats should be kept.

Hiroaki Nakano of Komeito was blunt. "A cut of 45 proportional seats is completely unacceptable," he said. "I think the conclusion should be to put together whatever the parties can agree on." Takayuki Ochiai of the Democratic Reform Association said the debate would not connect "unless considerable ingenuity is applied".

Why it matters

Cutting proportional seats tends to favour large parties, which win most single-member districts, and to squeeze smaller ones, which depend on

proportional seats. That explains the opposition of Komeito and the smaller opposition parties, and the support of parties that see the cut as a sign that politicians are sharing the burden of reform.

The cut has been a demand of the Japan Innovation Party, and the government has listed the bill among its priorities for the extraordinary Diet session.

With the end of the month as the target, the coming week's talks will show whether a compromise built around the rules on revival can satisfy those who insist on a smaller chamber.

POLITICS

The Osprey in Okinawa: A Decade of Protest, Two Fatal Crashes in Japan's Waters and an Aircraft the Self-Defense Forces Now Fly Too

The tilt-rotor flies like a helicopter and an aeroplane; its record has made it the most contested machine at Futenma

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The Osprey is a tilt-rotor aircraft. Its two large propellers point upwards for take-off and landing, like a helicopter, and tilt forward in flight, letting it cruise much faster and further than a conventional helicopter.

The U.S. Marine Corps began deploying its MV-22 version to Futenma Air Station in Ginowan in October 2012, replacing ageing CH-46 helicopters. The deployment went ahead despite opposition from the prefectural government, the prefectural assembly and every municipal assembly in Okinawa.

Accidents

Opposition hardened after a series of accidents. In December 2016 an MV-22 came down in shallow water off Nago during a refuelling exercise; its crew survived. In November 2023 an Air Force CV-22 crashed off Yakushima in Kagoshima Prefecture, killing all eight crew members, and the American military grounded its Osprey fleet worldwide for about three months.

Supporters of the aircraft point out that its accident rate per flying hour is comparable to that of other military aircraft. Critics in Okinawa say that any crash over Ginowan, where the air station is surrounded by homes, would be catastrophic.

Japan's own Ospreys

The Ground Self-Defense Force has bought its own V-22s to carry troops quickly to the remote islands of the south-west. They were kept at Kisarazu in Chiba Prefecture for several years before moving to a new base at Saga Airport.

That is the point Governor Genta Koja made this week: with the Self-Defense Forces themselves operating the type, he said, demanding that the Americans withdraw theirs was no longer realistic.

What changes

In practical terms the governor's decision changes little about how the aircraft fly, since the prefecture has no power to stop them. Its significance is political. For the first time, the prefectural government is not formally opposing the aircraft, which removes a constant source of protest letters and statements.

It also aligns the prefecture with the plan to move Futenma's functions to Henoko, where landfill work has been under way for years despite legal challenges by previous governors.

The exercise ahead

The first test of the new relationship comes with Keen Sword, the joint Japanese and American exercise beginning on Monday. Two American Ospreys landed on Miyako on Thursday in preparation, and the prefecture did not ask them to stay away.

Residents' groups opposed to the bases have said they will continue to protest, regardless of the governor's position.

POLITICS

Police Agency Sets Up Expert Panel to Consider Fitting Stalkers With GPS Devices and Making Treatment Compulsory

The move follows the killing of a woman in Ikebukuro in March by a former partner who was under a prohibition order

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

The National Police Agency will set up a panel of experts to consider new measures against stalking, including requiring offenders to wear satellite

POLITICS

positioning devices so that victims can be warned when they come near, the agency said on Thursday.

The panel will also consider making treatment and counselling compulsory for offenders, as the proportion who receive it has stagnated, and aims to produce a report that could lead to an early revision of the Stalker Regulation Act.

The Ikebukuro killing

The move follows a case in March in which a woman was stabbed to death at a commercial facility in Ikebukuro, Tokyo, by her former partner. Under the act, the man had been served with a prohibition order telling him to stop stalking her.

Police hope that a GPS device could alert a victim, or the police, when an offender approaches, which might have prevented such a tragedy.

Human rights

The idea is contentious. The agency acknowledged that, depending on how such devices are used, they could be regarded as a violation of human rights, and said the panel would consider how to address that concern. Requiring someone who has not been convicted of a crime to be tracked would raise particular legal questions.

Who is on the panel

The panel will hold its first meeting in Tokyo on Monday. Its members include psychiatrists, legal scholars and lawyers. To include the perspective of victims, a relative of a woman killed by her former partner in Zushi, Kanagawa Prefecture, has also joined.

The law so far

Japan's Stalker Regulation Act was passed in 2000, after the killing of a university student in Okegawa, Saitama Prefecture, the previous year. It has been revised several times, to cover persistent emails, then messages on social media, and later the secret use of GPS devices by stalkers to track their victims.

The law allows police to issue warnings and prohibition orders, and violating an order is a crime. Critics say the system still leaves victims exposed during the period between an order and an arrest, which is the gap a tracking device is meant to close.

Several countries use electronic monitoring of people under restraining orders, often in domestic violence cases, with devices that alert a victim carrying a receiver. The panel is expected to study such examples.

Any change to the law would need the approval of the Diet. The agency has not said when it expects the panel to report.

POLITICS

Cabinet Public Relations Office Seeks 5.9 Billion Yen for Government Videos, With Most of the Work to Go to Private Firms, Tokyo Shimbun Reports

The request is part of a tenfold rise in the office's budget that critics call taxpayer-funded promotion of the government

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

The Cabinet Public Relations Office has requested about 5.9 billion yen for videos promoting government policy in the next fiscal year, with about 80 per cent of its budget request going to work outsourced to private companies, the Tokyo Shimbun reported on its front page on Friday.

The video spending forms the bulk of a sharply expanded request. The Cabinet Secretariat asked for 7.2 billion yen for the office in its budget request for fiscal 2027, ten times its budget for the current year, Kyodo News reported last month. In recent years the office's budget has ranged from about 400 million to 700 million yen.

What the money is for

The secretariat says it wants to make key policies easier to understand, citing measures against rising prices, support for child-rearing and economic security. It plans to create content that is easy to grasp and to produce and distribute a wide range of videos.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara has argued that the way people gather information is changing, with the spread of video and artificial intelligence, and that conventional methods struggle to reach all generations.

The criticism

Critics on social media have accused the government of using taxpayers' money to promote itself. One video produced this year to explain the government's basic economic and fiscal policy featured Taizo Sugimura, a former lower house member and television personality, declaring: "This country has a law of money flow!"

The Tokyo Shimbun's report adds a further question: how much of the money will stay in government hands and how much will go to advertising agencies and production companies, and how their work will be checked.

The line between information and promotion

Governments everywhere spend money explaining their policies, and there is a legitimate public interest in people knowing about benefits and services they are entitled to. The difficulty lies in drawing the line between information and political promotion, especially when the policies being explained are contested.

Opposition parties are likely to raise the issue during budget deliberations. The final figure will be set when the government compiles its budget for fiscal 2027 at the end of the year.

For now the request is just that, and budget requests are routinely trimmed by the Finance Ministry. But a tenfold increase for an office whose job is to speak for the government is bound to draw scrutiny.

POLITICS

Dividends and Other Investment Income Will Count Toward Medical Premiums and Co-Payments for Those 75 and Over From August 2029

The health ministry plan aims to ask older people who can afford it to pay more and ease the burden on working-age people

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Investment income such as share dividends will be taken into account when setting the medical insurance premiums and co-payments of people aged 75 and over from August 2029, under a plan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, according to reports.

At present, premiums and the share of medical bills that patients pay at the counter are based on income that municipalities can see, mainly salaries and pensions. Dividends and interest on bonds are counted only for people who declare them in a tax return. Many investors choose not to file, because tax is withheld at source, so their investment income does not affect their premiums.

Fairness

Critics have long argued that this is unfair. Two people with the same total income can pay very different premiums depending on whether that income comes from a pension or from shares, and there is no way for municipalities to check what has not been declared.

The government began moving last year to reflect financial income in premiums first for people aged 75 and over, who are covered by the separate medical insurance system for the late elderly, and to extend the approach to National Health Insurance, which covers the self-employed and others under 75.

How it will work

The plan relies on information that financial institutions already submit to the National Tax Agency about the income they pay out. The government intends to build an online database that municipalities can use when calculating premiums. Building that system is the main reason the change will take several years.

The aim

The goal is to ask older people who have the means to contribute more, so that the premiums paid by working-age people, which help fund the medical system for the elderly, do not keep rising. Health spending on people aged 75 and over is growing fast as the baby-boom generation ages.

Older people who rely only on pensions and modest savings are unlikely to be affected. Those with substantial investment portfolios could see higher premiums and, in some cases, a higher co-payment rate when they see a doctor.

What comes next

Details such as which kinds of income will be counted, and from what amount, will be set out in the

years before the change takes effect. Financial institutions and municipalities will need to adapt their systems.

The change is part of a broader effort to make the social security system fairer between generations, a theme that successive governments have pursued but found politically difficult, because older voters turn out in large numbers.

POLITICS

Transport Ministry Considers Letting Foreign Ships Register Under the Japanese Flag in an Emergency So the Government Can Direct Them to Carry Supplies

The idea, reported by the Nikkei, reflects how few ocean-going ships carry Japan's flag; a record oil release this year already needed foreign tankers

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism is considering a system under which foreign-registered ships could be registered as Japanese in an emergency, so that the government could instruct them to carry supplies, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun reported on its front page on Friday.

Japan depends on the sea for almost all of its trade by weight, including its oil, gas and much of its food. But most of the ocean-going ships operated by Japanese shipping companies are registered abroad, in countries such as Panama and Liberia, where costs and taxes are lower. Only a small fraction fly the Japanese flag.

Why the flag matters

A ship's flag determines which country's laws apply to it. The Japanese government has limited power to direct foreign-flagged ships, even those owned or operated by Japanese companies, and their crews are mostly foreign. In a crisis, such as a conflict that disrupted shipping lanes, that could leave the country unable to guarantee deliveries of essential goods.

Registering ships under the Japanese flag in an emergency would bring them under Japanese law and allow the government to order them to transport supplies, according to the report.

A recent test

The limits of the current system were exposed this year. In March, when the government released a record amount of oil from national and private reserves after the situation in Iran deteriorated, oil wholesalers asked to be allowed to use foreign-flagged tankers, saying Japanese-flagged ships alone could not move the oil from storage bases to refineries. Domestic coastal shipping is generally reserved for Japanese-registered vessels, and the ministry had to consider granting special permission.

Questions to settle

The idea raises legal and practical questions, including how ships would be transferred between registries quickly, what would happen to their foreign crews, and how the owners would be compensated. Shipping companies will want to know who bears the cost and the risk.

Japan has encouraged shipping companies for years to register more vessels at home, with tax incentives, but the numbers have remained small compared with the fleets they operate.

Part of a wider push

The plan fits a broader effort to strengthen economic security and prepare for emergencies, including the protection of supply chains for energy, food and critical minerals. The Middle East conflict and attacks on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz this year have made the vulnerability of sea lanes a practical concern rather than a theoretical one.

The ministry has not announced details, and any system would require legislation.

POLITICS

Cross-Party Lawmakers Condemn American Sanctions on the International Criminal Court and Ask Tokyo to Press Washington to Withdraw Them

The statement calls the sanctions on the court as an institution an unprecedented outrage; the court's president is Japanese

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

A cross-party group of Japanese lawmakers adopted a statement on Thursday condemning the United States for imposing sanctions on the International Criminal Court as an institution, and said it would ask the

Japanese government to convey its demand that Washington withdraw them.

The Parliamentary League for Human Rights Diplomacy, which includes members of both ruling and opposition parties, adopted the statement at a general meeting in the Diet building in the afternoon.

A step further

The United States had already sanctioned individuals connected with the court in The Hague, including its president, Tomoko Akane, a former Japanese prosecutor and diplomat. Its new measure targets the court as a whole.

The statement calls sanctions on the court as an organisation an unprecedented outrage in the history of international justice. It argues that crippling a court that victims around the world regard as their last hope cannot be justified, even if the aim is to stop it exercising jurisdiction over American citizens.

A grace period

The lawmakers asked the United States to withdraw the sanctions formally during a grace period of 180 days. They will submit the statement to the Japanese government soon and ask it to pass the request on to Washington.

A dilemma for the prime minister

The United States has continued to press for the court to be dismantled, Kyodo News reported. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has expressed support for the court in the name of upholding the rule of law, a position that now sits awkwardly with Japan's closest ally.

Japan is the court's largest financial contributor and has long presented support for international law as a pillar of its diplomacy, particularly in contrast to China and Russia. The court has issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin over the deportation of Ukrainian children.

Earlier support

Earlier this month a group of Japanese citizens submitted a petition with about 170,000 signatures to the government asking it to support Judge Akane. A group of prominent Japanese intellectuals has also issued a statement defending the court.

The government has not said how it will respond to the lawmakers' request.

POLITICS

Lawmakers Draft a Law Against Match-Fixing Linked to Betting, With a New Government Body to Co-ordinate the Fight

Japanese sports are being targeted by overseas betting sites; the draft would ban manipulation outright but carries no penalties

By the Political Desk

A cross-party group of lawmakers who support sport is drafting a law to prevent the manipulation of sports results, including match-fixing linked to betting, according to an outline of the bill that emerged on Thursday.

The draft would create a new government body, provisionally called the Council for Promoting Measures Against Fraud in Sports Competition, to co-ordinate the work of ministries and sports organisations, share information and promote measures efficiently.

Overseas betting

The lawmakers' project team met in the Diet building on Thursday. A senior member of the league said Japanese sport was being targeted by overseas betting sites. "We must end as quickly as possible the situation in which athletes are exposed to threats," he said.

What the draft says

The outline would explicitly prohibit the manipulation of sports results. Its general provisions state that the law aims to secure a fair environment, protect the rights of athletes, referees and others, and contribute to the healthy development of sport.

It sets out five basic measures: systems for reporting and consultation; information sharing between the government and private organisations; measures against illegal acts; education and awareness; and international co-operation.

The draft is not expected to include penalties, leaving prosecution to existing laws.

POLITICS

The timetable

After consultations among the parties, the league plans to finalise the bill quickly and may submit it to the current extraordinary Diet session.

Why now

Gambling on sport is largely illegal in Japan, apart from horse, bicycle, motorboat and motorcycle racing and the official sports lottery. But Japanese games, including professional baseball and football, are offered by betting sites based abroad that Japanese residents can reach online.

Sports organisations worry that criminals could try to approach players, referees or club staff to influence results, as has happened in other countries. Education for young athletes about the risks is one of the main aims of the bill.

Supporters say a basic law, even without penalties, would give the issue a clear legal footing and make it easier to organise prevention across sports and ministries.

POLITICS

Politics in Brief

By the Political Desk

HOKKAIDO'S VICE-CAPITAL BID: Hokkaido set up a council on Thursday to pursue its designation as a vice-capital that could take over some functions of the capital in an emergency. Governor Naomichi Suzuki told the first meeting in Sapporo that he wanted to present a model reflecting regional characteristics under an "All Hokkaido" framework. Members agreed that Hokkaido would lead growth strategies in food, energy and economic security and semiconductors. The mayor of Eniwa said the benefits should spread beyond Sapporo to other areas.

FUKUSHIMA TURNOUT: Average turnout in gubernatorial elections in the 12 Fukushima municipalities placed under evacuation orders after the 2011 nuclear accident has fallen by 14.54 percentage points since the disaster, compared with 6.16 points for the prefecture as a whole, according to a Kyodo News tally of three elections before and three after. Long years of evacuation outside the prefecture and complicated voting procedures may be to blame. The next election, on October 25, pits the incumbent against six newcomers.

BUSINESS VISAS: The number of foreign residents with the business manager visa status who left Japan without re-entry permission rose from 246 in the first half of 2025 to 953 in the first half of this year, about 3.9 times, Immigration Services Agency figures show. The rules were tightened a year ago today, raising the capital required from 5 million yen to 30 million yen and requiring at least one full-time employee who is Japanese or a permanent resident. About 46,800 people held the status at the end of 2025.

AUDIT BOARD: The Board of Audit said 13 of the 18 prefectures it examined were holding about 4.96 billion yen in funds created from a COVID-era regional grant with no prospect of using it. The funds subsidise costs such as credit guarantee fees for business loans, but borrowing fell short of estimates. The board asked the internal affairs ministry to have the money returned to the national treasury.

OKINAWA COUNCIL: Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara met Yuko Obuchi and Aiko Shimajiri of the Liberal Democrats' Okinawa research council to discuss the Okinawa Policy Council, which the government hopes to convene this month for the first time since 2013.

CHINESE CARRIER: The Defense Ministry said the Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning was confirmed on Thursday heading from waters south of Ishigaki Island towards the South China Sea. About ten take-offs and landings by its fighters and helicopters were observed on Wednesday.

ETOROFU: The Liberal Democrats' policy chief, Takayuki Kobayashi, called a visit by a delegation from China's Heilongjiang province to Etorofu "absolutely unacceptable".

UPPER HOUSE: The House of Councillors Budget Committee meets today and on Monday.

THE FARM MINISTRY: Arata Takebe holds his first regular news conference as minister after today's cabinet meeting.

DEFENCE DRILL: The Keen Sword joint exercise with American forces begins on Monday.

INTERNATIONAL

Gunman, 16, Kills Three Children and a Teacher at an Elementary School in Bend, Oregon, Before Being Shot Dead

A seven-year-old and another teacher are seriously wounded; it is the latest of more than 50 school shootings in the United States this year

By Laura Bennett | North America Correspondent

Three children and a teacher were killed on Thursday when a gunman opened fire at an elementary school in Bend, Oregon, police said. The suspect, a 16-year-old local resident, was shot dead at the scene.

The children who died were aged between 5 and 11, according to police. A seven-year-old child and another teacher were seriously injured. American media reported that the suspect was male. Police are investigating his motive and any connection he had with the school.

The attack

Multiple calls came in at about 1 p.m. local time, about 5 a.m. on Friday in Japan, reporting that someone had entered the school and was shooting. Shortly before, a person in a car had reported being shot at several times, police said.

A local resident who noticed the intruder chased him, and the suspect was then shot dead, according to accounts reported by American media. Details of how he was killed were not immediately clear.

A passer-by told American media of hearing three gunshots, then about three more some time later.

The town

Bend, a city of about 100,000 people in central Oregon, lies about 200 kilometres south-east of Portland, the state's largest city, on the dry eastern side of the Cascade Mountains. It is known as a centre for outdoor sports. The school has roughly 400 to 450 pupils.

A familiar pattern

According to American media, there have been 52 shootings at schools in the United States so far this year, in which at least 28 people have died. School shootings by teenagers have become a recurring feature of American life, and each prompts renewed debate about access to firearms, school security and mental health support for young people.

Oregon has some of the stricter gun laws among American states, including background checks for private sales. Voters approved a measure in 2022 requiring permits to buy guns and banning large-capacity magazines, but its implementation was delayed by legal challenges.

Reaction

Police set up a cordon around the school after the shooting. The names of the victims had not been released.

The shooting comes less than three weeks before the midterm elections. Gun control remains one of the most divisive questions in American politics, and broad federal legislation has repeatedly stalled in Congress.

INTERNATIONAL

Restrictions on Ukraine's Military Use of Starlink Are Lifted, Britain Says, as Reuters Reports the White House Ordered Them

Britain's defence secretary says he received a direct assurance from Hegseth; Zelensky blames an administration he says is moving closer to Russia

By Rachel Kim | International Desk

Restrictions on the Ukrainian military's use of Starlink, the satellite communications service run by Elon Musk's SpaceX, have been lifted, Britain's defence secretary, Wes Streeting, said on Thursday.

Mr Streeting told the BBC that he had received a direct assurance from the American defence secretary, Pete Hegseth, after meeting him in Washington.

Who ordered the curbs

Reuters reported on Thursday that the White House had instructed that the service be restricted. Ukraine's armed forces use Starshield, a military version of the service, for communications at the front, including for operating drones.

The restrictions, which Ukrainian officials disclosed earlier this week, disrupted operations including drone missions, according to the reports. Mr Streeting

said the reason for them was not clear.

President Volodymyr Zelensky told a British newspaper that the restrictions had been imposed by the Trump administration, which he said was moving closer to Russia, and objected to them.

A lever on the battlefield

The episode is a reminder of how much Ukraine's armed forces depend on a privately owned American satellite network, and how quickly access can be limited by decisions taken outside Ukraine. Earlier this week Mr Musk suggested on social media that questions about the restrictions should be put to the president.

Ukraine has relied on Starlink since the first weeks of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, when terminals were rushed into the country after Russian attacks disrupted its communications. The terminals have become essential for units at the front.

European concern

European governments, which have taken on a larger share of support for Ukraine as American policy has shifted, have been looking for alternatives, including the European Union's planned satellite network, but none can yet match Starlink's coverage and number of terminals.

Britain has been among Ukraine's most active backers. Mr Streeting's intervention suggests that European capitals raised the matter directly with Washington.

The wider war

The lifting of the restrictions came as Ukraine reported shortages of air defence interceptors and resumed long-range drone attacks on Russian oil refineries, which it had paused in line with American wishes.

Whether the curbs could be reimposed, and on whose authority, remains unclear. For Ukraine's commanders, the week has shown that a vital link can be switched off with little warning.

INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine Has Run Out of Patriot Interceptors and Could Not Stop Most Ballistic Missiles in Recent Raids, CNN Reports

Kyiv resumes drone strikes on Russian refineries after pausing them at Washington's request; Trump says the attacks push up energy prices

By Rachel Kim | International Desk

Ukraine has run out of interceptor missiles for the American-made Patriot air defence system and was unable to shoot down most of the ballistic missiles fired at Kyiv and other cities in recent Russian attacks, CNN reported on Thursday, citing a person familiar with the matter.

Strengthening Ukraine's air defences is an urgent priority, and President Volodymyr Zelensky has repeatedly appealed to other countries to supply interceptors. But global supplies are tight. Countries have used up large parts of their stocks in conflicts this year, including the fighting involving the United States and Iran.

Ballistic missiles

The Patriot is one of very few systems in Ukraine's arsenal capable of intercepting ballistic missiles, which descend at very high speed. Russia has intensified ballistic missile attacks on targets including the capital, and the shortage means such attacks could become harder to stop.

Russia carried out a large-scale attack on Ukrainian energy facilities on Wednesday, according to Kyodo News, as it seeks to cripple the country's power and heating supplies before winter.

Refineries hit again

Ukraine, meanwhile, resumed long-range attacks on Russia's oil industry. Russia's Defence Ministry said Ukraine launched a large-scale drone attack on a refinery in Ryazan region, south-east of Moscow, on Thursday, and that debris from drones it shot down caused a fire at the facility. A Ukrainian official confirmed the attack to Reuters.

Ukraine had paused such attacks in line with the wishes of the United States. President Donald Trump has argued that attacks on refineries drive up energy prices, and their resumption could deepen the rift between Washington and Kyiv.

The energy truce

Earlier this month the United States said Russia and Ukraine had agreed to stop attacking each other's energy facilities, but Ukraine accused Russia of violating the arrangement within days. The resumption of refinery strikes suggests that Kyiv no longer considers itself bound.

Black Sea attacks

In the Black Sea, two cargo ships were attacked by drones off Romania on Wednesday and Thursday, and seven crew members are missing. Reuters reported, citing NATO sources, that the drones were Russian.

Money for Chernobyl

The Group of Seven has raised 260 million euros, about 46 billion yen, to repair the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine, Reuters reported, quoting France's economy and finance minister, Roland Lescure, whose country holds the G7 presidency this year. The plant's protective structure was damaged by a Russian drone strike in February 2025.

With winter approaching, the shortage of interceptors and the attacks on power plants point to a hard season for Ukraine's civilians.

INTERNATIONAL

Houthi Missile Strikes Yemeni Government Facility in Aden, Killing Five; Rebels Warn Saudi Arabia That Its Airspace Is Not Safe

The prime minister and other ministers escape unhurt; the attack widens a confrontation that has already hit Saudi oil sites and airports

By Omar Haddad | Middle East Correspondent

A missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck a major government facility in Aden, the southern city that serves as the base of the country's internationally recognised government, killing five people and injuring 16, the government said on Thursday.

The prime minister and other cabinet members were unharmed, according to the government. Its health authorities said the dead and injured were security personnel and civilian staff.

Warnings to Riyadh

The Houthis, an armed group aligned with Iran that controls the capital, Sanaa, and much of northern Yemen, have stepped up attacks on Saudi Arabia, which backs the government. In a statement on Thursday the group said it had "repeatedly warned that Saudi airspace and airports are not safe".

It said that if attacked by Saudi Arabia, it had the capability to retaliate in kind, and hinted at further attacks.

A widening fight

The strike on Aden follows Houthi attacks this week on Saudi targets. Saudi Arabia said an administration building of the state oil company Aramco in Dhahran was hit on Tuesday, and a senior Houthi figure said the group would keep attacking Saudi airports and oil facilities.

There is concern that the escalating exchanges could intensify further, Kyodo News reported. The confrontation has added to fears about oil supplies from the Gulf at a time when crude prices are already high. West Texas Intermediate crude rose for a sixth straight day on Thursday to close at \$97.97 a barrel.

A long war

Yemen's civil war began in 2014, when the Houthis seized Sanaa. A Saudi-led coalition intervened in 2015 to restore the government, and years of fighting caused one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. A truce in 2022 brought a long lull in large-scale fighting between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia, which the recent attacks have shattered.

The wider region

The Houthis have also attacked shipping and Israel during the Gaza war, and the Middle East has been in turmoil this year because of the conflict between the United States and Iran. A cargo ship sank in the Strait of Hormuz this week after reportedly hitting a mine.

Japan imports most of its crude oil from the Middle East, much of it through the Strait of Hormuz, so instability in the Gulf feeds directly into prices at home. The government subsidises gasoline to hold the national average at about 170 yen a litre.

INTERNATIONAL



The Sino-Korean Yalu River Bridge, which links Dandong in China with Sinuiju in North Korea and was opened with a joint ceremony on Thursday, 12 years after its main structure was completed. North Korea's premier said it would bring new vitality to economic co-operation. (File photo: WPM Productions)

INTERNATIONAL

China and North Korea Open the Yalu River Bridge, Finished in 2014 and Left Idle for 12 Years, as Their Ties Warm

North Korea's premier says the link will bring new vitality to economic co-operation; passenger trains resumed in March and flights have increased, but United Nations sanctions still limit trade

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

China and North Korea held a joint ceremony on Thursday to open the Sino-Korean Yalu River Bridge across their border, a road bridge whose main structure was completed in the autumn of 2014 and which has stood unused ever since.

North Korea's premier, Pak Thae Song, sent a video message to the ceremony saying the bridge would bring "new vitality" to economic co-operation based on mutual benefit, North Korean state media reported on Friday. Rodong Sinmun, the newspaper of the ruling Workers' Party, carried photographs and an article about the ceremony on its second page.

China's state news agency Xinhua had announced on Wednesday that the bridge would open to traffic on Thursday.

Twelve years of waiting

The cable-stayed bridge spans the Yalu River between the Chinese city of Dandong and Sinuiju in North Korea, the main crossing point for trade between the two countries. It was built largely at China's expense to replace the narrow Sino-Korean Friendship Bridge, completed during Japanese colonial rule in 1943, which carries a single road lane and a railway.

Work on the new bridge finished in 2014, but it never opened. Relations between Beijing and Pyongyang cooled after North Korea's repeated nuclear and missile tests, the connecting roads on the North Korean side were left unfinished for years, and border traffic was later shut almost entirely during the coronavirus pandemic.

A thaw

The opening is the clearest sign yet of improving relations. The leaders of the two countries have met twice since September 2025 and agreed to strengthen strategic co-ordination, Kyodo News reported. Passenger trains between the two countries resumed in March after about six years, and direct flights have increased. October 6 marked the 77th anniversary of

the establishment of diplomatic relations.

North Korean media did not report the resumption of the train service in March, although Chinese media covered it heavily. The prominent coverage of the bridge opening suggests that Pyongyang now wants its people to see the relationship with China as a source of prosperity.

Sanctions

How much traffic the bridge will carry depends partly on sanctions. United Nations Security Council resolutions adopted after North Korea's nuclear tests restrict its exports of coal, iron, textiles and seafood, cap its imports of petroleum products and ban the sale of machinery and vehicles to the country. China says it implements the resolutions, but trade in goods outside their scope, such as food and consumer products, has been recovering.

Analysts in Seoul and Tokyo will watch whether the new crossing becomes a channel for goods that sanctions are meant to block. North Korea has deepened its ties with Russia since 2024, supplying troops and munitions for the war in Ukraine, and China's warmer approach is seen partly as an effort to reassert its influence over its neighbour.

Japan's interest

For Japan, any easing of North Korea's economic isolation matters because sanctions are one of the few levers on a country that continues to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles capable of reaching Japanese territory, and that has yet to account for the Japanese citizens it abducted in the 1970s and 1980s.

North Korea fired a short-range tactical ballistic missile on Monday, and leader Kim Jong Un recently described an intercontinental ballistic missile on display at a defence museum as a national treasure.

The new charges

Federal prosecutors filed the charges in a superseding indictment. It alleges that from about 1999 to 2025 the couple ordered the military and security services to detain and torture people they regarded as dissidents.

It also alleges that Americans detained in Venezuela between 2022 and 2025 were subjected to torture, including electric shocks, beatings and suffocation.

The original case

Mr Maduro and Ms Flores were captured in a raid by American forces on Caracas in January and flown to the United States. They already faced charges including conspiracy to traffic drugs, conspiracy to commit narco-terrorism and possession of machine guns.

Immunity

Their lawyers have asked the court to dismiss the case, arguing that Mr Maduro, as a head of state, is immune from prosecution. The United States did not recognise his claimed victory in the 2024 presidential election, which it and many other governments

regarded as fraudulent.

A rare prosecution

The case is one of the most unusual prosecutions in American history. The last comparable example was that of Manuel Noriega, the Panamanian leader captured after the American invasion of Panama in 1989 and later convicted of drug trafficking in Miami.

Supporters of the operation that captured Mr Maduro say it removed a leader accused of rigging elections, repressing opponents and running a state deeply involved in the drug trade. Critics have said it violated Venezuela's sovereignty and international law.

The court has not yet set a trial date. The case is expected to take many months, with arguments over immunity likely to come first.

People supporting his detention gathered outside the Manhattan federal courthouse in March.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump Calls Off Plan to Stream the Firing-Squad Execution of the Fort Hood Gunman After an Outcry at Home and Abroad

The execution of former Army major Nidal Hasan will go ahead on December 3 without a broadcast; the Pentagon under Hegseth had driven the plan

By Laura Bennett | North America Correspondent

President Donald Trump said on Thursday that a Defense Department plan to broadcast live the execution of Nidal Hasan, the former Army major who killed 13 people at Fort Hood in 2009, had been called off.

The decision followed strong opposition from lawmakers of both parties and from public opinion in the United States and abroad.

In a social media post, Mr Trump argued that showing the execution to the world would have been a powerful deterrent, but said that "many good people" did not want it streamed.

The case

Hasan, an Army psychiatrist, opened fire at Fort Hood, a large Army base in Texas, in November 2009, killing 13 people and wounding more than 30. He was convicted by a military court in 2013 and sentenced to death.

Mr Trump approved execution by firing squad, an extremely rare method in the United States. The execution is scheduled for December 3 at the base and will go ahead as planned, but without a live broadcast. Relatives of the victims will be allowed to attend.

The Pentagon's plan

The plan to stream the execution had been led by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and was well advanced before it was cancelled, according to reports.

The death penalty in the military

Executions under military law are very rare. The last was carried out in 1961. Several soldiers remain on military death row, and any execution requires the approval of the president.

The debate

Lawmakers from both the Republican and Democratic parties had objected to the broadcast, as had critics outside the United States.

Public executions were common in the United States until the 1930s. Executions today take place before a small number of witnesses, including journalists, and recording them is generally prohibited.

Japan also retains the death penalty, carried out by hanging, and executions are conducted in secret, with the condemned typically told only on the morning of the day.

INTERNATIONAL

With Under Three Weeks to the Midterms, Republicans Pull Money From Long-Shot Races as Trump Fumes About His Ratings

Discontent over the Iran operation and prices weighs on the president's party; Politico reports he has asked whether to replace his chief of staff

By Laura Bennett | North America Correspondent

The Republican Party has stopped spending campaign money in districts and on candidates it considers unlikely to win in next month's midterm elections and is moving the funds to races it regards

as winnable, American media reported on Thursday. Fewer than three weeks remain before the elections on November 3, in which all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and about a third of the Senate are at stake.

Headwinds

The party is struggling to recover ground because of public discontent with two of the Trump administration's policies, its military operation against Iran and its handling of rising prices, Kyodo News reported.

Mr Trump, speaking at an event at the White House on Thursday about rallies by his supporters, said an incredible number of people were attending but that the "fake news" would not report it, showing his irritation at reports of Republican weakness.

The chief of staff

The political news site Politico reported on Thursday that Mr Trump had been consulting people around him about whether to replace Susie Wiles, the White House chief of staff, and had complained about his low approval ratings. He had asked Republican lawmakers about a possible change, according to the report.

Mr Trump told Politico that he "fully trusts" Ms Wiles and denied that he was considering replacing her. The site named Stephen Miller, the deputy chief of staff, Steve Witkoff, the special envoy, and Randy Levine, president of the New York Yankees, as possible successors.

During his first term Mr Trump went through four chiefs of staff, including acting ones, and the turnover was widely seen as a cause of disorder in the White House. Ms Wiles has been credited with running a more disciplined operation in his second term.

What is at stake

Losing control of either chamber of Congress would make it much harder for Mr Trump to pass legislation and would expose his administration to investigations by Democratic committees in his final two years.

Kamala Harris, the Democrats' candidate in 2024, said this week that she was confident her party would win both houses.

For Japan, the outcome will shape American policy on trade, tariffs and the alliance, as well as Washington's approach to the Middle East and Ukraine.

INTERNATIONAL

The World in Brief

By the International Desk

EUROPEAN BANKING: Italy's UniCredit said on Thursday that it had received the European Central Bank's approval to acquire Commerzbank, the large German lender. It expects to hold a majority of the shares around the end of the year. UniCredit disclosed a stake of about 9 per cent in September 2024 and made a takeover proposal in May.

BLACK SEA: NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte met Romania's president, Nicusor Dan, and Bulgaria's prime minister in Brussels on Thursday to discuss drone attacks on merchant ships off the two countries' coasts. He said NATO had stepped up its vigilance in eastern Europe and would keep its forces ready as needed.

G20: Finance ministers and central bank governors meeting in Bangkok shared serious concern about inflation driven by high oil prices and agreed on the importance of currency stability, but issued no joint statement. The United States, which holds the G20 presidency this year, was absent: Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent did not attend.

JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA: Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama and South Korea's deputy prime minister and finance minister, Lee Hyung-il, agreed in Bangkok to extend the currency swap agreement between the two countries, which expires at the end of November, South Korea's finance ministry said.

CHORNOBYL: The Group of Seven has raised 260 million euros to repair the Chornobyl plant in Ukraine, France's finance minister said.

MIDDLE EAST: Yemen's government said a Houthis missile killed five people at a government facility in Aden. A cargo ship sank in the Strait of Hormuz this week after reportedly striking a mine.

TRADE FAIR: The Canton Fair, China's largest trade fair, opened its 140th session in Guangzhou on Thursday, with about 32,000 exhibitors and robots

INTERNATIONAL

and artificial intelligence drawing buyers' attention. Premier Li Qiang criticised moves to "politicise and weaponise" trade, an implicit reference to the United States. The fair runs until November 4.

INTERNATIONAL COURT: A cross-party group of Japanese lawmakers condemned American sanctions on the International Criminal Court and asked Washington to withdraw them within a 180-day grace period.

VENEZUELA: Nicolas Maduro pleaded not guilty in New York to new charges of conspiring to torture opponents and detained Americans.

OREGON: Three children and a teacher were killed in a shooting at an elementary school in Bend; the 16-year-old suspect was shot dead.

ECONOMY

Markets at a Glance

By the Data Desk

NIKKEI 225 (THURSDAY): 64,425.95, down 3,318.34, or about 4.9 per cent; sixth straight fall; third-largest fall in points on record.

TOPIX (THURSDAY): 3,999.34, down 97.44.

PRIME MARKET VOLUME: About 3.03 billion shares.

NIKKEI 225 (FRIDAY OPENING): 64,925, up 499; up more than 1,000 yen at one point in the morning.

DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE (THURSDAY): 52,177.69, up 556.21, its first gain in three days.

NASDAQ COMPOSITE (THURSDAY): 26,713.03, up 20.16, its first gain in four days.

SOUTH KOREA (THURSDAY): Kospi down about 8 per cent, according to TheStreet.

TEN-YEAR U.S. TREASURY: About 5.09 per cent on Thursday afternoon in New York, down about 0.1 point.

WTI CRUDE, NOVEMBER (THURSDAY): \$97.97 a barrel, up \$2.88, a sixth straight gain.

DOLLAR: 157.94 to 158.04 yen at the New York close on Thursday.

BANK OF JAPAN POLICY RATE: About 1.25 per cent; next meeting October 29 and 30.

GASOLINE: 170.10 yen a litre, national average for regular as of Monday, down 10 sen.

SOURCES: Kyodo News, Nikkei Inc., TheStreet, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

ECONOMY

American Wholesale Prices Jump 6.3 Per Cent, the Fastest in Almost Four Years, While Retail Sales Beat Forecasts

Energy prices up 35.4 per cent from a year earlier; the core index rises 5.0 per cent; shoppers keep spending, led by petrol stations and restaurants

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Producer prices in the United States rose 6.3 per cent in September from a year earlier, the Labor Department said on Thursday, far above the 5.3 per cent that economists had expected and the fastest pace since December 2022, three years and nine months ago.

It was the second month in a row in which the annual rate has risen. The report, which measures the prices that businesses charge one another, followed Wednesday's consumer price figures showing inflation at 3.7 per cent.

Energy leads

Goods prices rose 9.8 per cent and services prices 4.9 per cent. Within goods, energy prices were up 35.4 per cent, reflecting the high cost of crude oil linked to the turmoil in the Middle East, while food prices were unchanged from a year earlier.

The core index, which excludes food and energy because their prices swing widely, rose 5.0 per cent, also above forecasts, a sign that higher costs are spreading through the economy.

From August to September, on a seasonally adjusted basis, the index rose 1.3 per cent. Goods rose 2.6 per cent, services 0.8 per cent and the core index 0.7 per cent.

Shoppers keep spending

Separately, the Commerce Department said retail sales rose 0.8 per cent in September from August to \$745.0 billion, about 117 trillion yen, against a forecast of 0.3 per cent. Excluding cars and car parts,

sales rose 0.9 per cent. The figures are preliminary.

Sales at petrol stations rose 6.4 per cent, the biggest gain, largely because of higher prices. Furniture stores were up 1.3 per cent and restaurants 1.1 per cent. Sales of building materials and garden supplies fell 0.6 per cent, and those of sporting goods, musical instruments and books fell 0.5 per cent. Compared with a year earlier, retail sales were up 6.3 per cent.

What the Fed sees

Wholesale prices are watched closely by the Federal Reserve because they tend to feed through into consumer prices. If inflation stays high, expectations of further interest rate rises could strengthen.

The Fed's Beige Book, a survey of business conditions in its 12 districts published on Wednesday, found that four districts reported price increases accelerating, with the rising cost of diesel spreading through supply chains. Economic activity expanded in nine districts and was flat in three.

Many districts described consumer spending as driven by high-income households, while some said low-income households were becoming cautious, a polarisation that could weaken spending if prices keep rising.

Market reaction

The data arrived after a punishing day in Asia, where the Nikkei fell 3,318 yen. In New York, stocks recovered: the Dow gained 556 points as retailers rallied on the strong sales figures, and Treasury yields fell.

Economists said the next consumer price report, and comments from Fed officials in the coming weeks, would determine whether the central bank moves at its next meeting.

ECONOMY

G20 Finance Chiefs Share Serious Concern About Inflation in Bangkok but Issue No Statement as the American Treasury Secretary Stays Away

Central banks must raise rates without missing the right moment, participants agree; Katayama watches currencies 'with a high sense of tension'

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Finance ministers and central bank governors from the Group of 20 ended a meeting in Bangkok on Thursday sharing serious concern about inflation driven by high oil prices, but without a joint statement. Scott Bessent, the American Treasury secretary, did not attend, although the United States holds the group's presidency this year.

Participants agreed on the importance of currency stability and exchanged views on the progress of central banks' interest rate increases. They agreed that central banks needed to raise rates without missing the right timing to bring prices down, Kyodo News reported.

Oil and the Middle East

The prolonged turmoil in the Middle East has kept crude oil prices high, and higher energy costs have pushed up inflation around the world. Inflation fears have in turn pushed up long-term interest rates in many countries, adding to the strain on public finances.

The International Monetary Fund, in its World Economic Outlook published on Tuesday, forecast global growth of 3.1 per cent this year, 0.1 percentage point higher than in July, but warned that inflation could become a drag on the world economy. Its managing director, Kristalina Georgieva, told a news conference that "now is the time to rationalise spending".

Japan's message

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama told reporters in Bangkok that she had reaffirmed the importance of exchange rate stability. "We need to watch market movements with a high sense of tension," she said. The dollar traded at about 158 yen on Thursday.

Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda attended the meeting and was due to hold a news conference in Bangkok on Friday afternoon. The bank raised its policy rate to about 1.25 per cent in September and said it would keep raising rates to stabilise prices.

Swap with Seoul

On the sidelines, Ms Katayama and South Korea's deputy prime minister and finance minister, Lee Hyung-il, agreed to extend the currency swap agreement between the two countries, which expires

at the end of November, South Korea's finance ministry said. The length and size of the extension were not disclosed.

Minerals and China

The meeting was also expected to discuss strengthening supply chains for critical minerals, with China's restrictions on exports of rare earths in mind.

The absent host

With the presidency's finance chief absent, the meeting ended without a communique. The Trump administration has shown little enthusiasm for multilateral forums, and its tariffs and pressure on trading partners have been a source of friction within the group.

The G20 leaders' summit is due to be held in the United States later this year.

ECONOMY

Bank of Japan's Koeda Says There Is No Need to Be Overly Cautious About Raising Interest Rates Further

Speaking in Kumamoto, the board member puts the neutral rate 'considerably above 1 per cent' and calls the economy 'not bad'; markets eye the October 29-30 meeting

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Junko Koeda, a member of the Bank of Japan's Policy Board, said on Thursday that the central bank should not be excessively cautious about raising interest rates, signalling her support for continuing to lift its policy rate.

"There is no need to be overly cautious about rate increases," she said in a speech in Kumamoto. On the timing of the next move she said only that adjustments "should be made in a timely manner".

The neutral rate

Ms Koeda said she kept in mind the neutral rate, the level of interest rates that neither stimulates nor cools the economy, when judging whether to raise rates. She said it was "considerably above 1 per cent", and noted that, given Japan's potential growth rate, "there may also be the view that it is above 2 per cent".

Many market participants believe the bank will eventually raise its policy rate to around the neutral level. The bank lifted the rate to about 1.25 per cent at its September meeting.

The bank ended eight years of negative interest rates in March 2024 and has raised its policy rate several times since.

The economy and prices

Ms Koeda said the domestic economy as a whole was "still not bad" and that "broad-based price increases are continuing". She has previously warned that high oil prices caused by the conflict in the Middle East could keep inflation above the bank's 2 per cent target for longer.

Next meeting

The bank's next policy meeting is on October 29 and 30, and investors are watching for clues about when the next increase will come. Her remarks came on the same morning that Tokyo stocks were falling sharply, with the Nikkei closing 3,318 yen lower.

A former academic

Ms Koeda, a former professor at Waseda University who specialises in macroeconomics, joined the board in 2025. In a speech in Fukuoka in May she argued for raising rates at an appropriate pace in response to higher prices while considering their effect on the economy.

Rate decisions are taken by majority vote of the nine-member Policy Board: the governor, two deputy governors and six other members. Members regularly speak to business leaders in regional cities, and their remarks are studied for hints about the board's thinking.

Rising rates bring higher returns for savers but higher costs for borrowers, including the government, which has to refinance a large stock of debt, and households with variable-rate mortgages.

Her comments add to signs that board members are open to another increase, although the timing is likely to depend on how financial markets and the economies abroad hold up after this week's turbulence.

Governor Kazuo Ueda's news conference in Bangkok on Friday afternoon is the next opportunity for markets to gauge the bank's thinking.

ECONOMY

Gasoline Stays Near 170 Yen With a 43-Yen Subsidy as Kerosene Edges Up and Airlines Raise Fuel Surcharges for November and December

JAL's one-way surcharge on North American and European routes rises to 62,000 yen, the second-highest ever; ANA follows

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

The national average retail price of regular gasoline was 170.10 yen a litre on Monday, down 10 sen from a week earlier, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said on Thursday.

The price is being held at about 170 yen by a government subsidy paid to oil wholesalers, which will be 43 yen a litre of regular gasoline from Thursday until October 21. Without it, the pump price would be far higher, reflecting crude oil near \$98 a barrel in New York.

Diesel and kerosene

The average price of diesel was unchanged at 159.60 yen a litre. Kerosene, used in many homes for heating as the weather cools, rose 10 yen to 2,563 yen for an 18-litre can, the size of a typical container.

Kerosene prices are an increasing worry for households in northern Japan as winter approaches.

Airlines

Japan Airlines said on Thursday that it would raise its fuel surcharge on international flights for tickets issued in November and December. On routes to North America and Europe, the one-way surcharge will be 62,000 yen, the second-highest level on record. All Nippon Airways set the same level on its North American and European routes.

JAL blamed higher prices for aviation fuel, driven by uncertainty about the situation in the Middle East.

A brief respite

The surcharge reached a record 65,000 yen one way on North American and European routes for tickets issued in July and August, after conditions in the Middle East deteriorated. JAL lowered it for tickets issued in September and October, when fuel prices fell for a time after the United States and Iran formally signed a memorandum aimed at ending their fighting.

The new increase reverses that reduction, adding to the cost of overseas travel at a time when the weak yen already makes trips abroad expensive for Japanese travellers.

The cost of subsidies

Gasoline subsidies of this kind were first introduced in 2022 and have cost the government trillions of yen. Critics say it blunts the incentive to save fuel and benefits wealthier households that drive more, while supporters say it protects rural residents and businesses that depend on cars and lorries.

With crude prices rising for six straight days, the subsidy per litre is likely to grow if prices stay high.

ECONOMY

Core Machinery Orders Rise 5.2 Per Cent in August, the First Gain in Two Months, Pointing to Steady Business Investment

The Cabinet Office keeps its view that orders show signs of recovery; both manufacturing and non-manufacturing rise

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Core machinery orders, a leading indicator of business investment, rose 5.2 per cent in August from July to 1.0698 trillion yen on a seasonally adjusted basis, the Cabinet Office said on Thursday.

It was the first increase in two months. The figure covers private-sector orders excluding ships and electric power, which are volatile and can distort the trend.

Both sides up

Orders from manufacturers rose 1.6 per cent to 527.0 billion yen, and orders from non-manufacturers rose 2.9 per cent to 541.3 billion yen.

The Cabinet Office kept its overall assessment unchanged, saying that orders "show signs of recovery".

Why the figures matter

Machinery orders are watched because companies order equipment months before they install it, so the data give an early signal of how much they plan to invest. Investment in factories, software and

ECONOMY

machinery is one of the main drivers of Japan's growth, along with consumer spending and exports.

Companies have been spending to automate as labour shortages worsen, and to expand capacity in semiconductors and other strategic industries supported by government subsidies.

Clouds ahead

The August data predate the latest turbulence in financial markets. Thursday's sharp fall in Tokyo stocks, driven by worries about the financing of artificial intelligence and higher American interest rates, has raised questions about whether companies will maintain their investment plans.

High energy prices and rising interest rates at home also weigh on companies' calculations, although many are sitting on large cash reserves.

The monthly figures are volatile, and economists generally look at the trend over several months. The Cabinet Office will publish the September figures next month, along with companies' forecasts for orders in the October-December quarter.

The data will also be watched by the Bank of Japan as it weighs further increases in interest rates.

ECONOMY

TSMC Posts Record Quarterly Profit on Booming Demand for AI Chips and Says It Cannot Build Capacity Fast Enough

Net profit rises 68.7 per cent; the Taiwanese chipmaker is considering a new production site in Texas, but its shares slip in the wider sell-off

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., the world's largest contract chipmaker, reported record revenue and net profit for the July-September quarter on Thursday, as the boom in artificial intelligence drove demand for its most advanced chips.

Revenue rose 50.9 per cent from a year earlier to 1.4942 trillion New Taiwan dollars, about 7.28 trillion yen, and net profit rose 68.7 per cent to 763 billion New Taiwan dollars. Both were the highest for any quarter, and revenue and profit have now risen for 11 quarters in a row.

'Very strong'

At the company's earnings briefing, its chairman and chief executive, C.C. Wei, repeatedly described demand for AI chips as "very strong" and said the company's production capacity had not kept up.

He said TSMC was considering a new production site in Texas, in addition to its factories in Arizona.

Shares fall anyway

Despite the record results, TSMC's shares fell in early trading in New York on Thursday, according to TheStreet, which cited a lower gross margin and the broader sell-off in AI and semiconductor stocks.

The results arrived on a day of heavy selling across Asia's chip-heavy markets. The Nikkei fell 3,318 yen and South Korea's Kospi about 8 per cent, as investors worried about the debts taken on to build AI data centres and about higher interest rates in the United States.

The Japanese connection

TSMC is closely tied to Japan. It operates a factory in Kikuyo, Kumamoto Prefecture, through a joint venture in which Sony, Denso and Toyota hold minority stakes, and is building a second plant nearby. The first plant began mass production at the end of 2024. Japanese companies supply many of the materials and much of the equipment used in its factories.

Strong results at TSMC normally support the shares of Japanese chip-equipment makers such as Tokyo Electron and Advantest. On Thursday, worries about financing outweighed the good news.

The paradox

The contrast between record profits and falling shares captures the market's current dilemma. Demand for AI chips is plainly enormous; the question investors are asking is whether the companies buying them can keep paying, and whether lenders will keep financing them if interest rates rise further.

TSMC's guidance for the current quarter will be studied for any sign of a slowdown. For now, the company says the bottleneck is its own capacity, not demand.

BUSINESS

Beer Cartel Investigation Turns to What Top Executives Knew About Price Talks Among the Four Big Brewers

The Fair Trade Commission's first criminal probe in the food and drink sector centres on informal meetings of sales managers; results were reported to management at some companies

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

The Japan Fair Trade Commission's criminal investigation into a suspected price cartel among the country's four big brewers is focusing on how much their top executives knew, the Sankei Shimbun reported on Friday.

The commission searched the head offices of Asahi Breweries, Kirin Brewery, Suntory and Sapporo Breweries on October 7, using its powers to seize evidence with a court warrant, on suspicion of unreasonable restraint of trade under the Antimonopoly Act. It also searched the Brewers Association of Japan.

The 'back meetings'

According to people familiar with the case, sales staff at the four companies are suspected of co-ordinating the timing and size of increases in shipment prices for beer, happoshu and so-called third-category beers for at least several years.

The main participants were section chiefs in sales departments. After the brewers' association's regular meetings, they allegedly gathered separately at informal sessions known as urakai, or back meetings, where they shared a list of prices by product size and agreed on increases, Kyodo News reported. At some companies, the content of these discussions was reported to management.

A first for the sector

The case is the commission's first compulsory criminal investigation in the food and drink sector, and it is investigating with a view to filing a criminal complaint with prosecutors. The commission is understood to regard the case as having a wide effect on daily life and as highly malicious.

Sales of beer and happoshu in Japan totalled about 1.6 trillion yen in 2024, according to the National Tax Agency, and the four brewers hold most of the market.

Why top management matters

Whether senior executives knew of or approved the arrangements will affect not only any criminal charges but also the companies' governance and their liability to customers and shareholders. Under the Antimonopoly Act, both individuals and companies can be prosecuted for cartels, and companies face heavy surcharges.

Price rises

Beer prices in Japan have risen repeatedly in recent years, as the brewers cited higher costs for ingredients, packaging, energy and logistics. Consumers and retailers will now ask whether all of those increases reflected costs.

The commission is analysing the seized materials to establish how prices were set. The investigation is expected to take months.

BUSINESS

Lawson and FamilyMart Raise Interim Profits on Better Product Ranges, While Seven-Eleven Japan's Operating Profit Falls

Lawson's AI-assisted ordering lifts daily sales per store to a record 608,000 yen; FamilyMart posts a record on stronger coffee sales

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

Lawson and FamilyMart reported higher operating profits for the six months to August on Thursday, helped by stronger product ranges, while Seven-Eleven Japan, the market leader, reported a decline, completing the interim results of the three largest convenience store chains.

The figures are for each company's domestic convenience store business on an unconsolidated basis.

Lawson

Lawson's operating profit rose 3.5 per cent to 35.3 billion yen. The company improved its product range with an ordering system that uses artificial intelligence, and campaigns offering larger portions for the same price drew customers.

Average daily sales per store, a measure all three companies watch closely, rose by 5,000 yen to 608,000 yen, a record for Lawson.

FamilyMart

FamilyMart's operating profit rose 2.3 per cent to 60.1 billion yen, a record for the company. Sales of coffee, which carries high profit margins, grew after it introduced new brewing machines in its stores.

Seven-Eleven

Seven-Eleven Japan's operating profit fell. The company, a subsidiary of Seven & i Holdings, has been working to revive sales growth at its stores in Japan, where it has more outlets than any rival.

A mature market

Japan's convenience stores, of which there are more than 55,000, are a fixture of daily life, but the market is mature. With few places left to open new stores and a shortage of workers, the chains are competing on the range and quality of their products, on digital services and on efficiency.

Rising prices have pushed shoppers to look for value, which has helped campaigns offering more for the same price, while chains have tried to protect margins with higher-value items such as fresh coffee and ready-made meals.

The companies will report full-year results in the spring.

Analysts said the results showed that investment in data and product development was paying off for the two smaller chains, while the market leader faced pressure to show that its own reforms were working.

BUSINESS

Anthropic's Quarterly Revenue Rises About 50 Per Cent to \$16.8 Billion as the AI Developer Prepares to List Its Shares as Early as November

Growth slows from the previous quarter's doubling as Meta and Microsoft turn to their own products and competition with OpenAI intensifies, the Financial Times reports

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Anthropic, the American developer of the Claude artificial intelligence models, increased its revenue by about 50 per cent from the previous quarter to \$16.8 billion, about 2.6 trillion yen, in July to September, the Financial Times reported on Wednesday.

The company was profitable on an adjusted basis for the second quarter in a row, according to the report. It is preparing for an initial public offering of its shares as early as November, and promoted its results at a briefing for investors in San Francisco.

Slower growth

The pace of growth has slowed. Revenue roughly doubled between January-March, when it was about \$4.8 billion, and April-June, when it reached \$11.5 billion.

The slowdown in the latest quarter reflects a shift by major customers, including Meta and Microsoft, toward their own AI and other products, and intensifying competition with OpenAI and other rivals, the report said.

A crowded field

Anthropic is one of a handful of companies developing the most advanced AI models, competing with OpenAI, Google and others. Its models are used by businesses for programming, research and customer service, among other tasks.

The company has raised large sums from investors, including Amazon and Google, to pay for the computing power needed to train and run its models.

The market backdrop

The report arrived as investors grew nervous about the money behind the AI boom. On Thursday Tokyo stocks suffered their third-largest fall on record, triggered in part by a slide in the bonds of CoreWeave, a company that rents out computing power for AI.

A listing by Anthropic would be one of the largest technology share sales in years and a test of investors' appetite for AI companies at a time of rising interest rates. OpenAI has also been reported to be preparing a listing.

Other news

Anthropic warned earlier this week that AI systems could within months acquire the ability to copy themselves onto other devices, a finding it presented as a reason for stronger safeguards. It is also among

the AI companies facing scrutiny over how they obtained books and other material to train their models.

BUSINESS

Business in Brief

By the Business Desk

PANASONIC RECALL: Panasonic will replace parts free of charge in about 640,000 drum-type washer-dryers because detergent or fabric softener can leak from the joint of the automatic dosing tank and damage wiring, posing a risk of smoke or fire. Seven incidents involving fire have occurred in Japan and abroad, with no injuries. The affected machines are 21 models in the LX series made between August 2021 and July 2025 and sold in Japan and Taiwan. Owners are asked not to use the automatic dosing function until repaired. Inquiries: 0120-878-303, toll-free.

RESONA AND JCB: Resona Holdings will take a 5.27 per cent stake in JCB, the credit card company, including shares already held by two subsidiaries, under a capital and business alliance to strengthen their co-operation in payments. Resona will buy the shares around mid-November. JCB has close ties to Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group.

BANKERS' ASSOCIATION: The Japanese Bankers Association informally chose Akihiro Fukudome, 63, president of Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp., as its next chairman from April 2027. The outgoing chairman, Mizuho Bank president Katsuhiko Kato, called the string of cyberattacks and data leaks at companies serious and said he had urged banks to verify customers' identities carefully in transactions conducted without face-to-face contact.

MIZUHO: Mizuho Financial Group will fully launch in November a programme that trains sales and clerical staff as AI engineers in three months instead of the usual year and a half. All five employees in a pilot that began in June, including some with no programming experience, met the standard and moved into engineering jobs in September; about 20 will take part next.

CHIBA STORM DAMAGE: Damage to agriculture, forestry and fisheries in Chiba Prefecture from Typhoon No. 25 has reached 25.6 billion yen, the prefecture said. Floods damaged farmland and facilities worth 19.2 billion yen and made 2,100 hectares of rice paddies in 35 municipalities difficult to harvest. A breach in the embankment of Inba-numa in Narita killed or washed away about 4,500 kilograms of farmed eels.

CASINO DEALERS: The Japan Casino School will open a course in April next year in Tokyo and Osaka to train staff for integrated resorts, with Osaka's resort due to open in 2030. Endorsed by the operator MGM Osaka, the course will teach roulette dealing, measures against cheating and how to spot signs of gambling addiction, with places for 400 students at each site and fees of about 600,000 yen.

WOMEN IN FARMING: The Nihon Nogyo Shimbun and Kyodo News held a symposium in Tokyo on gender equality in farming, in the United Nations' International Year of the Woman Farmer. Akiha Aneba, a professor at Komazawa University, asked why farm women are still prevented by family, community and society from choosing how to live, and called for systems that treat women as individuals rather than as part of a household.

MACHINERY ORDERS: Core machinery orders rose 5.2 per cent in August to 1.0698 trillion yen, the first rise in two months, the Cabinet Office said.

CONVENIENCE STORES: Lawson and FamilyMart raised interim operating profits; Seven-Eleven Japan's fell.

AIRLINES: Japan Airlines and All Nippon Airways will each charge a one-way fuel surcharge of 62,000 yen on North American and European routes for tickets issued in November and December, the second-highest on record.

BEER: The Fair Trade Commission's criminal investigation of the four big brewers is focusing on what senior executives knew, the Sankei Shimbun reported.

CANTON FAIR: China's largest trade fair opened in Guangzhou with about 32,000 exhibitors. It runs until November 4.

TECHNOLOGY



An illustration referring to the lawsuits filed against OpenAI this week by eight American states, which accuse the company of harming children and misleading the public about the safety of ChatGPT. (File image: WPM Productions)

TECHNOLOGY

Lawsuits, Licences and Listings: A Week That Showed How Much Is Now Riding on the Companies Building Artificial Intelligence

Eight American states take OpenAI to court over harm to children; Google pays more than 400 news outlets for AI features; Anthropic's revenue jumps ahead of a listing; and a slide in CoreWeave's bonds rattles Tokyo

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

It has been a week in which the companies behind artificial intelligence found themselves in court, at the negotiating table with publishers and at the centre of a stock market rout, all within a few days.

On Wednesday eight American states, led by Iowa and Kansas, sued OpenAI in their own courts, accusing the developer of ChatGPT of harming children and misleading the public about the safety of its chatbot. The states allege that the chatbot responded harmfully to children on the subjects of suicide and harming others and gave dangerous medical advice, and they want the company's statements about safety declared unlawful and civil penalties imposed.

Iowa went further, asking its court to halt the testing of advanced models until a third party verifies that they are safe, an unusual request for a state court to consider.

Paying for the news

On Thursday Google said more than 400 news organisations around the world were taking part in a trial under which it pays them for the use of their articles in developing new AI features. CNN announced a multi-year strategic partnership with Google the same day, and the Financial Times, Forbes and Axios are among the new participants. The programme began last year with partners including The Washington Post.

Each publisher grants Google permission to use its articles. Google News will show summaries of articles on each publication's own page, and the company will begin a trial of audio news in which users can choose the topics that interest them.

The arrangements are a response to a long-running complaint from publishers that AI systems are built on their journalism without payment and then draw readers away from their websites.

Books and training data

How AI companies obtain the text they learn from is also under scrutiny in Japan. Earlier this month Nippan IPS, an overseas business subsidiary of the book distributor Nippan Group, admitted to the Japan Book Publishers Association that it had sold Japanese books to Anthropic between December 2024 and December 2025, after American court documents

showed the company had bought books from Asia. Nippan said its contract did not mention AI training. The publishers' association had asked for an explanation in September.

The money

Anthropic, for its part, raised its quarterly revenue by about 50 per cent to \$16.8 billion in July to September and is preparing to list its shares as early as November, the Financial Times reported. OpenAI has also been reported to be preparing a listing.

But the scale of the money involved is also a source of anxiety. On Thursday a sharp fall in the bonds of CoreWeave, which rents out computing power to AI developers and has borrowed heavily to buy chips, was cited as the trigger for the Nikkei's third-largest one-day fall in history.

An outage in China

In China, DeepSeek, whose low-cost chatbot caused a stir in early 2025, said on Thursday that some of its services had become unavailable in an apparent system failure. Users saw a message saying the server was temporarily unavailable. The company said it had identified the cause and was working to restore the service. According to the government-affiliated China Internet Network Information Center, more than half of Chinese people were using generative AI by the first half of this year.

Why it matters in Japan

Japanese companies and consumers use these services every day, Japanese publishers are deciding whether to license their content, and Japanese investors hold large stakes in the companies that build AI infrastructure. The lawsuits in America, the licensing deals and the swings in the markets will all shape how the technology develops here.

The government has favoured a light approach to regulating AI, relying on guidelines and a basic law passed in 2025 rather than strict rules. The American lawsuits may test whether that approach is enough to protect children.

dates of birth were also among the data. Credit card information, which the company manages separately, was not included.

How it happened

An employee noticed unauthorised access to the system that manages member information at about 9 a.m. on Tuesday, and the company cut off the outside communications, it said.

According to the Nikkei, the attackers misused an interface used to retrieve member information, known as an API, from October 9. The passwords were stored in encrypted form, but the program used to decrypt them was also compromised, the paper reported, which means customers should assume their passwords are known.

What customers should do

SourceNext is contacting customers who may be affected by email and asking them to change their passwords. Anyone who used the same password for other services should change it there as well, security

experts advise, because stolen passwords are commonly tried on other sites.

Customers should also be wary of emails or phone calls that appear to come from SourceNext or other companies and ask for personal details or payments, as leaked data is often used in phishing.

Reports to the authorities

The company reported the incident to the Personal Information Protection Commission on Thursday and planned to consult the police on Friday, the Nikkei reported.

The leak could also affect the stock market listing planned this year by Pocketalk, the SourceNext group company that makes the translation device of the same name, according to the paper.

One of the largest

With up to 22.5 million records, the incident is among the largest leaks of personal information in Japan. It is the latest in a series of data breaches in recent weeks, including millions of records at companies linked to the data centre operator IDC Frontier and 11.18 million member records at the operator of Burger King's Japanese restaurants, disclosed on Thursday.

For a company that sells security software, the breach is particularly embarrassing. The Japanese Bankers Association's chairman said on Thursday that the string of cyberattacks on companies was serious and urged banks to take care when verifying customers' identities online.

TECHNOLOGY

Burger King's Japanese Operator, a Hospital Booking System and a Manga Store Are Hit as Researchers Find Attackers Mining Apps for Weak Points

11.18 million app members' data leaked; 787 medical institutions disrupted; NICT says attackers analysed Android apps, possibly with AI, to find the servers behind them

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

A run of cyberattacks on Japanese companies continued this week, with new incidents disclosed on Thursday at the operator of Burger King's restaurants in Japan, a medical IT company whose booking system serves hundreds of hospitals, and a popular electronic manga store.

BK Japan, which runs the Burger King chain in Japan, said about 11.18 million records of members of its official app had been leaked through unauthorised access. The data include names, dates of birth, email addresses, gender and phone numbers. The company does not hold credit card numbers, and no misuse of the data had been confirmed. The access took place between October 2 and 7 and was discovered on October 13.

Hospitals affected

Medley, a medical IT company, said its hospital operations system, At-Link, had been accessed without authorisation and that it had suspended the service, disrupting online reservations and other functions at 787 medical institutions across the country. It is investigating whether patients' personal information was leaked. An outside specialist organisation alerted it to the intrusion on October 11, and it stopped the service late on October 14. The app for patients was also suspended.

Manga store closed

NTT Solmare said on Thursday that the servers of Comic Cmoa, its electronic book store specialising in manga, appeared to have been accessed from outside without authorisation, and that it had temporarily suspended the service to investigate.

How the attackers got in

Researchers at the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology, a government research body, found that some of the recent leaks began with attackers analysing smartphone apps for Google's Android operating system to discover weaknesses in the servers the apps connect to. The analysis may have been done with the help of AI, the institute said.

The attackers then exploited each server's specific weaknesses, making it carry out unintended communications or run unauthorised programs, which allowed them to steal confidential information. The institute said apps for Apple's devices could be threatened in the same way.

Because it is difficult to make an app impossible to

analyse, the institute said, "it is important to design and operate the server, the foundation that runs the app, so that its security is ensured". Government agencies have urged companies to strengthen their server security.

Disaster mail restored

Arcadia, the company in Minoh, Osaka Prefecture, whose disaster information service was hit by unauthorised access, said on Thursday that its servers had been restored and confirmed safe, and that it was up to each local government whether to resume sending disaster emails. The internal affairs ministry said that as of 5 p.m. on Thursday, 192 local governments had reported that their disaster emails had been suspended or that information might have leaked.

A new defence

Since October 1, the police and the Self-Defense Forces have been permitted to enter and disable servers used in cyberattacks under a law enacted in May 2025, a measure known as active cyber defence. Other parts of the system, including the analysis of communications data under the supervision of an independent committee, are to take effect in stages by November 2027.

Experts say the wave of incidents shows that companies of every size, not only those holding financial data, are targets.

TECHNOLOGY

The Leap Second Is Abolished: World's Clocks Will Switch to a 'Leap Hour' System in May 2027 That Should Not Need Adjusting for Centuries

The General Conference on Weights and Measures votes in France to let atomic time drift up to an hour from the Earth's rotation, ending one-second fixes blamed for computer failures

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The General Conference on Weights and Measures voted in France on Thursday to abolish the leap second, the occasional one-second adjustment that has kept the world's atomic clocks in step with the rotation of the Earth since 1972.

In its place a "leap hour" will be introduced on May 20, 2027, allowing the difference between Coordinated Universal Time, the world's standard time, and time based on the Earth's rotation to grow to as much as one hour, or 3,600 seconds.

Because the difference grows slowly, no correction is expected to be needed for several hundred years. The aim is to avoid the computer malfunctions and communication failures that leap seconds have caused.

Why clocks and the Earth disagree

Coordinated Universal Time is kept by atomic clocks based on the properties of caesium atoms, which tick with extraordinary regularity. The length of a day measured by the Earth's rotation, by contrast, varies irregularly, affected by the tides and by movements deep inside the planet.

Until now, whenever the accumulated difference was about to exceed 0.9 seconds, an extra second was added to Coordinated Universal Time.

8:59:60 a.m.

In Japan, leap seconds were inserted on January 1 or July 1, after 8:59:59 a.m., producing a moment marked 8:59:60 before the clock moved on to 9 a.m. There have been 27 leap seconds since 1972.

The extra second has caused trouble because many computer systems are not designed to handle a minute with 61 seconds. Leap seconds have been blamed for failures at airlines and other organisations, and in 2012 a leap second was followed by server failures in Japan and delays to airline procedures.

A negative second

There has also been growing concern about a negative leap second. In recent years the Earth's rotation has been slightly faster than expected, raising the possibility that a second would one day have to be removed rather than added, something that has never been done and for which software is even less prepared.

The road to abolition

The conference decided in 2022 to stop adding leap seconds by 2035 and asked experts to propose a new tolerance. Thursday's vote settles the details.

In Japan, Japan Standard Time is maintained by the

TECHNOLOGY

National Institute of Information and Communications Technology, which will need to prepare its systems for the change, as will the operators of networks, financial markets and satellite navigation services that depend on precise time.

For most people the change will pass unnoticed. The sun will rise and set as it always has; it is only the world's most precise clocks that will stop being nudged to follow it.

TECHNOLOGY

Why a Single Second Caused So Much Trouble: Crashed Servers, Grounded Bookings and the Compromise Over Satellites That Ended the Leap Second

Tech companies learned to 'smear' the extra second; satellite navigation systems keep their own time; Russia's concerns helped set the 2035 deadline

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The leap second was born as a compromise. When atomic clocks became the basis of civil time in the 1960s, astronomers and navigators still needed time that matched the Earth's rotation, which determines where the stars appear in the sky. Adding a second now and then, first done in 1972, kept both camps happy.

For several decades that worked. The trouble came with networked computers, which must agree on the time to the thousandth of a second and more.

The night of June 30, 2012

The leap second added at the end of June 2012 exposed a flaw in the Linux operating system that caused some servers to overload. Websites including Reddit and Mozilla had problems, and a reservation system used by airlines including Qantas failed, delaying hundreds of flights. In Japan, the same leap second was linked to server failures and delays in airline procedures.

On January 1, 2017, the last time a second was added, an error caused by the leap second disrupted part of the internet company Cloudflare's service.

Each leap second was decided by the International Earth Rotation and Reference Systems Service, whose office at the Paris Observatory monitored the Earth's rotation and announced insertions about six months in advance.

Smearing time

Large companies developed workarounds. Google, for example, began spreading the extra second over many hours by making its clocks run very slightly slow, a technique known as smearing, so that its systems never saw a 61-second minute. But different companies smeared in different ways, which meant their clocks briefly disagreed.

In 2022 engineers at Meta, the owner of Facebook, publicly called for the leap second to be abandoned, arguing that it caused more harm than good.

Satellites keep their own time

Satellite navigation systems complicate the picture. The American GPS system runs on its own time scale, which ignores leap seconds and is now 18 seconds ahead of Coordinated Universal Time; receivers apply the difference. Russia's GLONASS system, by contrast, follows Coordinated Universal Time, leap seconds included, which is one reason Russia asked for more time before abolition.

The 2022 decision to end leap seconds by 2035 reflected that compromise, and Thursday's decision sets the date for the new system at May 20, 2027.

The leap hour

Under the new rules, the gap between atomic time and the Earth's rotation will be allowed to grow to an hour before anything is done. At the current rate, that will take centuries. How the hour will eventually be handled, and whether anyone will ever do it, is a problem for future generations.

A lesson in time

The history of the leap second is also a lesson in how much of modern life depends on clocks agreeing. Financial trading, mobile networks, power grids and satellite systems all rely on precisely synchronised time, and a disagreement of a single second can cascade.

Today's editorial recalls a satellite that fell silent in 1960 for a similar reason: its clock and the clocks on the ground stopped agreeing.

TECHNOLOGY

CNN Signs a Multi-Year Deal With Google as More Than 400 News Organisations Join a Programme That Pays for Articles Used in AI Features

The Financial Times, Forbes and Axios are among new participants; Google plans article summaries and a trial of audio news

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Google said on Thursday that more than 400 news organisations worldwide were taking part in a trial programme under which it pays them for the use of their articles in developing new features powered by artificial intelligence.

The same day CNN, the American television network, announced a multi-year strategic partnership with Google. The Financial Times, the business magazine Forbes and the news site Axios are among the new participants, joining The Washington Post and others that signed up when the programme began last year.

How it works

Each participating publisher licenses Google to use its articles. Google News will display summaries of articles on each publication's dedicated page, and the company will begin a trial of audio news, in which users can choose the topics they want to hear about.

A long dispute

News organisations have complained for years that technology companies profit from their journalism without paying for it. The rise of AI chatbots and AI-generated summaries in search results has sharpened the complaint, because readers can get answers without visiting the publishers' websites, which reduces their advertising and subscription income.

Some publishers have sued AI developers for using their articles to train models without permission, while others have chosen to sign licensing deals. Google's programme falls into the second category.

What publishers gain

For publishers, licensing offers a new source of revenue and some control over how their work appears in AI products. Critics within the industry worry that it makes them dependent on a handful of technology companies and that the payments may not make up for lost traffic.

Japan's publishers

Japanese news organisations have also been debating how to respond to AI. Several have called for rules requiring AI companies to obtain permission and pay for the use of articles, and some have objected to AI search services summarising their reporting.

Japan's copyright law is relatively permissive about the use of copyrighted works for machine learning, which has made the question of payment a matter of negotiation rather than legal right in many cases.

Honda Shows a Remote-Controlled 'Avatar Robot' at CEATEC That Inherits ASIMO's Technology and Can Turn a Screw With Human-Like Dexterity

The operator wears goggles and gloves; the robot mirrors every pinch and twist; the electronics show at Makuhari Messe closes today

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Honda is demonstrating a robot that can be operated remotely as its user's alter ego at CEATEC 2026, the information technology exhibition at Makuhari Messe in Chiba that closes today.

The Honda Avatar Robot builds on the technology of ASIMO, the humanoid robot that Honda unveiled in 2000 and that became one of the best-known robots in the world. The company says its new machine combines hands as dexterous as a person's with a firm, powerful grip.

The demonstration

At the show, the robot assembles parts for motorcycles. Its operator wears goggles and gloves. When the operator pinches a screw, the robot's hand pinches in the same way; when the operator moves, the robot follows, inserting the screw straight into its hole and tightening it with a screwdriver.

Why avatars

Remote-controlled robots of this kind are being developed for work that is dangerous, physically demanding or hard to staff, from disaster response and maintenance at power plants to care work and assembly lines. A skilled worker could, in principle, operate a robot in a distant factory or a disaster zone without travelling there.

Japan's shrinking workforce makes such technology especially attractive. Companies in manufacturing, logistics and services are struggling to hire, and remote operation could let older or disabled workers do jobs that would otherwise be physically beyond them.

ASIMO's legacy

Honda ended development of ASIMO in 2018 and retired the robot from public demonstrations in 2022. The company said at the time that the technology would live on in other products, and the avatar robot is one of the fruits of that research.

The show

CEATEC, held each October, has shifted in recent years from consumer electronics towards technologies for society as a whole, including AI, robotics and mobility. Hundreds of companies and organisations are exhibiting this year.

Honda has not said when the avatar robot might be commercialised. For visitors at Makuhari, the sight of a machine copying a human hand with such precision was a glimpse of how factories and workplaces might change.

The Week in Technology

By the Technology Desk

LEAP SECOND: Abolished by the General Conference on Weights and Measures; a leap hour system starts on May 20, 2027.

SOURCENEXT: Up to about 22.5 million customer records may have leaked; card details were not included.

BURGER KING JAPAN: About 11.18 million app members' records leaked through unauthorised access between October 2 and 7.

MEDLEY: The At-Link hospital system was suspended after an intrusion, affecting 787 medical institutions.

COMIC CMOA: NTT Solmare suspended its manga store after suspected unauthorised access to its servers.

ARCADIA: The hacked disaster-mail service has been restored; 192 local governments reported suspensions or possible leaks.

APPS AS A WAY IN: NICT says attackers analysed Android apps, possibly with AI, to find weaknesses in the servers behind them.

GOOGLE: More than 400 news organisations join a programme that pays for articles used in AI features; CNN signs a multi-year deal.

ANTHROPIC: Quarterly revenue up about 50 per cent to \$16.8 billion; a share listing is planned as early as November, the Financial Times reports.

DEEPSEEK: The Chinese chatbot suffered an outage on Thursday.

HONDA: A remote-controlled avatar robot that inherits ASIMO's technology is on show at CEATEC, which closes today.

MIZUHO: A three-month boot camp will turn sales and clerical staff into AI engineers from November.

1834: Burning a Pile of Obsolete Wooden Accounting Records Sets Fire to the Palace of Westminster and Destroys Most of It

The Exchequer's notched tally sticks, retired after centuries of use, were fed into the furnaces beneath the House of Lords; the flues overheated

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 16, 1834, a fire destroyed most of the old Palace of Westminster in London, the medieval home of the English and later British Parliament. It was started not by an enemy or an accident of war, but by a clear-out of old records.

For centuries the Exchequer, the royal treasury, had kept accounts with tally sticks. A payment was recorded by cutting notches of different sizes into a stick of hazel or willow, which was then split

lengthways. The payer kept one half and the Exchequer the other; because no two sticks split in the same way, the halves could be matched to prove a transaction.

An obsolete system

The tally system was abolished in the late 18th century, but the old practice lingered until 1826, and huge quantities of sticks remained in storage. In October 1834 officials ordered them to be burned in the stoves that heated the House of Lords.

Workmen fed the sticks into the furnaces all day. The flues overheated, and in the early evening the fire broke out. By the next morning most of the palace was in ruins. Westminster Hall, built in the 11th century, survived, thanks in part to firefighters who concentrated on saving it.

A spectacle

Huge crowds gathered along the Thames to watch. Among them was the painter J.M.W. Turner, whose paintings of the blaze became some of his best-known works.

The new palace

The design competition that followed was won by the architect Charles Barry, who worked with Augustus Pugin on the Gothic Revival interiors. Their building, with its clock tower housing the bell known as Big Ben, is the Palace of Westminster that stands today.

A lesson about legacy

The story has been retold ever since as a parable about old systems. Charles Dickens mocked it two decades later as a monument to official stubbornness: a government that clung to notched sticks long after paper and pen were available, and then burned down its own Parliament getting rid of them.

Modern organisations wrestling with ageing computer systems and archives of old data still face versions of the same problem: what to keep, what to migrate and how to dispose of the rest without causing damage.

Yesterday's editorial argued that the FORTRAN programming language has outlived those who tried to bury it. The tally sticks are a reminder that retiring a system can be as hazardous as keeping it.

1843: Walking Beside a Dublin Canal, William Rowan Hamilton Discovers Quaternions and Carves the Formula Into a Bridge

The four-part numbers puzzled mathematicians for a century; today they steer spacecraft, animate video games and tell smartphones which way up they are

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 16, 1843, the Irish mathematician William Rowan Hamilton was walking with his wife along the Royal Canal in Dublin, on his way to a meeting of the Royal Irish Academy, when the answer to a problem he had worked on for years came to him.

He had been trying to extend complex numbers, which can describe rotations in a flat plane, to three dimensions. The breakthrough was to use not three components but four: a real number plus three imaginary units, which he called i, j and k.

Carved in stone

The rule that made it work was i squared equals j squared equals k squared equals ijk equals minus one. Hamilton was so struck by it that he took out a penknife and carved it into the stone of Broom Bridge, which carries a road over the canal.

The carving has long since worn away, but a plaque marks the spot, and mathematicians and students walk the route each year on October 16 in his honour.

A strange algebra

Quaternions had a peculiar property: multiplying them in a different order gives a different answer, so i times j is not the same as j times i. That broke one of the basic rules of arithmetic and opened the way to modern abstract algebra.

Hamilton devoted much of the rest of his life to quaternions. Later physicists largely replaced them with vector notation, which was simpler for many calculations, and for a time they seemed a curiosity.

A comeback in computing

Quaternions returned with the computer age. They are an efficient and stable way to represent rotations in three dimensions, avoiding a problem called gimbal lock that can afflict other methods when two

TECHNOLOGY

axes line up.

Today they are used to control the orientation of satellites and spacecraft, to move robot arms, to animate characters in video games and films, and to combine the readings of the motion sensors in smartphones and drones. Satellites of every kind, including those that watch typhoons such as Champi, commonly rely on such calculations to keep their instruments pointed in the right direction.

A walk by a canal 183 years ago is quietly at work in most of the devices in our pockets.

TECHNOLOGY

1846: "Gentlemen, This Is No Humbug": A Public Operation Under Ether in Boston Launches the Age of Surgical Anaesthesia

Dentist William Morton put a patient to sleep at Massachusetts General Hospital; a Japanese surgeon had operated under herbal anaesthesia four decades earlier
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 16, 1846, in a steeply tiered operating theatre at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, a dentist named William T.G. Morton held a glass inhaler to the face of a young man named Edward Gilbert Abbott and asked him to breathe in the vapour of ether.

When Abbott was unconscious, the surgeon John Collins Warren removed a tumour from his neck. The patient did not cry out. When it was over, Warren is said to have turned to the doctors watching and declared: "Gentlemen, this is no humbug."

Surgery before anaesthesia

Until then, surgery was a desperate measure performed on conscious patients held down by assistants. Speed was everything; the best surgeons could amputate a leg in less than a minute. Many patients died of shock or infection, and many more refused operations altogether.

News of the Boston demonstration spread rapidly across the United States and Europe, and within months ether, and soon chloroform, were being used in operating rooms around the world. The physician and writer Oliver Wendell Holmes suggested the word anaesthesia to describe the new state.

Disputed credit

Morton was not the first to use ether. A Georgia doctor, Crawford Long, had removed a growth from a patient under ether in 1842 but did not publish his results until later. Morton, Long and others spent years fighting over who deserved the credit.

Japan's pioneer

In Japan, the surgeon Hanaoka Seishu of Kii Province, in present-day Wakayama Prefecture, had performed an operation for breast cancer under general anaesthesia in 1804, more than 40 years before Morton. He used a herbal preparation he called tsusensan, developed over many years of experiments in which his mother and wife took part.

Because Japan was largely closed to the outside world at the time, his achievement remained little known abroad for generations.

The Ether Dome

The Boston operating theatre, now known as the Ether Dome, still stands at Massachusetts General Hospital and is preserved as a historic site.

Modern anaesthesia, delivered by specialists who monitor breathing, heart rate and blood oxygen, has made operations that would once have been unthinkable routine. Its history began with a patient who did not scream.

TECHNOLOGY

1923: Walt and Roy Disney Found a Small Cartoon Studio in Los Angeles That Will Pioneer Sound, Colour and the Animated Feature Film

A contract for short films about a girl named Alice was the start; Steamboat Willie, Technicolor and Snow White followed
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 16, 1923, Walt Disney, a 21-year-old cartoonist who had recently arrived in Los Angeles from Kansas City, signed a contract with a New York film distributor to produce a series of short films called the Alice Comedies. With his older brother Roy, he founded the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio to make them.

The Alice films combined a live-action girl with

animated characters. They were modestly successful, enough to keep the brothers in business.

Sound

The studio's first great leap was technological. In 1928 it released Steamboat Willie, starring a mouse named Mickey, one of the first cartoons with a fully synchronised soundtrack, in which music and sound effects matched the action on screen. It made Mickey Mouse a star.

Colour

In 1932 the studio released Flowers and Trees, the first commercially released film made in Technicolor's full three-colour process, and it won the first Academy Award for an animated short. Disney had secured exclusive use of the process for cartoons for a period.

Depth

For its later films the studio developed the multiplane camera, which photographed layers of artwork placed at different distances from the lens, giving animated scenes an illusion of depth.

The first feature

In 1937 Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs became the first full-length animated feature produced in the United States with traditional hand-drawn cels. Many in Hollywood had predicted it would fail. It was a huge success.

Japan

The company has long had a special relationship with Japan. Tokyo Disneyland, operated by Oriental Land under licence, opened in Urayasu, Chiba Prefecture, in 1983, the first Disney park outside the United States. This week Oriental Land announced that Japan's first Disney cruise ship will be named Disney Imagination.

Japanese animation, meanwhile, developed its own traditions, from the work of Osamu Tezuka to the films of Studio Ghibli, and Disney and Japanese studios have influenced each other for decades.

From a two-man studio, Disney grew into one of the world's largest media and entertainment companies. Its early willingness to bet on new technology was a large part of the reason.

TECHNOLOGY

1962: Kennedy Is Shown Spy-Plane Photographs of Soviet Missile Sites in Cuba, and Thirteen Days of Nuclear Crisis Begin

A U-2 flight two days earlier had photographed the launch sites; analysts at the National Photographic Interpretation Center spotted the missiles
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On the morning of October 16, 1962, McGeorge Bundy, President John F. Kennedy's national security adviser, went to the president's bedroom in the White House with news that would bring the world closer to nuclear war than at any time before or since.

Photographs taken by an American U-2 reconnaissance aircraft over western Cuba on October 14 showed that the Soviet Union was installing medium-range ballistic missiles capable of reaching much of the United States.

The flight

The U-2, flown by Major Richard Heyser, passed over the island at very high altitude, beyond the reach of most anti-aircraft weapons, and its cameras captured thousands of frames of the ground below.

The film was flown to Washington and examined by analysts at the National Photographic Interpretation Center, headed by Arthur Lundahl. On October 15 they identified the tell-tale layout of Soviet missile sites near San Cristobal, including launchers, missile transporters and fuel trucks.

The art of reading photographs

Photo interpretation was a demanding craft. Analysts worked with magnifiers and stereoscopes, comparing images taken from slightly different angles to see objects in three dimensions, and drew on knowledge of how Soviet forces laid out their equipment.

Thirteen days

Kennedy convened his advisers that morning. After days of debate he chose a naval blockade, which he called a quarantine, rather than air strikes, and announced it on television on October 22. The crisis ended on October 28, when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles in return for an American pledge not to invade Cuba; the

United States also quietly agreed to remove its missiles from Turkey.

From aircraft to satellites

The crisis showed the value of aerial reconnaissance, which was already moving into space. The first American spy satellite programme, Corona, had returned its first film capsule from orbit in 1960, and satellites eventually took over much of the work done by aircraft.

Today satellite imagery is available commercially to governments, companies and the public, and is used to track everything from troop movements to typhoon damage and illegal fishing.

TECHNOLOGY

1964: China Explodes Its First Atomic Bomb at Lop Nur, in the Middle of the Tokyo Olympics, Becoming the Fifth Nuclear Power

The uranium device, code-named 596, yielded about 22 kilotons; fallout was detected in Japan as the Games went on
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 16, 1964, China detonated its first nuclear weapon at the Lop Nur test site in the desert of Xinjiang, in the far west of the country. With the explosion, China joined the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and France as a nuclear-armed state.

The device, mounted on a tower, used uranium-235 and an implosion design, and produced an explosive force estimated at about 22 kilotons, comparable to the bomb dropped on Nagasaki.

Code name 596

The project was code-named 596, a reference to June 1959, the month in which the Soviet Union, once China's partner in nuclear research, told Beijing it would not supply a prototype bomb. Soviet technical aid was withdrawn entirely in 1960, and Chinese scientists completed the work on their own.

The timing

The test came during the Tokyo Olympics, which ran from October 10 to 24, and in the same week that Nikita Khrushchev was removed from power in Moscow. China announced the test the same day and declared that it would never be the first to use nuclear weapons, a pledge it has repeated since.

Fallout over Japan

Radioactive fallout from Chinese atmospheric tests was detected in Japan in the following days and years, and measurements of radioactivity in rain became a regular part of news reports. China continued testing in the atmosphere until 1980 and underground until 1996.

Japan's response

The test sharpened debate in Japan about its own security. Prime Minister Eisaku Sato, who took office weeks later, set out the three non-nuclear principles in 1967: not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons. Japan has relied on the American nuclear umbrella for deterrence ever since.

The arsenal today

China's nuclear arsenal remained relatively small for decades but has grown rapidly in recent years, according to American and independent estimates, and Beijing has built new missile silos in its western deserts.

Japan's government is currently debating nuclear-powered submarines and the future of the non-nuclear principles, questions that trace back in part to the explosion in the desert 62 years ago today.

TECHNOLOGY

1975: GOES-1 Is Launched, the First of America's Geostationary Weather Satellites; Japan's First Himawari Follows Two Years Later

Satellites parked 36,000 km above the equator gave forecasters a continuous view of storms; Himawari has watched over Japan's typhoons since 1977
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 16, 1975, a Delta rocket lifted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, carrying GOES-1, the first of the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites that the United States has used to watch the weather ever since.

A geostationary satellite orbits about 36,000 kilometres above the equator, completing one orbit a day, so it appears to hang motionless over one spot on the Earth. From there it can photograph the same

broad area again and again, allowing forecasters to watch clouds and storms move and develop.

From pictures to forecasts

Earlier weather satellites, starting with TIROS-1 in 1960, orbited much lower and passed over any given place only a couple of times a day. Geostationary satellites provided something new: a continuous view of an entire ocean basin, ideal for tracking hurricanes and typhoons from their birth far out at sea.

GOES-1 followed two experimental Synchronous Meteorological Satellites launched in 1974 and 1975, and became part of an international network of geostationary weather satellites planned under the Global Atmospheric Research Programme.

Himawari

Japan's contribution to that network was the Geostationary Meteorological Satellite, launched from Cape Canaveral on an American Delta rocket in July 1977 and nicknamed Himawari, or sunflower. Positioned over the equator south of Japan, it gave the Japan Meteorological Agency its own eye on the western Pacific.

Its successors have carried the name ever since. Himawari-8, launched in 2014, and Himawari-9, launched in 2016, take images of the full disc of the Earth every ten minutes and of Japan even more often, in many wavelengths. Himawari-9 has been the agency's operational satellite since December 2022.

Watching Champi

It is Himawari's images that let forecasters estimate the strength of Typhoon No. 30, Champi, as it crosses the empty ocean near the Marshall Islands, far from any weather station. The images are also shared freely with weather services across Asia and the Pacific.

The next generation

The agency plans to launch Himawari-10 later this decade, with new instruments to measure the temperature and moisture of the atmosphere in three dimensions, which should improve forecasts of heavy rain and typhoon intensity.

Half a century after GOES-1, no typhoon goes unseen.

TECHNOLOGY

1975: A Three-Year-Old Girl in Bangladesh Becomes the Last Person Known to Catch the Deadliest Form of Smallpox Naturally

Rahima Banu recovered; within five years the disease that had killed hundreds of millions was declared eradicated, under a programme later led by a Japanese doctor
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 16, 1975, Rahima Banu, a three-year-old girl living on Bhola Island in southern Bangladesh, fell ill with smallpox. She was the last person in the world known to have contracted variola major, the deadliest form of the disease, from natural transmission.

Health workers isolated her, guarded her house and vaccinated everyone living nearby to stop the virus from spreading. She recovered.

A killer through history

Smallpox killed perhaps 300 million people in the 20th century alone and left many survivors scarred or blind. In 1796 the English doctor Edward Jenner showed that inoculation with cowpox protected against it, the beginning of vaccination.

The eradication campaign

In 1967 the World Health Organisation launched an intensified campaign to eliminate smallpox worldwide. Rather than vaccinating entire populations, teams used a strategy called surveillance and containment: finding every case quickly, isolating it and vaccinating the people around it, which broke the chains of transmission.

The campaign relied on rewards for reporting cases. The girl who reported Rahima Banu's illness received one.

The end of a disease

The last natural case of the milder form, variola minor, was a hospital cook in Merca, Somalia, in October 1977. The World Health Assembly declared smallpox eradicated in May 1980. It remains the only human disease to have been wiped out.

TECHNOLOGY

A Japanese leader

The final years of the programme were led by Isao Arita, a Japanese doctor who headed the WHO's smallpox eradication unit from 1977 and oversaw the work of certifying that the disease was gone.

Lessons for today

The campaign's methods, of rapid detection, isolation and targeted vaccination, have been adapted for other diseases, including polio, which the world has come close to eliminating but has not yet finished. Samples of the smallpox virus are still kept in two high-security laboratories, in the United States and Russia.

Rahima Banu grew up, married and had children of her own.

TECHNOLOGY

1998: Jon Postel, Who Edited the Internet's Rule Books for 28 Years and Ran Its Address System, Dies at 55

His robustness principle, 'be conservative in what you do, be liberal in what you accept', still guides how network software is written

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 16, 1998, Jon Postel, one of the people most responsible for the way the internet works, died in Santa Monica, California, of complications following heart surgery. He was 55.

Few people outside computing knew his name. But for nearly three decades he quietly managed two functions on which the whole network depended.

The rule books

From 1969, when the ARPANET, the internet's forerunner, was being built, Postel edited the Requests for Comments, the series of documents in which the network's technical standards are proposed, debated and published. He worked on many of the most important ones himself, including the specifications of the Internet Protocol and the protocol for sending email.

The numbers

He also ran the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority from the University of Southern California's Information Sciences Institute, keeping track of the numbers and names that let computers find one another, including the allocation of internet addresses and the top-level domains such as .jp.

For years these functions rested largely on the judgment of one man, financed by American government research contracts. As the internet became a commercial and global network, that arrangement could not last.

Postel's law

He is best remembered for a principle he set down in the specification of the Transmission Control Protocol: "Be conservative in what you do, be liberal in what you accept from others." Known as Postel's law, or the robustness principle, it told programmers to follow standards strictly when sending data but to tolerate small errors when receiving it, so that imperfect systems could still talk to each other.

Engineers have since debated whether too much tolerance creates security holes, but the principle helped the early internet grow by making it forgiving.

ICANN

In the year of his death, the American government moved to hand his duties to a new private non-profit organisation, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN, which took over the address and domain name functions.

Many of the systems in today's news, from email to the servers attacked in this week's data breaches, run on standards that passed across his desk.

TECHNOLOGY

2003: Apple Releases iTunes for Windows, Opening Its Music Store and the iPod to the Vast Majority of Computer Users

The song store had launched for Mac users in April at 99 cents a track; Japan's version followed in 2005

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 16, 2003, Apple released a version of its iTunes software for Microsoft Windows, extending its online music store and its iPod music player to the large majority of personal computer users who did not own a Mac.

The iTunes Music Store had opened in the United

States in April 2003, selling songs for 99 cents each with the backing of the major record companies, which had been fighting illegal file-sharing services such as Napster. At first it was available only on Apple's own computers.

A turning point

The Windows version was a turning point. The iPod, launched in 2001, had already been made to work with Windows, but without access to the store its appeal was limited. With iTunes for Windows, anyone with a PC could buy music legally, organise their collection and load it onto an iPod.

Apple said within days that the Windows software had been downloaded more than a million times. Sales of the iPod soared over the following years, transforming Apple's business and paving the way for the iPhone in 2007.

The music industry

The store showed that people would pay for digital music if buying it was easy and cheap enough, and it changed how music was sold, from albums on discs to individual tracks. It also gave Apple considerable power over the industry's pricing.

Japan

The store came to Japan in August 2005. The Japanese music market, dominated by CD sales and rental shops, was slower than many others to shift to digital downloads, and CDs remained popular for years longer than in America.

What came next

Downloads were themselves overtaken by streaming. Apple launched its own streaming service in 2015, and in 2019 it began replacing iTunes on the Mac with separate apps for music, podcasts and video, although iTunes for Windows lived on for longer.

Today, most music is streamed rather than owned. But the decision to put iTunes on Windows remains one of the most consequential moves in the history of consumer technology: a company famous for its closed systems opened its doors to its rival's customers, and won.

TECHNOLOGY

October 16 in Technology and Science

By the Data Desk

1714: Birth of Giovanni Arduino, the Italian geologist who divided the rocks of the Earth's crust into primary, secondary and tertiary groups, a forerunner of the modern geological time scale.

1803: Birth of Robert Stephenson, the English engineer who built the Rocket locomotive with his father and the Britannia Bridge over the Menai Strait.

1834: Burning of obsolete tally sticks sets fire to the Palace of Westminster.

1843: William Rowan Hamilton discovers quaternions beside a Dublin canal.

1846: The first public demonstration of surgery under ether, at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

1882: The New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad, known as the Nickel Plate Road, begins operating.

1916: Margaret Sanger opens the first family planning clinic in the United States, in Brooklyn.

1918: Birth of Abraham Nemeth, the blind American mathematician who devised a braille code for mathematics.

1923: Walt and Roy Disney found their cartoon studio in Los Angeles.

1930: Birth of John Polkinghorne, the British particle physicist who later became an Anglican priest and wrote on science and religion.

1939: Spitfires of No. 603 Squadron intercept the first German air raid on Britain of the Second World War, over the Firth of Forth.

1944: Birth of Elizabeth Loftus, the American psychologist whose research showed how easily memories can be distorted.

1962: President Kennedy is shown U-2 photographs of Soviet missile sites in Cuba.

1964: China tests its first atomic bomb at Lop Nur.

1975: GOES-1, the first American geostationary operational weather satellite, is launched; Rahima Banu becomes the last known natural case of variola major smallpox.

1995: The Skye Bridge opens, linking the Isle of

Skye to the Scottish mainland.

1998: Death of Jon Postel, editor of the internet's Requests for Comments and head of its numbers authority.

1999: The magnitude 7.1 Hector Mine earthquake strikes the Mojave Desert in southern California.

2003: Apple releases iTunes for Windows.

2016: Death of Calvin Godlieb, known as Kelly, the Canadian computer scientist who pioneered computing at the University of Toronto from the 1940s.

SOCIETY

Hitachiomiya in Ibaraki Becomes the Fifth Place to Begin a Literature Survey for Nuclear Waste Disposal, and the First on Honshu

The first stage of a process expected to take about 20 years brings up to 2 billion yen in subsidies; none of the four earlier sites has moved on to the next stage

By the Society Desk

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization of Japan said on Thursday that it had begun a literature survey in Hitachiomiya, Ibaraki Prefecture, the first step in selecting a final disposal site for high-level radioactive waste from nuclear power stations.

Hitachiomiya is the fifth municipality in Japan to accept such a survey and the first on Honshu, the main island. The minister of economy, trade and industry approved a change to the organisation's business plan, needed to start the survey, the same day.

What the survey involves

A literature survey is a desk study. Researchers analyse geological maps, academic papers and other existing records to look for features such as active faults and volcanoes that would make an area unsuitable for burying waste deep underground.

A municipality that accepts the survey receives up to 2 billion yen in subsidies from the national government.

A long road

If the literature survey finds an area potentially suitable, it can be followed by an overview survey, involving boreholes and other fieldwork, and then a detailed survey with underground facilities. The government has said it will not move to the next stage against the wishes of the local mayor and the prefectural governor. The whole process is expected to take about 20 years.

Earlier surveys

The four earlier literature surveys were in the town of Suttsu and the village of Kamoenai in Hokkaido, the town of Genkai in Saga Prefecture, and Minamitorishima, a remote island belonging to Ogasawara village in Tokyo. None has yet moved on to the overview survey.

The surveys in Suttsu and Kamoenai, which began in 2020, were the first. Genkai, which accepted its survey in 2024, was the first town hosting a nuclear power station to do so.

In Hokkaido, the prefectural governor has said he opposes moving to the next stage, which illustrates the difficulty the process faces.

Why a site is needed

Japan's nuclear power stations have produced large quantities of spent fuel. The government's policy is to reprocess it to recover uranium and plutonium, leaving highly radioactive liquid waste that is turned into glass and must be isolated from the environment for tens of thousands of years. Japan plans to bury it more than 300 metres underground.

Finland is building the world's first such repository, at Olkiluoto, and Sweden and France are also well advanced. Japan has been searching for a site for more than two decades.

Local debate

Such surveys have divided opinion in the communities that accepted them. Supporters point to the subsidies and the chance to help solve a national problem; opponents worry that accepting the first stage could make it hard to refuse later ones. Hitachiomiya is a largely mountainous city in northern Ibaraki.

In the earlier survey areas, the organisation has held regular meetings with residents to explain its work.

SOCIETY

Around Japan: A Flightless Rail's Frozen Sperm, the Oldest Fossil of a Living Butterfly, and New Rules on Minutes in Kobe

By the Society Desk

Short reports from around the country.

Kyushu

JR Kyushu's president, Yoji Komiya, said on Thursday that multiple overhead line installations had been damaged between Kumamoto and Shin-Yatsushiro, where Kyushu Shinkansen services were suspended, and that the company would investigate the cause without ruling out an effect of the Kumamoto earthquake in July, which hit that section hard.

Okinawa

A team including researchers from Osaka Metropolitan University has frozen the sperm of the Okinawa rail, the endangered flightless bird of the forests of northern Okinawa, and used it for artificial insemination. No chicks hatched, but embryos developed until just before hatching. The bird's numbers have recovered to about 1,500 thanks partly to the control of mongooses, and frozen sperm could help maintain genetic diversity.

Hyogo

A butterfly fossil found more than 30 years ago in rock about 2.5 million years old in Shinonsen, Hyogo Prefecture, is the oldest known fossil of a butterfly species still living today, the town said. A Keio University team identified it as a species of white butterfly now found in northern and north-eastern China but not in Japan. The previous record was a fossil about 300,000 years old found in Nasushiobara, Tochigi Prefecture.

Kobe

Kobe now requires staff to obtain committee members' confirmation when preparing the minutes of expert councils, after the city deleted members' remarks from minutes without permission. Mayor Kizo Hisamoto called the city's handling extremely inappropriate.

Nagoya

The Nagoya District Court rejected a damages suit by a girl and her father against the operator of a private elementary school, whose teacher had marked with a flower-shaped stamp of approval a diary in which the girl wrote that classmates had told her to die. The court found that the school's conduct did not amount to a tort.

Miyazaki

Yoshimi Sawamura, 47, a tanka poet born in Gifu and living in Kyotanabe, Kyoto Prefecture, won the 31st Wakayama Bokusui Prize, named after the poet from Miyazaki Prefecture, for her collection Ryu no Nemutteita Ato, or Traces Where the Dragon Slept, the organisers said. The tanka poet Machi Tawara was among the judges.

Tokyo

Lawyers for Japanese victims of MRI International, an American asset management company that collected about 130 billion yen from some 8,700 people, said they would end their work after 13 and a half years now that about 5.4 billion yen recovered by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission has been paid out. Payments began in late August. The team's leader, Hiroshi Yamaguchi, urged the Financial Services Agency to create a system for recovering companies' assets for victims, which Japan lacks.

Childbirth terms

An academic society and the government are coordinating a review of the medical term ijo bunben, or abnormal childbirth, out of consideration for the emotional burden it places on mothers, the Asahi Shimbun reported.

Supreme Court

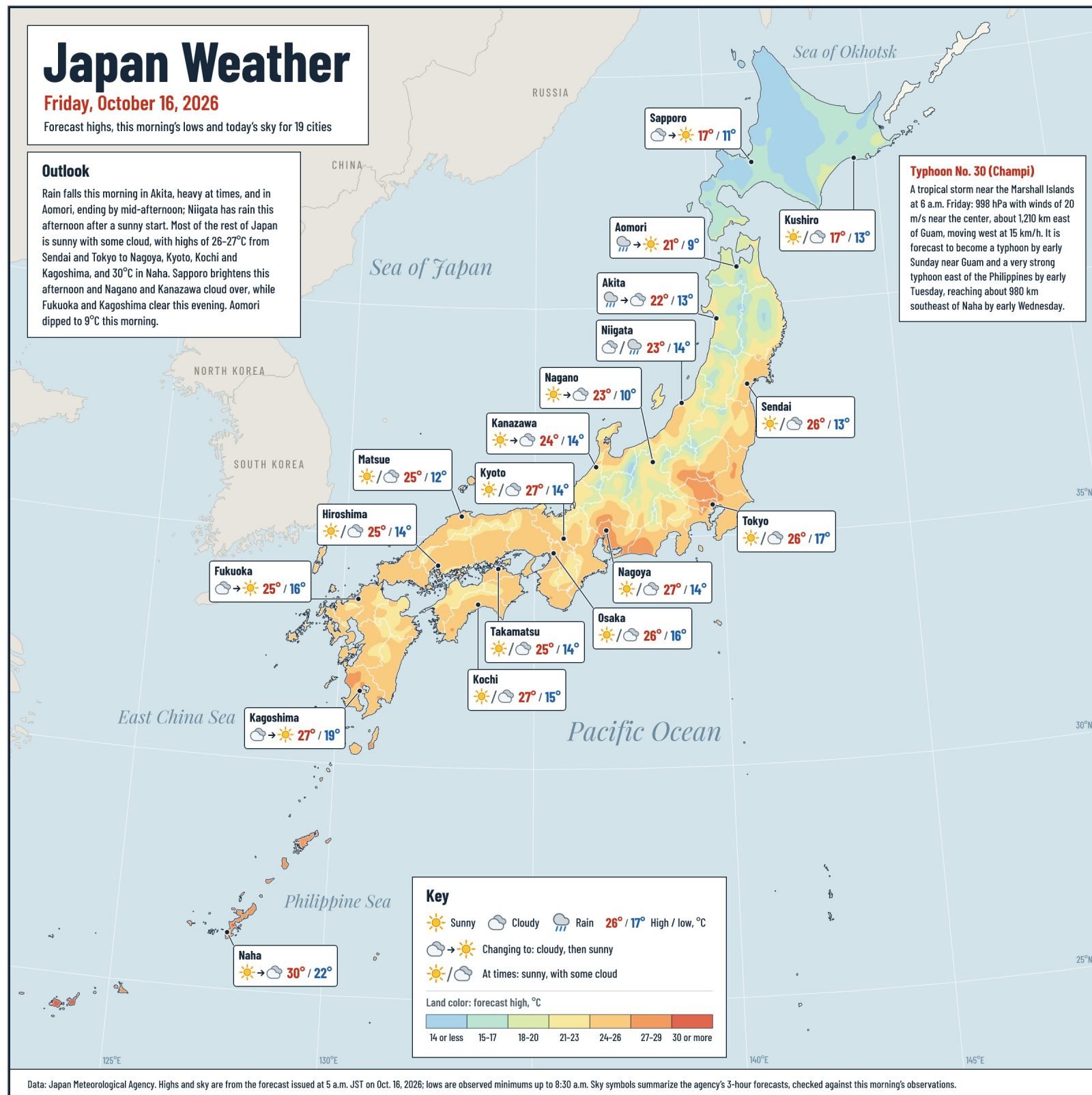
The Supreme Court upheld an award of 1.1 million yen to a former lawyer whom a Yokohama prosecutor insulted during questioning, but did not rule on his claim that his right to remain silent had been violated.

WEATHER & SOCIETY



26°C

Low 17°C this morning · Sunny with some cloud · Typhoon No. 30, Champi, forms near the Marshall Islands



TODAY'S HIGHS AND LOWS — 19 CITIES

Forecast highs and this morning's lows from today's weather map, °C, north to south. An arrow: the sky changes. A stroke: at times.

City	Current Temp	Forecast Temp
Sapporo	11°	17°
Kushiro	13°	17°
Aomori	9°	21°
Akita	13°	22°
Sendai	13°	26°
Niigata	14°	23°
Nagano	10°	23°
Kanazawa	14°	24°
Tokyo	17°	26°
Nagoya	14°	27°
Kyoto	14°	27°
Osaka	16°	26°
Matsue	12°	25°
Hiroshima	14°	25°
Takamatsu	14°	25°
Kochi	15°	27°
Fukuoka	16°	25°
Kagoshima	19°	27°
Naha	22°	30°

TODAY'S WEATHER

A warm, mostly sunny autumn day for most of the country. The map, for 19 cities, shows sunshine with some cloud from Kagoshima and Kochi to Osaka, Tokyo and Sendai, with highs of 26 to 27 degrees from Sendai and Tokyo to Nagoya, Kyoto, Kochi and Kagoshima, and 30 in Naha, the only city in the warmest band. The Sea of Japan side of the north is the exception: rain falls this morning in Akita, heavy at times, and in Aomori, ending by mid-afternoon, and Niigata has rain this afternoon after a sunny start. Sapporo brightens this afternoon, Nagano and Kanazawa cloud over, and Fukuoka and Kagoshima clear this evening. Aomori dipped to 9 degrees this morning, the coldest reading on the map, and the gap between morning and afternoon reaches 13 degrees in Sendai, Nagano, Nagoya, Kyoto and Matsue. Tokyo is sunny with some cloud, with a high of 26 after a low of 17.

REGIONAL FORECASTS

Hokkaido: Sapporo cloudy, then sunny, 17/11; Kushiro sunny with some cloud, 17/13, the coolest highs on the map with Sapporo. Tohoku: Aomori rain, then sunny, 21/9, the coldest morning on the map; Akita rain, then cloudy, 22/13, the rain heavy at times this morning; Sendai sunny with some cloud, 26/13. Niigata and the Sea of Japan coast: Niigata cloudy with rain at times, 23/14, the rain arriving this afternoon after a sunny start; Kanazawa sunny, then cloudy, 24/14. Inland: Nagano sunny, then cloudy, 23/10. Kanto: Tokyo sunny with some cloud, 26/17. Tokai: Nagoya sunny with some cloud, 27/14. Kansai: Kyoto sunny with some cloud, 27/14; Osaka sunny with some cloud, 26/16. Chugoku: Matsue sunny with some cloud, 25/12; Hiroshima sunny with some cloud, 25/14. Shikoku: Takamatsu sunny with some cloud, 25/14; Kochi sunny with some cloud, 27/15. Kyushu: Fukuoka cloudy, then sunny, 25/16; Kagoshima cloudy, then sunny, 27/19, the mildest morning on the main islands. Okinawa: Naha sunny, then cloudy, 30/22, the warmest on the map by day and by night. On Thursday inland parts of San'in had the coldest morning of the season, with 6 degrees in Iinan, Shimane Prefecture, and Nichinan, Tottori Prefecture.

THE TYPHOON

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, formed at 3 p.m. on Thursday, the first season to reach 30 storms since 2013. At 6 a.m. today it was a tropical storm in the

Marshall Islands area at 11.4 degrees north, 155.7 degrees east, about 1,210 km east of Guam, with a central pressure of 998 hPa and maximum winds of 20 metres a second, gusting to 30, moving west at 15 km/h. Gale-force winds extend 330 km to the west and 280 km to the east. It is forecast to become a severe tropical storm this evening, a strong typhoon near the Mariana Islands by early Sunday with a pressure of 965 hPa, and a very strong typhoon east of the Philippines by early Tuesday, reaching about 980 km south-east of Naha by 3 a.m. Wednesday at 940 hPa, still heading west-north-west. Guam lies inside the area that could have storm-force winds by 3 a.m. Sunday and Saipan by 3 a.m. Monday. Its path beyond the Marianas is highly uncertain; Weathernews says it could approach the south-western islands next week or later, and that physics-based and AI forecasts show different trends.

SEA AND COAST

Champi is far from Japan and has no effect on the coasts today. Travellers due to fly to Guam or Saipan this weekend should check with their airline. Rain on the Sea of Japan side of northern Tohoku, heavy at times in Akita this morning, eases this afternoon. Emergencies at sea: coast guard, 118.

THE DAYS AHEAD

A front is expected to bring rain to some areas from Saturday, according to Weathernews, so those with outdoor plans for the weekend should check the latest forecast. Large differences between morning and afternoon temperatures continue, and a layer that can be taken off is advisable. The typhoon is the main thing to watch next week: the official track forecast ends on Wednesday morning south-east of Naha, and the Japan Meteorological Agency's forecasts at www.jma.go.jp will be updated through the weekend.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET

Tokyo: sunrise 5:47 a.m., sunset 5:06 p.m.; Osaka: sunrise 6:03 a.m., sunset 5:23 p.m.; Sapporo: sunrise 5:48 a.m., sunset 4:52 p.m.; Fukuoka: sunrise 6:23 a.m., sunset 5:45 p.m.; Naha: sunrise 6:28 a.m., sunset 6:01 p.m.; all times calculated for Friday, October 16. A waxing crescent moon, less than a week old, can be seen in the south-west after sunset under clear skies across most of the country, and sets in mid-evening.

ABOUT THE MAP

The map cites the Japan Meteorological Agency: the highs and the sky are from the forecast issued at 5 a.m. today, and the lows are observed minimums up to 8:30 a.m. Its sky symbols summarise the agency's three-hourly forecasts, checked against this morning's observations. Two symbols joined by an arrow mean the sky changes during the day, as in Aomori, where rain gives way to sunshine; two separated by a stroke mean one sky with the other at times, as in Tokyo, sunny with some cloud, and Niigata, cloudy with rain at times. The colour of the land shows the forecast high in seven bands, from 14 degrees or less to 30 or more; today much of Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu falls in the band from 24 to 26, with patches of 27 to 29 in the Kanto plain, around Nagoya and in southern Kyushu, and Okinawa in the band of 30 or more. A panel at the upper right describes Typhoon No. 30, which lies far beyond the edge of the map. The chart beside the map sets out each city's low and high, north to south. The typhoon's forecast track appears with the typhoon map in the front section, and a United States map for today appears on the Weather Abroad page.

SOCIETY

Hokkaido Police Arrest Eight Men Over Phone Scams Run From a Base in Laos, After Their Transfer to Japan

Seven were among 101 people detained in a Laotian raid in June; they are suspected of taking 500,000 yen from a man in his 70s in Hakodate

By the Society Desk

Hokkaido prefectural police have arrested eight Japanese men aged 22 to 55 on suspicion of fraud, accusing them of making calls for a phone scam operation based in Laos.

Seven of the eight were among 101 people detained when Laotian authorities raided the base in June. Police believe all eight worked as callers, the members of such groups who make the phone calls, and are investigating who gave them their instructions.

The alleged crime

The men are suspected of conspiring between June 18 and 20 to defraud a man in his 70s in Hakodate. Posing as bank employees or police officers, they contacted him by telephone and through the

messaging app LINE, told him that a credit card in his name had been used in a crime, and took 500,000 yen in cash.

Police have not disclosed whether the suspects admit the allegations.

Back to Japan

Some of the men were flown back from Laos and arrived at New Chitose Airport on Thursday morning, where they were taken into custody.

Scam centres abroad

In recent years Japanese police have uncovered a series of fraud operations run from South-East Asia, including bases in Cambodia, the Philippines, Thailand and Myanmar, where callers target elderly people in Japan. Some of those recruited say they were lured abroad with promises of well-paid work and then forced to take part.

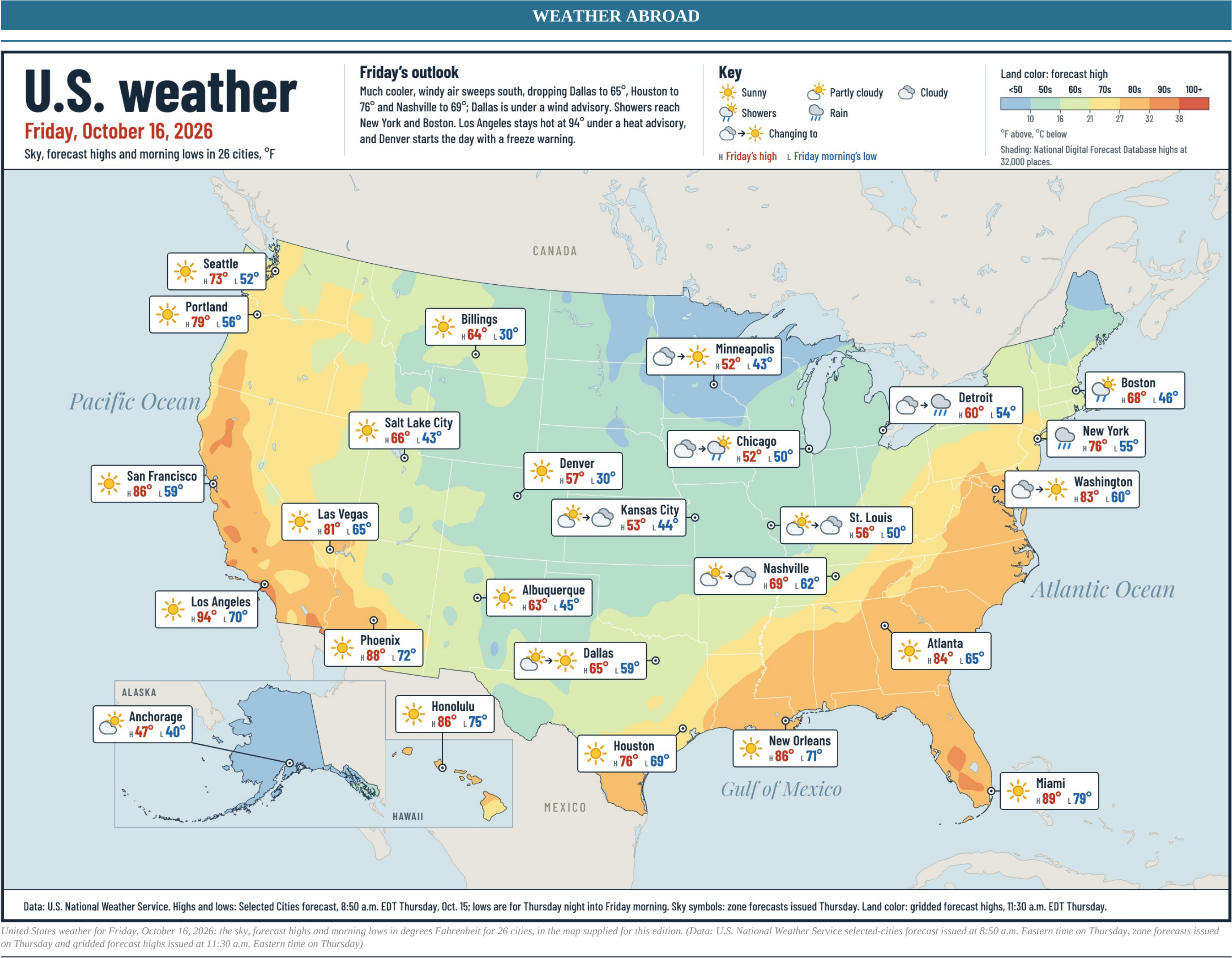
Last year 29 Japanese detained in Cambodia were flown home and arrested by a joint investigation team led by Aichi prefectural police. In July, 10 of them were arrested again on suspicion of organised fraud, accused of belonging to a group that investigators say once took 100 million yen in a single month. In 2023 four men accused of directing a fraud and robbery ring from an immigration detention centre in Manila were deported from the Philippines. Many callers are recruited through social media posts advertising well-paid 'dark part-time jobs', known as yami baito.

Special fraud, the term used in Japan for scams such as impersonating relatives, officials or bank staff, causes tens of billions of yen in losses every year, and the victims are overwhelmingly elderly.

Advice

Police repeatedly warn that genuine police officers and bank staff never ask people to hand over cash or cards, or to transfer money, over the phone. Anyone who receives such a call should hang up and consult the police on the consultation number #9110, or a family member.

Co-operation with foreign governments has become a key part of the effort to break up the groups, and Japanese police have stepped up exchanges with their counterparts in South-East Asia.



SOCIETY



The Onagawa nuclear power plant in Miyagi Prefecture. Tohoku Electric Power will shut down the No. 2 reactor around Saturday because a valve in equipment connected with the feedwater system is leaking about 0.2 tons of water an hour; the company says the surrounding environment is unaffected. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SOCIETY

Tohoku Electric Will Shut Down the Onagawa No. 2 Reactor Around Saturday Because a Feedwater Valve Is Leaking Water

About 0.2 tons an hour is escaping; trace amounts of radioactivity are being recovered and the company says the environment is unaffected; repairs should take about 10 days

By the Society Desk

Tohoku Electric Power will shut down the No. 2 reactor at its Onagawa nuclear power plant in Miyagi Prefecture around Saturday, October 17, because water is leaking from a valve in equipment connected with the reactor's feedwater system, the company said on Thursday.

The leaking water contains trace amounts of radioactive material, but it is being collected, and the company said there was no effect on the surrounding environment.

A slow leak

The volume of water in a drain tank that collects the leakage has been increasing since July. The company kept watch, but decided to shut the reactor down because the rate of leakage has risen slightly. About 0.2 tons of water is leaking an hour, it said.

After the shutdown, the company will inspect and replace parts. Restarting the reactor is expected to take about 10 days.

A troubled year

It will be the second unplanned halt this year. In May, two days after the reactor resumed generating power following a regular inspection, a worker saw low-level steam containing radioactive material rising from a drain tank in the turbine building, and the reactor was brought to a cold shutdown for checks. The company suspected a faulty valve.

In October 2025, a fault in a control rod drive

mechanism at the bottom of the reactor pressure vessel left one control rod temporarily impossible to move manually. The rod was replaced during the regular inspection that ended in June.

A symbolic reactor

Onagawa No. 2, with an output of 825,000 kilowatts, began commercial operation in 1995. When it restarted in October 2024, it became the first reactor at a plant in the area struck by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake to return to service, and the first boiling water reactor, the same type as those at the Fukushima Daiichi plant, to restart after the disaster.

The plant survived the 2011 tsunami, which was about 13 metres high there, because it had been built on high ground. It even served as an evacuation centre for local residents in the days after the disaster.

Anti-terrorism facilities

The reactor had faced a possible shutdown at the end of this year because construction of its anti-terrorism facilities, required under post-Fukushima safety rules, would not be finished by the deadline. The Nuclear Regulation Authority has decided to extend the deadline, allowing it to keep operating.

The plant is on the Oshika Peninsula, straddling the town of Onagawa and the city of Ishinomaki.

A cold start in places

Aomori was the coldest city on the map this morning, at 9 degrees, followed by Nagano at 10 and Sapporo at 11. On Thursday inland parts of the San'in region had their coldest morning of the season, with lows of 6 degrees in Iinan, Shimane Prefecture, and Nichinan, Tottori Prefecture.

With afternoons warm and mornings cool, the gap between the low and the high reaches 13 degrees in Sendai, Nagano, Nagoya, Kyoto and Matsue.

Changing skies

Sapporo starts cloudy and brightens in the afternoon, reaching 17, the same as Kushiro, the coolest highs on the map. Nagano and Kanazawa cloud over during the day, while Fukuoka and Kagoshima clear this evening.

The south

Kagoshima, at 27 after a low of 19, has the mildest morning on the main islands. Naha turns cloudy later in the day after a sunny start, with a low of 22.

The typhoon

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, was a tropical storm near the Marshall Islands at 6 a.m., about 1,210 kilometres east of Guam, with a central pressure of 998 hectopascals and winds of 20 metres a second near its centre, moving west at 15 kilometres an hour. It is forecast to become a typhoon near Guam by early Sunday and a very strong typhoon east of the Philippines by early Tuesday, and to be about 980 kilometres south-east of Naha by early Wednesday. It poses no threat to Japan today.

The weekend

A front is expected to bring rain to some areas from Saturday, according to Weathernews, so those with outdoor plans for the weekend should check the latest forecast.

WEATHER

Today's Extremes

By the Data Desk

WARMEST: Naha, 30. On the main islands: Nagoya, Kyoto, Kochi and Kagoshima, 27.

COOLEST HIGH: Sapporo and Kushiro, 17.

COLDEST MORNING: Aomori, 9. Then Nagano, 10, and Sapporo, 11.

MILDEST MORNING: Naha, 22. On the main islands: Kagoshima, 19.

WIDEST RANGE: Sendai, Nagano, Nagoya, Kyoto and Matsue, 13 degrees between morning and afternoon.

NARROWEST RANGE: Kushiro, 4.

WETTEST: Akita, rain heavy at times this morning, then cloud; Aomori, rain then sunshine; Niigata, rain in the afternoon.

COLDEST IN SAN'IN ON THURSDAY: Iinan and Nichinan, 6, the lowest of the season.

TROPICS: Typhoon No. 30, Champi, 998 hPa, about 1,210 km east of Guam.

TOKYO SUNSET: About 5:06 p.m.

SOCIETY

Taxi and Bus Drivers Will Be Able to Refuse Rides to Passengers Who Abuse Them, Under Revised Standard Terms From December

The transport ministry's change, reported by Kyodo News, follows a new law requiring employers to protect workers from customer harassment

By the Society Desk

Taxi and bus operators will be explicitly allowed to refuse to carry passengers, or to ask them to get off, if they persist in harassing drivers with verbal abuse or other behaviour, under a change planned by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Kyodo News reported on Thursday.

The ministry will revise the standard terms of carriage for the industry, which set out the basic rules for transport operators, and put the change into effect on December 1. The aim is to protect drivers.

How it will work

Under the revision, passengers will be expected to refrain from harassment, and drivers will be able to ask a passenger to stop. If the behaviour continues, operators will be permitted to refuse service or ask the passenger to leave the vehicle.

The ministry is still deciding whether to list specific examples of harassment in the terms.

The new law

The change follows the amended law on comprehensive labour measures, which took effect on October 1 and requires all companies and local governments to take measures against customer harassment, known in Japan as kasuhara.

The standard terms are a template drawn up by the ministry. Operators can adopt them as their own without changes, which most do.

Drivers under pressure

Drivers' unions and operators have long complained about passengers who shout, threaten or become violent, often when drunk late at night. Bus drivers face complaints about delays and fares, and the industry is already struggling with a severe shortage of drivers, which has forced cuts in services across the country.

Protecting drivers from abuse is seen as one way to keep people in the job and attract new recruits.

Concerns

Asking a passenger to get off could provoke a strong reaction, and operators will also need measures to keep drivers safe in such situations, such as recording equipment and procedures for contacting the police.

Retailers, railways and airlines have already introduced their own policies against customer harassment, and some local governments have passed ordinances on the issue. Tokyo's, the first in the country, took effect in April 2025.

SOCIETY

Shizuoka Court Revokes Permit for a Solar Farm in Ito, Saying the City Failed to Consider the Risk of Landslides

Residents sued over a large solar project on the hillsides of the resort city; the ruling adds to scrutiny of developments that alter slopes

By the Society Desk

The Shizuoka District Court on Thursday revoked a permit granted for a large solar power plant planned in Ito, a resort city on the Izu Peninsula, ruling that the city had failed to examine the risk that installing the panels would cause landslides and runoff of soil.

Presiding Judge Kaoru Hirayama said the city could be presumed not to have considered the possibility of slope failures and soil runoff, and that its approval was therefore illegal.

The case

Local residents sued the prefecture and the city in 2023, arguing that the necessary measures to prevent disasters had not been taken. They challenged the city's approval in 2022 of the second of two changes to the project's plan.

A local company planned the solar farm. The city approved its application under the law regulating residential land development in 2018 and later approved two partial changes to the plan.

Solar farms and slopes

Large solar farms built on hillsides have become a source of conflict in many parts of Japan. Clearing forest and reshaping slopes can increase the risk of landslides and flooding during heavy rain, and residents have complained of damage to landscapes and water sources.

Shizuoka Prefecture is especially sensitive to such risks. In July 2021 a mudslide in Atami, also on the Izu coast, caused by the collapse of an improperly built embankment, killed and injured residents and destroyed homes, prompting a national law to tighten controls on landfill and land development.

Wider implications

The ruling is likely to encourage residents elsewhere who are challenging solar projects, and to make local governments more careful when approving developments on slopes.

Japan has expanded solar power rapidly since introducing a feed-in tariff in 2012, and it remains central to the country's plans to cut carbon emissions. But the best flat sites have largely been used, and new projects increasingly face local opposition.

The city and the prefecture can appeal against the ruling.

SOCIETY

Contractor in Shizuoka Bid-Leak Case Wanted to Win Work Near Its Office to Save Costs, Police Believe

Police search the Fukuroi civil engineering office after the arrest of a prefectural section chief and two company directors

By the Society Desk

A director of the construction company at the centre of a bid-rigging case in Shizuoka Prefecture told investigators before his arrest that the company "really wanted to win" the contracts, because the work was close to its office and would save on costs, according to people familiar with the investigation.

Police suspect that the company side may have proposed that a prefectural official leak the estimated price of the contracts.

The arrests

On Wednesday Shizuoka prefectural police arrested Masaaki Yamamoto, 57, a section chief in the construction division of the prefecture's Fukuroi civil engineering office, on suspicion of violating the law against bid-rigging by public officials.

Two directors of the civil engineering company Akiyama, Takashi Akiyama, 71, and Hirokazu Tomita, 63, were arrested on suspicion of obstructing a public bidding process.

The bridge contracts

The three are suspected of conspiring in February over two general competitive tenders for the replacement of a bridge as part of river flood-prevention work. Mr Yamamoto allegedly gave the company the estimated price, allowing it to win the contracts.

The bridge is about 900 metres from Akiyama's head

SOCIETY

office. Police believe the company wanted to cut expenses such as travel and the transport of materials.

The search

On Thursday police searched the Fukuroi civil engineering office for about two and a half hours.

Why estimated prices matter

In public tenders, the estimated price is the upper limit for an acceptable bid, and it is kept secret so that bidders compete genuinely. A company that knows the figure can bid just below it and win the contract at the highest possible price, at the expense of taxpayers and of honest competitors.

The case is one of several recent arrests of local government officials across the country over leaked prices and bid-rigging. On Thursday Niigata prefectural police arrested a 32-year-old official of the industrial promotion department of Minamiuonuma City on suspicion of accepting entertainment from a contractor, and two men from the company on suspicion of bribery.

SOCIETY

Narita Airport Stages a Large Drill Simulating a Failed Landing and Fire on a Boeing 767, With About 1,100 Taking Part

Firefighters, paramedics and the Ground Self-Defense Force practise rescue and triage; a new command vehicle is used for the first time

By the Society Desk

Narita International Airport held a large emergency drill on Thursday afternoon simulating a passenger aircraft that failed to land and caught fire, leaving many people injured.

About 1,100 people took part, including staff of Narita International Airport Corp., local fire departments and members of the Ground Self-Defense Force. The aim was to confirm procedures for rapid firefighting, rescue and medical care.

The scenario

A Boeing 767, a medium-sized passenger jet, was used in the exercise, which took place on a weekday during the daytime. The airport's maintenance area stood in for the runway.

In the scenario, the aircraft was blown off course by a crosswind as it came in to land, failed to land properly and caught fire after an engine struck the runway.

The response

Fire engines sprayed water on the aircraft as passengers and crew evacuated one after another. Rescue workers carried injured people out of the plane and laid them on stretchers, asking each how badly they were hurt.

Paramedics carried out triage to decide the order of treatment, and the most seriously injured were quickly taken away by ambulance. A command vehicle with a meeting space inside was used in such a drill for the first time.

In triage, casualties are sorted with coloured tags: red for those who need treatment at once, yellow for those whose treatment can wait a little, green for the walking wounded and black for those beyond help. The tags stay with each casualty so that others can see the assessment.

Why it matters

Narita, which opened in 1978 after years of protests by farmers and activists, is one of Japan's two main international gateways and handles hundreds of flights a day. Airports are required to prepare emergency plans and to rehearse them regularly with local fire and medical services.

International aviation standards require airports to hold a full-scale emergency exercise at least once every two years, with partial exercises in between, so that fire crews, hospitals, police and airlines practise working together.

The collision on the runway at Haneda Airport in January 2024 between a Japan Airlines Airbus A350 and a Japan Coast Guard aircraft, in which all 379 people on the airliner escaped before it was destroyed by fire but five of the six crew of the coast guard plane died, showed both the value of training and the speed with which an accident can unfold.

Narita is also expanding, with plans for a new runway and a longer B runway, which will increase its capacity in the coming years.

SOCIETY

Prosecutors Will Disclose 57 New Pieces of Evidence Before the Retrial in the Hino Case, Decades After a Man Was Convicted of Murder

Hiroshi Sakahara died in prison serving a life sentence; skin fragments the defence wants tested cannot be found, prosecutors say

By the Society Desk

Prosecutors said on Thursday that they would disclose 57 new pieces of evidence, including material not previously sent to the court, before the retrial in the Hino case, one of the best-known claims of wrongful conviction in Japan.

They made the announcement at a meeting of judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers at the Otsu District Court. According to the defence, the evidence is thought to include investigation reports and witness statements.

The case

In 1984 a 69-year-old woman who ran a liquor shop in the town of Hino, Shiga Prefecture, was murdered and a safe was stolen. Hiroshi Sakahara was convicted of robbery resulting in death and sentenced to life imprisonment, and the sentence became final. He maintained his innocence and died of illness in 2011 at the age of 75 while still serving it.

His family continued to seek a retrial, which is now being prepared.

The missing fragments

The defence has long sought evidence that it says would help establish his innocence, including statements by eyewitnesses and skin fragments found under the victim's fingernails and on a cord recovered with her body, which could be tested for DNA.

Prosecutors said they had checked with the police, who could not find the fragments.

Retrials in Japan

Retrials are rare in Japan, where the conviction rate in criminal trials exceeds 99 per cent. A retrial can be ordered only when new evidence clearly casts doubt on a conviction, and the process can take decades.

The acquittal of Iwao Hakamada in 2024, 58 years after his arrest, prompted calls to reform the system, including rules requiring prosecutors to disclose evidence and limits on their ability to appeal against decisions to grant a retrial.

Other cases

In the Osaki case in Kagoshima Prefecture, in which Ayako Haraguchi, now 99, was convicted of murder over a death in 1979, the defence presented opinions from five university forensic experts on Thursday at the Kagoshima District Court, saying they found no signs that the victim had been strangled. It is her fifth request for a retrial.

SOCIETY

Four Japanese-Led Gamma-Ray Telescopes Are Completed in the Canary Islands, the Core of a Global Observatory to Study Black Holes and Dark Matter

Nobel laureate Takaaki Kajita says the telescopes will open 'a new and important window' on the universe

By the Science Desk

Four large telescopes at the heart of an international observatory designed to study black holes, dark matter and other mysteries of the universe were completed on Thursday on La Palma, one of Spain's Canary Islands in the North Atlantic. Japan led their development.

The telescopes form the core of the Cherenkov Telescope Array Observatory, known as CTAO, and a ceremony with a ribbon-cutting was held to mark their completion.

How they work

The telescopes detect gamma rays of extremely high energy emitted by violent objects such as black holes and supernovae. When such gamma rays enter the Earth's atmosphere, they produce faint flashes of light called Cherenkov light. Analysing that light allows scientists to trace the gamma rays back to their sources.

Two sites

CTAO is building telescopes of different sizes at two sites, La Palma and Paranal in Chile, which will operate together as a single observatory covering

both the northern and southern skies.

Japan's role

Takaaki Kajita, a distinguished professor at the University of Tokyo who shared the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physics for discovering that neutrinos have mass, attended the ceremony. The telescopes, he said, "will likely open a new and important window".

The Japanese group is led by Hidetoshi Kubo, a professor at the University of Tokyo's Institute for Cosmic Ray Research.

Each of the four large telescopes has a dish 23 metres across; the first was inaugurated on La Palma in 2018.

Why gamma rays

Gamma rays are the most energetic form of light. Studying them can reveal how particles are accelerated to extreme energies near black holes and in the remnants of exploding stars, and might provide clues to the nature of dark matter, the invisible substance thought to make up most of the matter in the universe.

The atmosphere blocks gamma rays from reaching the ground, which is why telescopes such as these observe the showers of light they create instead.

A long project

CTAO involves scientists from many countries and is expected to be the world's leading facility for high-energy gamma-ray astronomy for decades. Japanese researchers and companies contributed to the design and construction of the large telescopes, including their mirrors and cameras.

Astronomers hope the observatory will help explain some of the most extreme events in the universe, from colliding neutron stars to the jets of matter fired out by supermassive black holes.

SOCIETY

Global Warming Puts 44 Per Cent of Reef-Building Coral Species at Risk of Extinction, an IUCN Assessment Published in Nature Finds

The study used data only up to 2020, before record marine heatwaves and a global bleaching event, so the crisis may be worse

By the Science Desk

Forty-four per cent of the world's reef-building coral species are threatened with extinction, mainly because of global warming, according to an assessment by experts of the International Union for Conservation of Nature published in the British journal Nature on Thursday.

The team examined 892 species of reef-building coral. Excluding those for which there were too few data, they assessed 774 species and found 340 to be at risk of extinction.

The categories

Of the threatened species, 33 were classed as critically endangered, 251 as endangered and 56 as vulnerable, the three categories of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Worse than it looks

The assessment used data up to 2020. It therefore does not reflect the record-breaking marine heatwaves since 2023 or the global coral bleaching event that followed, which means the situation may be deteriorating further, the team said.

"Limiting warming by even 0.1 degrees could help to conserve coral ecosystems," the team said.

Why corals matter

Coral reefs cover a tiny fraction of the ocean floor but support about a quarter of all marine species. They protect coastlines from waves and storms, sustain fisheries and draw tourists, and are worth billions of dollars a year to the economies of the countries that have them.

When the water becomes too warm, corals expel the algae that live in their tissues and give them their colour and much of their food. The corals turn white, a process known as bleaching, and can die if the heat lasts too long.

Japan's reefs

Japan has extensive coral reefs in Okinawa and the Amami islands, as well as corals further north along the warm Kuroshio current. Sekisei Lagoon, between Ishigaki and Iriomote islands, Japan's largest coral reef, has suffered severe bleaching in recent hot summers.

Researchers in Japan are working on ways to help reefs recover, including growing corals and transplanting them, but they stress that such efforts cannot keep pace with warming unless emissions are cut.

The findings add to pressure on governments ahead of international climate negotiations, where the goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees is increasingly regarded as out of reach.

SPORTS

Kimiyasu Kudo, Winner of Five Japan Series With SoftBank, Takes Over Last-Placed Chunichi, Saying His Goal Is the Championship

The Aichi native, who never played for the Dragons, says he wants to repay Nagoya; he will wear No. 81 again

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

The Chunichi Dragons named Kimiyasu Kudo, the former SoftBank manager who won five Japan Series titles, as their new manager on Thursday, entrusting him with rebuilding a team that finished last in the Central League this season.

"I want to build a team that makes everyone happy by winning," Kudo, 63, told a news conference in Nagoya in the morning. "The final goal is the championship."

A homecoming of sorts

Kudo is from Aichi Prefecture, where Chunichi are based, but he never played for or coached the club. Explaining why he accepted the job, he said: "I wanted to repay Nagoya, even a little."

He will wear the No. 81 he wore as manager of SoftBank.

A team in decline

Chunichi finished last for the first time in two years and have been in the bottom half of the six-team league for six straight seasons. The manager, Kazuki Inoue, 55, announced his resignation because of the poor results.

The record

As a left-handed pitcher, Kudo played for four clubs, starting with Seibu, and won 224 games in a career that lasted into his late forties. He was known for his longevity and his scientific approach to training and conditioning.

As manager of SoftBank from 2015 to 2021, he won three Pacific League titles and five Japan Series, one of the most successful managerial runs in Japanese baseball.

The task

Chunichi have a strong tradition, including two Japan Series titles and a loyal following in Nagoya, but have struggled to score runs in their spacious home ground, Vantelin Dome Nagoya, for years.

Chunichi began their autumn training this week.

SPORTS

Scoreboard

By the Sports Desk

CLIMAX SERIES, CENTRAL: DeNA 1, Hanshin 0 (DeNA lead 2-1). PACIFIC: SoftBank 6, Nippon-Ham 2 (SoftBank lead 4-0).

NLCS GAME 3: Milwaukee 6, Los Angeles Dodgers 2 (Milwaukee lead 3-0). Ohtani 1 for 2; Sasaki one-third of an inning, one run.

ALCS: Cleveland and Tampa Bay level 1-1 before Game 3.

GOLF, JAPAN OPEN, ROUND 1: 1. Ryuichi Oiwa 62 (-8). Defending champion Naoyuki Kataoka 68.

GOLF, FUJITSU LADIES, ROUND 1: 1= Minami Hiruta, Shizuku Takahashi 65 (-7); 3. Tsai Pei-ying 66.

TRACK CYCLING WORLDS, SHANGHAI: Men's keirin bronze, Shinji Nakano; 4th, Kaiya Ota. Women's elimination silver, Yumi Kajihara.

NBA PRESEASON: Los Angeles Clippers 122, Denver Nuggets 110. Rui Hachimura 16 points, a team high.

NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL, AOMORI: Boys' 110m hurdles, Daiki Goto (Kyoto) 13.63; girls' under-20 2,000m steeplechase, Fuka Kondo (Ehime) 6:31.52, a national under-20 record.

GO, MEIJIN: Ryo Ichiriki beat Toramaru Shibano in Game 6; series 3-3.

EMPEROR'S CUP: Round of 16 on December 9; final on January 1.

SPORTS



Shugo Maki of the Yokohama DeNA BayStars, whose two-out solo home run in the eighth inning gave DeNA a 1-0 win over Hanshin at Koshien on Thursday and a 2-1 lead in the Central League's Climax Series final stage. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

Maki's Eighth-Inning Homer Gives DeNA a 1-0 Win at Koshien and a 2-1 Lead Over Hanshin, Who Have Not Scored in Two Games

Seven Yokohama pitchers combine on a shutout; the Tigers manage two infield hits and strand runners on second and third in the ninth
By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Shugo Maki hit a two-out solo home run in the eighth inning, and seven pitchers combined to shut out the Hanshin Tigers as the Yokohama DeNA BayStars won 1-0 at Koshien Stadium on Thursday to take a 2-1 lead in the Central League's Climax Series final stage.

The series count includes the one-win advantage awarded to Hanshin as league champion. DeNA, who finished third in the regular season, have now won both games played and need two more victories to reach the Japan Series. The final stage is played over a maximum of six games, and the first team to four wins advances.

The decisive swing

For seven innings neither side could break through. Hanshin's starter, Haruto Takahashi, pitched his way out of trouble repeatedly, but with two out in the eighth Maki drove a pitch into the stands in left-centre field for the only run of the game.

A relay of seven

DeNA used seven pitchers in relay, and between them they held the Tigers to two infield hits. Hanshin's best chance came in the ninth, when they put runners on second and third with one out. But DeNA's bullpen held on, and the Tigers' wait for a run stretched to 18 innings: they were shut out 2-0 in the opening game on Wednesday as well.

SPORTS

Kurihara's Walk-Off Grand Slam Beats Nippon-Ham 6-2 and Leaves SoftBank One Win From a Third Straight Japan Series

Tied 2-2 in the ninth with the bases loaded, the slugger clears the right-centre fence; a win or a draw today will send the Hawks through
By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Ryoya Kurihara hit a walk-off grand slam with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning to give the Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks a 6-2 win over the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters at Mizuho PayPay Dome on Thursday, putting the three-time Pacific League champions one victory away from the Japan Series.

SoftBank now have four wins in the final stage of the Climax Series, including a two-win advantage, and need one more. A win or a draw in today's third game would send them to the Japan Series for the third year in a row.

The ninth

The game was tied 2-2 when SoftBank loaded the bases against the Nippon-Ham reliever Ren Fukushima. Kurihara sent the ball over the fence in right-centre field and was greeted by the manager, Hiroki Kokubo, as the celebrations began.

The starters

SoftBank's starter, Naoyuki Uezawa, settled after a shaky start and allowed two runs over six innings against the club for which he used to pitch. After the second inning Nippon-Ham managed only two hits off SoftBank's pitchers.

Nippon-Ham's starter, Koki Kitayama, matched him,

A champion in trouble

Hanshin won the Central League for the second year in a row and entered the final stage as clear favourites. Their pitching has held up, conceding three runs in two games, but their batting has gone silent at the moment it matters most.

Today's third game at Koshien is pivotal for the Tigers. Hanshin will start Hiroto Saiki, their ace, and DeNA will start Katayama.

The other league

In the Pacific League, the Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks moved to the brink of a third straight Japan Series on Thursday when Ryoya Kurihara hit a walk-off grand slam to beat the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters 6-2. SoftBank can clinch with a win or even a draw today.

The prize

The Japan Series begins on October 24 at the home ground of the Central League's representative. If DeNA complete their run, they would host the opening games at Yokohama Stadium; if Hanshin recover, the series would begin at Koshien. DeNA won the Japan Series in 2024 after finishing third in the regular season, beating SoftBank in six games. They are three wins away from a chance to do it again.

giving up two runs in six and two-thirds innings, before the bullpen faltered in the ninth.

The new rule

SoftBank won the Pacific League by more than ten games, which under a new rule this season earned them an advantage of two wins rather than the usual one, and a final stage of up to seven games in which the first team to five wins advances.

That arithmetic explains why a draw today would be enough: after a draw only four games would remain, so Nippon-Ham could at best draw level at four wins each, and a tie goes to the higher-ranked team.

Today's starters

SoftBank will start Yugo Maeda, and Nippon-Ham will start Takayuki Kato.

Two straight

SoftBank won the opening game 6-4 on Wednesday after coming from behind. Nippon-Ham, who finished third, beat the second-placed team in the first stage to reach the final.

The Japan Series starts on October 24 at the home ground of the Central League's representative, which will be either Hanshin or DeNA. SoftBank lost to DeNA in the 2024 Japan Series and beat Hanshin last year.

SPORTS

The Climax Series After Game Two

By the Sports Desk

CENTRAL LEAGUE: Yokohama DeNA lead Hanshin 2-1, counting Hanshin's one-win advantage. First to four wins; up to six games, all at Koshien. GAME 1, WEDNESDAY: DeNA 2, Hanshin 0. GAME 2, THURSDAY: DeNA 1, Hanshin 0. Maki

homered with two out in the eighth; seven DeNA pitchers allowed two infield hits.

GAME 3, TODAY, 6 P.M.: Hanshin, Hiroto Saiki; DeNA, Katayama.

PACIFIC LEAGUE: SoftBank lead Nippon-Ham 4-0, counting SoftBank's two-win advantage. First to five wins; up to seven games, all at Mizuho PayPay Dome.

GAME 1, WEDNESDAY: SoftBank 6, Nippon-Ham 4.

GAME 2, THURSDAY: SoftBank 6, Nippon-Ham 2. Kurihara hit a walk-off grand slam with one out in the ninth.

GAME 3, TODAY, 6 P.M.: SoftBank, Yugo Maeda; Nippon-Ham, Takayuki Kato. SoftBank clinch with a win or a draw.

THE JAPAN SERIES: From Saturday, October 24, at the home ground of the Central League's representative.

THE DRAFT: The professional baseball draft is on Thursday, October 22.

SPORTS

Yokohama High's Shoki Oda, Owner of the Fastest Pitch in Koshien History, Says He Will Go to American Baseball and Skip Japan's Draft

The 18-year-old right-hander, tipped as a first-round pick next week, says he wants to be the best in the world and is weighing the minor leagues and American universities
By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Shoki Oda, the Yokohama High School pitcher who threw the fastest pitch ever recorded at a Koshien tournament this summer, said on Thursday that he would pursue a career in American baseball instead of entering Japan's professional draft.

"I had the desire to become the best in the world, so I decided," the 18-year-old right-hander told a news conference at his school in Yokohama. "I want to commit myself and take on the challenge."

He said he was considering both minor league baseball in the United States and American universities. "There are the minors, but I'm also thinking about university," he said.

High school players who want to be drafted by Japanese clubs must first submit a formal declaration of their intention to turn professional.

A top prospect

Oda, who stands 186 centimetres, was widely expected to be chosen in the first round of the draft on October 22 and has been watched closely by Japanese and American scouts. At this summer's national championship he threw a pitch measured at 156 kilometres an hour, the fastest in the tournament's history; Sports Hochi put the figure at 157.

He helped Yokohama win the spring invitational tournament at Koshien in 2025 and to reach the semi-finals of this summer's championship. In September he pitched for Japan at the under-18 Asian championship.

A rare choice

It is rare for a top Japanese high school prospect to go straight to American baseball without first playing in Japan's professional leagues. In 2008 Junichi Tazawa, a pitcher in Japan's corporate leagues, signed with the Boston Red Sox without entering the draft, prompting Japanese clubs to adopt a rule restricting such players if they later returned home. The rule was scrapped in 2020.

More recently, Rintaro Sasaki, the record-breaking slugger from Hanamaki Higashi High School, chose to attend Stanford University in the United States rather than enter the draft.

The path ahead

Most Japanese stars who reach the major leagues, from Hideo Nomo to Shohei Ohtani, have done so after years in Japan's professional leagues. Going directly would mean starting in the minor leagues, with long bus rides, low pay and stiff competition, or playing college baseball while studying.

Oda's choice will be watched closely by other young players and by Japanese clubs, which fear losing the best talent before it ever reaches them.

His decision also means that the first round of next week's draft has lost one of its most coveted names.

SPORTS

Ryuichi Oiwa Shoots an Eight-Under 62 to Lead the Japan Open; Minami Hiruta and Shizuku Takahashi Share the Lead at the Fujitsu Ladies

The Japan Open champion earns invitations to the Masters and the Open; Shin Ji-yai, winner of the Japan Women's Open two weeks ago, starts with a 76
By the Sports Desk

Ryuichi Oiwa shot an eight-under-par 62 to take the first-round lead at the Japan Open Golf Championship at Tarao Country Club in Shiga Prefecture on Thursday.

Oiwa, 28, who has one tour victory, made an eagle, seven birdies and a single bogey on the par-70 course, which measures 7,411 yards. He leads by two strokes.

Yusaku Hosono and Koshiro Maeda were among those tied for fourth at 65. Naoyuki Kataoka, the defending champion, shot 68 and was tied for 19th.

The prize

The Japan Open is the last of the three domestic men's majors of the season. The total purse is 210 million yen, with 42 million yen for the winner, who also receives invitations to next year's Masters Tournament and the Open Championship. The field of 120 includes 12 amateurs.

The weather was sunny, with a temperature of 18.7 degrees and a light north wind, and 1,884 spectators attended.

Fujitsu Ladies

At the Fujitsu Ladies at Tokyu Seven Hundred Club in Chiba Prefecture, Minami Hiruta and Shizuku Takahashi shot seven-under 65s to share the first-round lead.

Hiruta is seeking her second tour victory in three seasons; Takahashi is chasing her first professional title. Tsai Pei-ying of Taiwan was one stroke behind in third.

Ayaka Furue, a three-time winner of the event, was among those tied for fourth at 67. Shiho Kuwaki, who leads the season's points ranking, shot 68.

Shin Ji-yai of South Korea, who won the Japan Women's Open two weeks ago and earned a lifetime exemption on the Japanese tour, struggled to a 76 and was tied for 94th.

The Fujitsu Ladies has a purse of 150 million yen, with 27 million yen to the winner, and a field of 108.

The Japan Open is played over four rounds and ends on Sunday.

CULTURE

Words of the Week

By the Culture Desk

URUU-JIKAN: Leap hour, the system that will replace the leap second (uruu-byo) from May 2027.

SHOKURYO ANZEN HOSHO: Food security, the new agriculture minister's first priority.

JUYO NI OJITA SEISAN: Production in line with demand, the rice policy he says he will continue.

KASUHARA: Customer harassment; drivers will be allowed to refuse rides to passengers who persist in it.

BUNKEN CHOSA: Literature survey, the first stage in the search for a nuclear waste site.

BOFU KEIKAI-IKI: Storm-warning area, the zone on a typhoon map where winds of 25 metres a second or more could blow.

URAKAI: Back meeting, the informal gatherings at which beer company managers allegedly agreed prices.

SAYONARA MANRUI HOMURAN: Walk-off grand slam, as hit by SoftBank's Ryoya Kurihara.

UKAI: Cormorant fishing, whose Nagara River season ended on Thursday.

FUKUSHUTO: Vice-capital, a status Hokkaido now formally seeks.

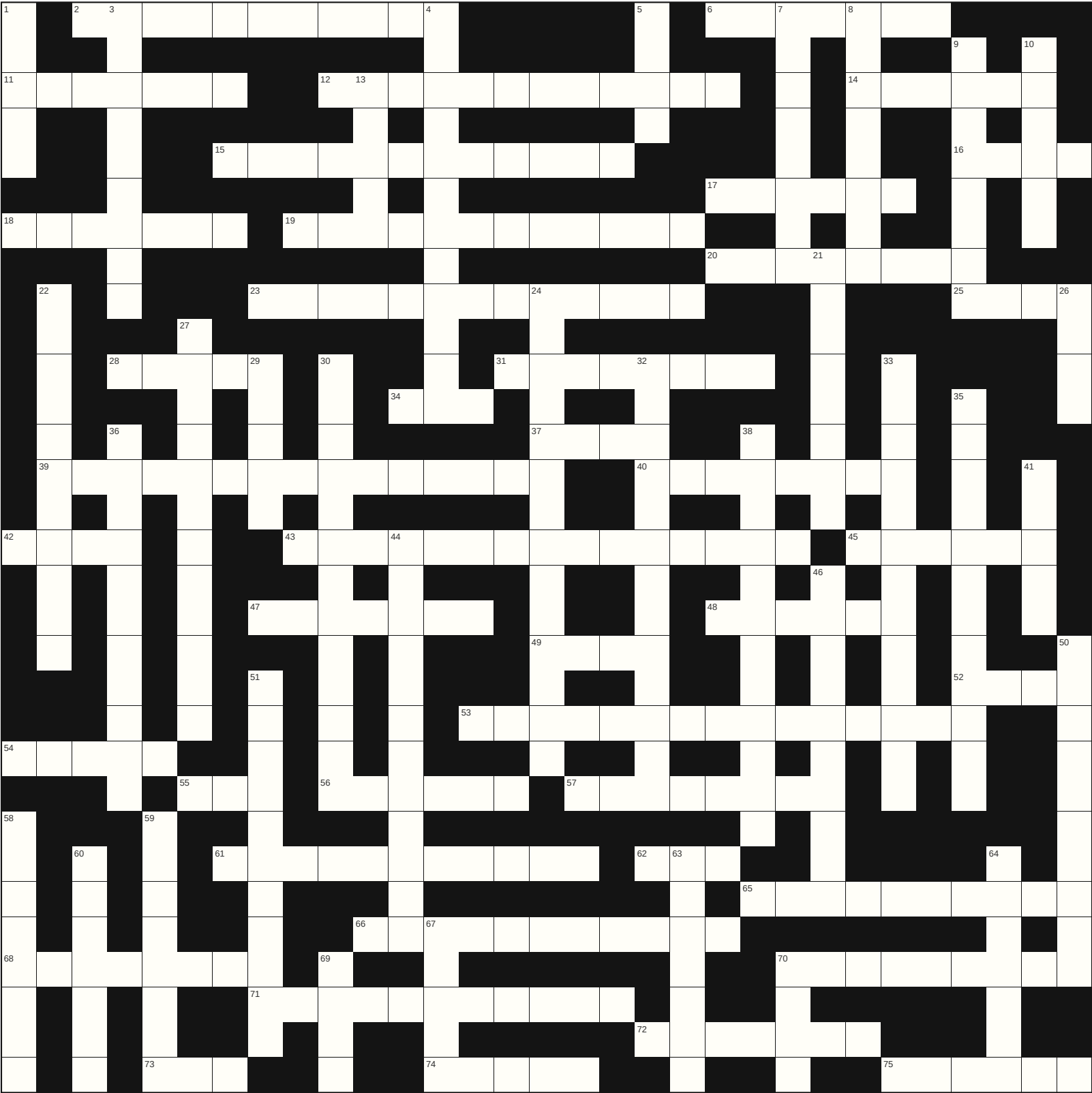
BORAKU: A plunge in share prices, as on Thursday, when the Nikkei fell 3,318 yen.

DORAFUTO KAIGI: The professional baseball draft on October 22, which Shoki Oda will skip.

GENSHIRO TEISHI: Reactor shutdown; Onagawa No. 2 is to be halted around Saturday to repair a leaking valve.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 76 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional.

ACROSS

2. Its verdict on the food tax cut (11)
6. City that hosted the G20 finance meeting (7)
11. Operating system whose apps were studied (7)
12. Fifth place to begin a nuclear waste survey (12)
14. Tokyo city where she died at 102 (6)
15. Paper that ran the ceremony on its second page (12)
16. Cormorant fishing (4)
17. Satellite series that carried the Tokyo Olympics (6)
18. Air station in the middle of Ginowan (7)
19. Alert for Dallas (12)
20. Ceremony that did not take place (8)
23. Chipmaking equipment maker that also weighed on the average (13)
25. Next name on the list, from Macao (4)
28. Japanese doctor who led WHO's smallpox unit (5)
31. Narita lake whose embankment broke (8)
34. Sweetfish the cormorants catch (3)
37. Taiwanese chipmaker with record quarterly profit (4)
39. 1928 cartoon with synchronised sound (15)
40. Heating fuel up 10 yen a can (8)
42. Japan Open first-round leader (4)
43. Area where the storm formed (15)
45. Relocation site in Nago (6)
47. Kyoto school of the hurdles winner (7)
48. Bank taking a stake of 5.27 per cent in JCB (6)
49. Player opened to PC users (4)
52. Numbers authority he ran (4)
53. Remote island among the earlier survey sites (15)
54. Chief of staff Trump says he fully trusts (5)
55. Where Napoleon surrounded the Austrians in 1805 (3)
56. Crop the United States wants to sell fresh (6)
57. Irish mathematician of the canal walk (8)
61. Where he carved the formula (11)
62. Russian security service holding the reporter (3)
65. Prosecutors' office that received them (10)
66. 1987 crash whose next-day fall in Tokyo is still the biggest in percentage terms (11)
68. TV personality: 'This country has a law of money flow!' (8)
70. City of the Canton Fair (9)
71. Level she put 'considerably above 1 per cent' (11)
72. American Treasury secretary who stayed away (7)
73. Shoki or Kaito, in today's sports pages (3)
74. Honda robot whose technology lives on (5)
75. Common flag of Japanese-operated ships (6)

DOWN

1. Japanese president of the International Criminal Court (5)
3. Trials whose death sentences were carried out in 1946 (9)
4. He promised fairness and this (12)
5. University whose team identified it (4)
7. Tottori town that also fell to 6 (8)
8. City where she gave her speech (8)
9. Messe where CEATEC closes today (8)
10. Pitcher who went straight to the Red Sox in 2008 (6)
13. Shimane town that fell to 6 degrees (5)
21. Chinese chatbot that suffered an outage (8)
22. Burned at Westminster in 1834 (11)
24. Source of Japan's ten typhoon names (14)
26. Yemeni city struck by a missile (4)
27. Niigata city whose official was arrested (12)
29. News site joining Google's paid programme (5)
30. OpenAI investor among the stocks behind 2,100 yen of the fall (13)
32. Batteries Courier was first to use in orbit (13)
33. Alert for Denver (13)
35. Chinese province whose delegation visited Etorofu (12)
36. Rose 0.8 per cent in America in September (11)
38. The new minister's first priority (12)
41. Bangladeshi island where she lived (5)
44. Cuban site of the missiles (12)
46. His principle: be conservative in what you do (10)
50. Last natural case of variola major smallpox (10)
51. The German lender (11)
58. Upper stage of the Thor rocket that launched it (8)
59. Kobe mayor who called the minutes affair inappropriate (8)
60. Saitama city of the 1999 killing that led to the law (7)
63. Offender who might be fitted with a GPS device (7)
64. Ehime city of a drum float festival (7)
67. His given name (5)
69. New Chunichi manager (4)
70. American geostationary weather satellites, first launched October 16, 1975 (4)

SPORTS

Brewers Beat the Dodgers 6-2 to Lead the NLCS 3-0; Ohtani, Batting Sixth, Singles in the Eighth and Sasaki Gives Up a Run

The two-time defending champions are one loss from elimination going into Game 4 in Los Angeles; in the American League, Cleveland and Tampa Bay are level

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

The Milwaukee Brewers beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 6-2 at Dodger Stadium on Wednesday, local time, to take a 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven National League Championship Series and push the two-time defending World Series champions to the edge of elimination.

Shohei Ohtani, batting sixth as the designated hitter, went 1 for 2, with a single to centre field in the eighth inning. It was the first time he had started a game batting sixth since September 2020, when he played for the Los Angeles Angels.

Roki Sasaki came on in the eighth inning as the Dodgers' third pitcher and allowed two hits and a run while getting one out.

A rare position

The Dodgers, who won the World Series in 2024 and 2025, are bidding to become the first team to win three in a row since the New York Yankees completed a run of three straight titles in 2000. To reach the World Series they must now win four games in a row.

Only once in baseball history has a team come back from 3-0 down to win a best-of-seven series: the Boston Red Sox, against the Yankees in the 2004 American League Championship Series.

The Brewers, swept 4-0 by the Dodgers in last year's NLCS, are seeking their first World Series appearance since 1982, when they lost to the St. Louis Cardinals in seven games.

Ohtani's role

Ohtani's place in the order drew attention before the game, because he normally bats at or near the top of the Dodgers' lineup.

Game 4

Game 4 is played this morning, Japan time, at Dodger Stadium.

The American League

In the American League Championship Series, the Cleveland Guardians and the Tampa Bay Rays were

level at one win apiece before Game 3, scheduled for Thursday, local time.

For Japanese fans, the series has been a frustrating one. Ohtani, Sasaki and Yoshinobu Yamamoto played central roles in the Dodgers' championships, and one more defeat would end their season.

SPORTS

Shinji Nakano Wins Keirin Bronze at the Track Cycling World Championships in Shanghai; Yumi Kajihara Takes Silver in the Elimination

Nakano comes through the repechage to reach the final; Kaiya Ota is fourth; Mina Sato advances to the sprint semi-finals

By the Sports Desk

Shinji Nakano won the bronze medal in the men's keirin on the second day of the track cycling world championships in Shanghai on Thursday.

Nakano lost in the first round but advanced through the repechage to reach the final, where he finished third. His teammate Kaiya Ota was fourth in the same final.

Silver for Kajihara

Yumi Kajihara, riding for Team Yumi, won the silver medal in the women's elimination race, which is not an Olympic event. Kajihara won a silver medal in the omnium at the Tokyo Olympics and has long been one of Japan's leading endurance riders. In 2020 she became the first Japanese woman to win a world title on the track, in the omnium.

The sprint

In the women's sprint, Mina Sato advanced to the semi-finals, while Aki Sakai was eliminated in the first round.

Shunsuke Imamura, who rides for the road team Lotto Group Wanty, finished 12th in the men's scratch race.

The keirin

The keirin was invented in Japan, where it began as a form of track racing for gambling after the Second World War. Riders follow a motorised pacer for several laps before sprinting for the line. It became an Olympic event in 2000.

Nakano, Ota, Sato and Sakai are all professional keirin riders in Japan. Japanese riders have become a force in international sprint events in recent years, helped by investment in coaching and equipment ahead of the Tokyo and Paris Olympics.

Next

The championships continue through the weekend.

The results are encouraging for Japan as the cycle towards the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics begins in earnest.

SPORTS

Competition Begins Today at the Asian Para Games in Aichi and Nagoya, With About 3,000 Athletes From More Than 40 Countries

Badminton, table tennis, blind football and wheelchair basketball start before Sunday's opening ceremony; Kaito Oda seeks a second straight wheelchair tennis title

By the Sports Desk

The Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games begin today with the first events in four sports, two days before the opening ceremony on Sunday, October 18.

Badminton, table tennis, blind football and wheelchair basketball start today. About 3,000 athletes from more than 40 countries and regions are expected to take part in 18 sports through October 24.

A welcome

A welcome ceremony for the national and regional teams was held on Thursday at Garden Pier in Nagoya Port, where the athletes are staying, and Japan's team took part.

Mari Amimoto of the women's wheelchair basketball team said she was really looking forward to the Games. Her team, she said, wanted to make Japan happy through wheelchair basketball and give the country some energy.

Oda aims for two in a row

Kaito Oda, the wheelchair tennis star, told a news conference in Nagoya on Thursday that he was aiming to defend his men's singles title. "It feels like the time has finally come," he said. "A desire to show my best tennis has welled up."

Yui Kamiji, the leading women's player, said she had caught influenza before the Games and had been unable to play for about ten days. "I want to get my condition right before my first match," she said.

The winners of the men's and women's singles will earn places at the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics.

After the Asian Games

The Para Games follow the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, which ended earlier this month. The Japanese delegation's leader has said he hopes the Games will help accelerate changes in society for people with

disabilities.

Japan has set up a support base for its athletes designed for wheelchair users.

SPORTS

Holders Machida Draw Tokyo Verdy in the Emperor's Cup Last 16; Yokohama FC, the Last J2 Side, Meet FC Tokyo

The round of 16 is on December 9 and the final returns to New Year's Day for the first time in six tournaments

By the Sports Desk

Machida Zelvia, who won the Emperor's Cup for the first time last season, will play Tokyo Verdy in the round of 16 of this year's tournament, following a draw in Tokyo on Thursday.

Yokohama FC, the only club from outside the first division still in the competition, were drawn against FC Tokyo.

The other ties

Vissel Kobe will play Shimizu S-Pulse, Kashima Antlers face Cerezo Osaka, Kawasaki Frontale meet Yokohama F. Marinos, Kashiwa Reysol play Fagiano Okayama, Kyoto Sanga face Sanfrecce Hiroshima, and Gamba Osaka meet Urawa Reds.

The schedule

The round of 16 will be played on December 9, the quarter-finals on December 23 and the semi-finals on December 27. The final will be held on January 1 at the National Stadium in Tokyo, the first New Year's Day final in six tournaments.

The draw for the 106th edition of the competition, Japan's oldest football tournament, was conducted with the help of two former national team players, Masashi Nakayama and Masami Ihara.

First held in 1921, the competition is older than the professional J.League by more than 70 years.

The winner earns a place in Asian club competition.

Machida's rise

Machida, a club from the western suburbs of Tokyo, rose rapidly through the leagues under owner support from the IT company CyberAgent and won promotion to the first division only in 2023. Their cup win last season was the first major trophy in the club's history.

They beat Vissel Kobe 3-1 in last season's final, played in November.

The tie against Tokyo Verdy, another club from the

SPORTS

Tokyo area, will be one of the highlights of the round.

SPORTS

Daiki Hashimoto Says He Will Not Give Up First Place as He Seeks a Fourth Straight All-Around World Title in Rotterdam

The gymnastics world championships open on Saturday with places at the 2028 Olympics at stake; China's Zhang Boheng withdraws

By the Sports Desk

Daiki Hashimoto, the Olympic champion, said he was in good form and had no intention of giving up first place as he prepared to seek a fourth consecutive all-around title at the gymnastics world championships, which open on Saturday in Rotterdam.

"My condition is good," he said after the official training session on Wednesday. "I have no intention of giving up first place, either in the team or the individual competition."

He landed cleanly on the parallel bars and other apparatus during training.

Olympic places

The top three finishers in each event earn quota places for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, and Japan's men's team is aiming to secure them.

China's star missing

China, which narrowly lost to Japan in the men's team event at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, confirmed shortly before the championships that its leading gymnast, Zhang Boheng, would not compete.

"I was a little surprised, but I will focus on showing my own world-best performance," Hashimoto said.

Hashimoto's record

Hashimoto, who competes for Nippon Life and Central Sports, won the Olympic all-around title in Tokyo in 2021 and the team gold in Paris in 2024. He has also won world all-around titles, and a fourth in a row would put him among the most successful gymnasts in history.

Russia

The championships have been overshadowed by reports that Russian gymnasts were refused visas to compete, which Kyodo News reported this week.

The men's all-around final is a highlight of the championships, and Japanese fans will be watching to see whether Hashimoto can extend his remarkable run.

SPORTS

Sports in Brief

By the Sports Desk

HACHIMURA: Rui Hachimura scored a team-high 16 points, with five rebounds and two steals in 24 minutes, as the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Denver Nuggets 122-110 in a preseason game in Inglewood, California. The Clippers have finished their three preseason games and open the regular season at home against the Sacramento Kings on October 21, Pacific time.

NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL: At the athletics events in Aomori, Daiki Goto of Kyoto, a Rakunan High School pupil who won silver in the 400 metres hurdles at the Asian Games, won the boys' 110 metres hurdles in 13.63 seconds. Fuka Kondo of Ehime set a national under-20 record of 6 minutes 31.52 seconds in the girls' 2,000 metres steeplechase. Tomohiro Shinno of Hiroshima won the men's high jump at 2.20 metres; the Paris Olympian Ryoichi Akamatsu was fifth.

SHUKA SHO: Monroe Walk, who has won four races in a row including the Rose Stakes, completed her final workout at Ritto in excellent condition for Sunday's Shuka Sho, the Grade 1 race for three-year-old fillies over 2,000 metres at Kyoto. Her trainer, Hiroyuki Uemura, called her a horse who could become a star.

MATCH-FIXING: A cross-party group of lawmakers is drafting a law to prevent the manipulation of sports results linked to betting, which would create a government body to co-ordinate countermeasures.

KUDO: Kimiyasu Kudo, 63, was named manager of the Chunichi Dragons.

ODA: Shoki Oda of Yokohama High School said he would pursue a career in American baseball.

PARA GAMES: Competition at the Aichi-Nagoya

Asian Para Games begins today; the opening ceremony is on Sunday.

GYMNASTICS: The world championships open in Rotterdam on Saturday.

FIGURE SKATING: Mao Shimada, preparing for the Grand Prix series, said she would "challenge everything".

GO: Ryo Ichiriki levelled the Meijin title match at 3-3; the deciding game is on October 28 and 29.

CULTURE

Cormorant Fishing on the Nagara River Ends Its Season by Firelight, With Ridership Slightly Down After Low Water in High Summer

A tradition said to be more than 1,300 years old drew 84,892 passengers; Gifu hopes to win UNESCO recognition for the art the poet Basho found both delightful and sad

By the Culture Desk

The cormorant fishing season on the Nagara River in Gifu City ended on Thursday night with the traditional spectacle: a boat gliding downstream with a fire blazing at its bow, a master fisherman in straw skirt and dark robes working a team of trained cormorants on leashes, and spectators on the riverbank and in sightseeing boats cheering as a bird surfaced with a sweetfish in its bill.

The season, which began on May 11, drew 84,892 passengers on the city's sightseeing boats, 0.7 per cent fewer than last year, the city said. Numbers had been recovering steadily from the slump during the coronavirus pandemic.

Low water

Bookings were firm early in the season, including from foreign visitors. But less rain fell in the summer, and during the peak period from late July to mid-August the river level dropped so low that boats carrying large groups could not sail on some days. The city reduced the number of reservations it accepted.

New attractions, including a premium sightseeing boat, did not make up the difference.

An ancient art

Cormorant fishing on the Nagara is said to date back more than 1,300 years. The fishermen tie a cord loosely around each bird's neck so that it can swallow small fish but not the larger sweetfish, known as ayu, which the fisherman retrieves. The fire at the bow attracts the fish and lights the water.

The master fishermen of the Nagara hold the title of cormorant fishers of the Imperial Household Agency, and part of their catch is presented to the imperial court. The fishing is designated by the government as an important intangible folk cultural property, and the city is seeking its inscription on UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage.

Basho's verse

The poet Matsuo Basho watched the cormorant boats on the Nagara in 1688 and wrote one of his best-known haiku: "Omoshirote / yagate kanashiki / ubune kana", roughly, "Delightful, and then, soon after, sad: the cormorant boats." The poem captures the excitement of the fishing and the melancholy that follows when the fires go out and the boats drift away into the dark.

The city's Nagara River Ukai Museum, beside the river, explains the history and techniques of the tradition throughout the year.

CULTURE

Toshiko Kanzawa, Author of the Children's Classic 'Kuma no Ko Ufu', Dies at 102

Her gentle stories of a bear cub's wonder at the world have been read aloud to generations of Japanese children since 1969

By the Culture Desk

Toshiko Kanzawa, the children's author best known for Kuma no Ko Ufu, or Ufu the Bear Cub, died of old age on October 11 at her home in Mitaka, Tokyo, it was announced on Thursday. She was 102.

Her funeral was attended by close family members, and a farewell gathering will be held later.

A life in children's books

Born in Kitakyushu, Ms Kanzawa graduated from Bunka Gakuin in Tokyo and wrote across a wide range of forms, including fairy tales, children's songs and poetry. Her birth name was Toshi Furukawa.

Her early works included Chibikko Kamu no Boken, published in 1961, about the adventures of a small

boy named Kamu.

Ufu

Kuma no Ko Ufu, published in 1969, became her most beloved book. In a series of short episodes, a curious bear cub discovers the joys and puzzles of everyday life, wondering, for example, what he is made of, and learning from his parents and friends. The book became a long-running bestseller and is regarded as a classic of literature for young children, often read aloud by parents and in nurseries.

Other works

Her other books include Furaipan Jiisan, or Grandpa Frying Pan, also from 1969; Nagare no Hotori, or By the Stream, from 1976; and Iinai Iinai Baa, from 1978, which won the Noma Children's Literature Prize and the prize of the Japanese Association of Writers for Children.

Her books are known for their simple language, their warmth and their attention to the small wonders of a child's world.

CULTURE

Actors' Union Issues Guidelines on AI Voices, Asking Businesses Not to Recreate the Voices of the Dead or Use AI to Replace Dubbing

Voice actors have complained of their voices being generated without consent; the union wants to protect their work

By the Culture Desk

The Japan Actors Union, which represents voice actors and actors, published guidelines on Thursday setting rules for businesses that use voices generated by artificial intelligence, saying it wanted to protect voice actors' opportunities for work.

The guidelines ask that the voices of people who have died not be used in new works, and that AI not, as a rule, be used to replace human voices in the dubbing of films and television dramas.

Permission from families

Generative AI makes it technically possible to recreate the voices of the dead and others. Even in the exceptional cases where that is done, the guidelines say, permission from the person's family or other relatives must be obtained.

Voices used without consent

The union acted after a series of cases in which voice actors' voices were reproduced by AI without their consent, sometimes in videos posted online or in products sold commercially. The cases have drawn attention to what has come to be called the right to one's voice.

Japan's voice acting industry is large and well known abroad, thanks to the popularity of anime and video games, and many voice actors have devoted fan followings. Their distinctive voices are part of their livelihoods.

A legal grey zone

Japanese law does not explicitly recognise a right over one's voice. Some protection may be available under laws on publicity rights, unfair competition and trademarks, but how they apply to AI-generated voices remains unclear.

The union's guidelines are not legally binding, but it hopes companies in broadcasting, games and advertising will follow them. It is also calling for clearer legal protection.

The guidelines come in the same week that Google announced payments to news organisations for the use of their articles in AI features, another sign of creators seeking a share of the value their work brings to AI.

CULTURE

October 16 in History

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1793: Marie Antoinette, the former queen of France, is executed by guillotine in Paris during the Revolution.

1805: Napoleon's forces surround the Austrian army at Ulm, forcing its surrender days later.

1834: Much of the old Palace of Westminster in London is destroyed by fire after old tally sticks are burned in its furnaces.

1846: The first public demonstration of surgery under ether anaesthesia takes place in Boston.

1916: Margaret Sanger opens the first family planning clinic in the United States, in Brooklyn, New York.

1923: Walt and Roy Disney found their cartoon studio in Los Angeles.

1946: Ten senior Nazi leaders convicted at the Nuremberg trials are executed.

1962: The Cuban Missile Crisis begins as President Kennedy is shown photographs of Soviet missile sites.

1964: China conducts its first nuclear test, during the Tokyo Olympics.

1975: Rahima Banu of Bangladesh becomes the last known natural case of variola major smallpox.

1978: Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Krakow is elected pope, taking the name John Paul II, the first non-Italian pope in more than 450 years.

2008: The Nikkei average falls 11.4 per cent in a single day during the global financial crisis.

CULTURE

Quotes of the Day

By the News Desk

"I want to advance agriculture, forestry and fisheries administration that the public can trust." Arata Takebe, the new agriculture minister.

"There is no such fact." Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, asked whether the Japanese government engages in espionage.

"There is no need to be overly cautious about rate increases." Junko Koeda, Bank of Japan board member.

"More than ten years have passed since the deployment. Withdrawing it is not realistic." Okinawa Governor Genta Koja, on the Ospreys at Futenma.

"The Hokkaido Shimibun is a news organisation independent of the government." The paper's editor-in-chief, Takeshi Yamamoto.

"We need to watch market movements with a high sense of tension." Finance Minister Satoshi Katayama.

"I had the desire to become the best in the world, so I decided." Shoki Oda, Yokohama High School pitcher.

"The final goal is the championship." Kimiyasu Kudo, new Chunichi manager.

"A cut of 45 proportional seats is completely unacceptable." Hiroaki Nakano of Komeito.

"The telescopes will likely open a new and important window." Takaaki Kajita, Nobel laureate.

CULTURE

Festivals and Events This Week

By the Culture Desk

NIIHAMA TAIKO FESTIVAL, EHIME, OCT. 16 TO 18: Huge decorated drum floats, each carried on the shoulders of scores of bearers, parade through Niihama in one of Shikoku's most spectacular autumn festivals.

KAWAGOE FESTIVAL, SAITAMA, OCT. 17 AND 18: Ornate floats from the city's old merchant district meet at crossroads for musical duels known as hikkawase. The festival is part of a group of float festivals inscribed on UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list.

ASIAN PARA GAMES, AICHI AND NAGOYA, OCT. 16 TO 24: Competition begins today; the opening ceremony is on Sunday, October 18.

SHUKA SHO, KYOTO RACECOURSE, OCT. 18: The final leg of the fillies' Triple Crown, over 2,000 metres.

CEATEC, MAKUHARI MESSE, CHIBA: The technology exhibition closes today.

JIDAI MATSURI, KYOTO, OCT. 22: A procession of about 2,000 people in costumes from more than a thousand years of Japanese history walks from the Imperial Palace to Heian Shrine.

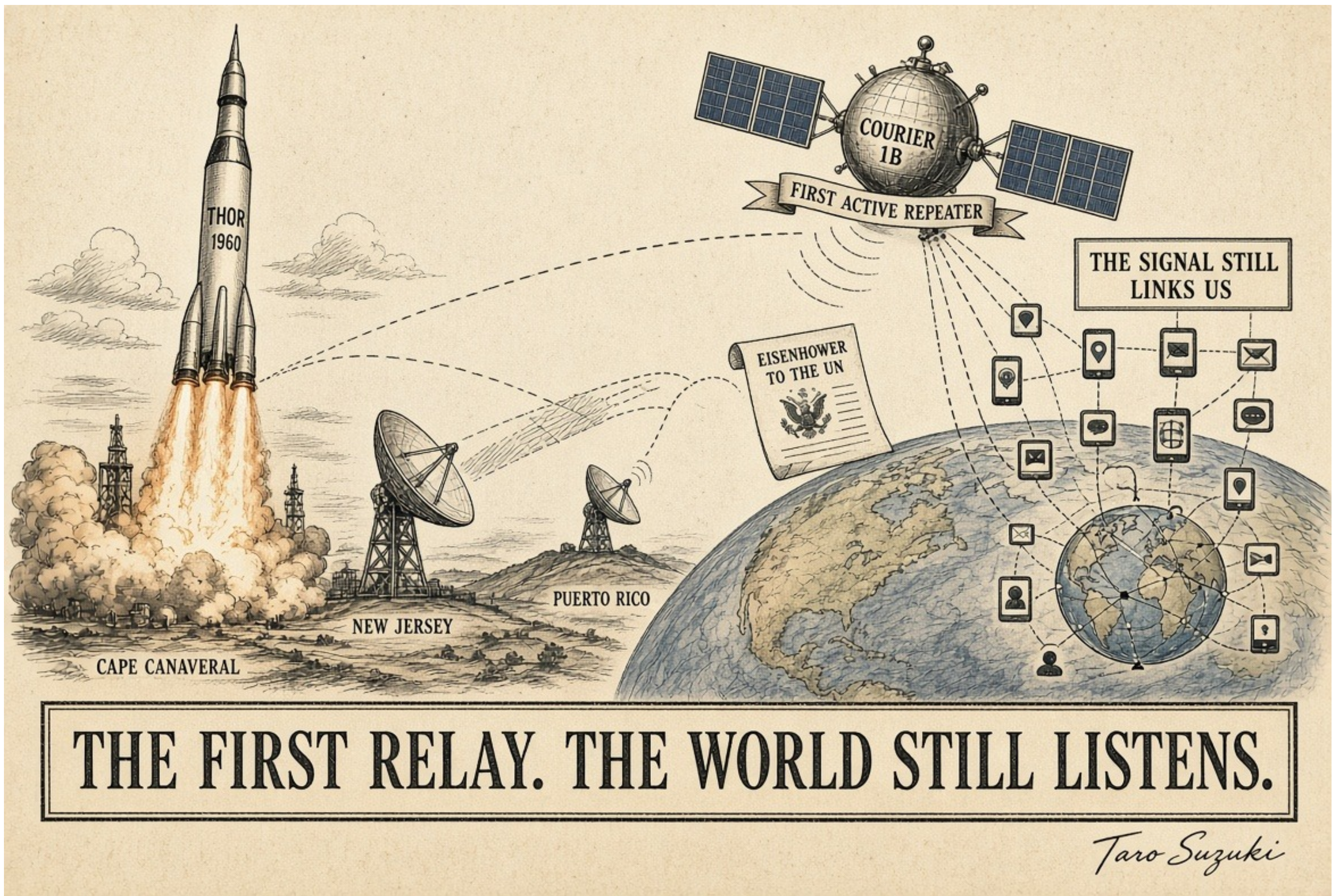
KURAMA FIRE FESTIVAL, KYOTO, OCT. 22: Torch-bearers parade through the mountain village of Kurama on the same night as the Jidai Matsuri.

PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL DRAFT, OCT. 22: Shoki Oda's decision to head for America has removed one leading name.

JAPAN SERIES, FROM OCT. 24: The best-of-seven series opens at the Central League representative's ground.

GO, MEIJIN TITLE MATCH, GAME 7, OCT. 28 AND 29: Izu, Shizuoka Prefecture.

EDITORIAL & OPINION



Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki for The Japan Morning Post.

EDITORIAL

The First Relay. The World Still Listens. What a Satellite That Lived for 17 Days in 1960 Can Teach Japan About Control, Time and Trust in Orbit

Courier 1B carried a president's message to the United Nations and then fell silent because its clock and its keepers' clocks no longer agreed. Sixty-six years later, satellites guide our ships, warn us of typhoons and keep armies talking, and this week showed how much depends on who holds the switch

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki's cartoon on this page tells a story in a single sweep from left to right. A Thor rocket rises in a cloud of smoke and flame from Cape Canaveral in 1960. A dashed line climbs from it to a sphere studded with antennas and flanked by solar panels, labelled COURIER 1B and FIRST ACTIVE REPEATER. Below, two dish antennas, in New Jersey and Puerto Rico, trade signals with the satellite, and a scroll marked with a presidential seal reads EISENHOWER TO THE UN. On the right, the dashed lines fan out across a curving Earth to dozens of telephones and tablets and to a small globe criss-crossed by links. A box declares: THE SIGNAL STILL LINKS US. The caption beneath: THE FIRST RELAY. THE WORLD STILL LISTENS.

It is a celebration, and a reminder. Courier 1B, launched on October 4, 1960, has been largely forgotten outside the history of engineering. Yet the line that runs from it to the devices in our pockets is real, and this week, which brought news of a satellite network switched off and on again over a battlefield, a typhoon tracked by satellites across an empty ocean, and the abolition of the leap second, is a good moment to follow it.

A satellite that talked back

In the summer of 1960 the United States had already sent a voice into space. In December 1958 a satellite called SCORE had broadcast a recorded Christmas message from President Dwight Eisenhower, conveying "America's wish for peace on Earth and goodwill toward men everywhere". In August 1960 Echo 1, a giant aluminised balloon, began bouncing radio signals passively off its skin from one ground station to another.

Courier 1B was something different. Proposed by the U.S. Army Signal Corps and built by Philco's Western Development Laboratories, it was a sphere about 1.3 metres across, weighing 225 kilograms and covered with 19,200 solar cells. Inside were

receivers, transmitters and five tape recorders. It could receive messages from one ground station, store them and play them back to another, or relay them in real time when both stations could see it. It could handle about 68,000 coded words a minute, an astonishing rate for its day, and it was the first satellite to use nickel-cadmium batteries.

That is what made it, in the words historians still use, the world's first active repeater communications satellite: not a mirror in the sky, but a machine that listened, remembered and answered.

Its predecessor, Courier 1A, had been lost about two and a half minutes after lift-off in August 1960. Courier 1B rose on a Thor-Ablestar rocket from Cape Canaveral on October 4 and settled into an orbit about 1,000 kilometres high, circling the Earth every 107 minutes.

A message to the world

After its first orbit, the satellite relayed a teletype message from President Eisenhower to the United Nations General Assembly, which Secretary of State Christian Herter was to deliver to the Assembly's president in New York. The ground stations were the ones the cartoon shows: a transmitting station at Deal, New Jersey, an outpost of the Army's laboratories at Fort Monmouth, and a receiving and relay station at Salinas, Puerto Rico.

There is something fitting in the fact that the first message entrusted to an active communications satellite was addressed to the United Nations. In the depths of the Cold War, with the Soviet Union ahead in rockets and the world still shaken by Sputnik, the United States chose to present its technology as a service to all nations.

From Courier to Early Bird

Courier's successors came quickly. In July 1962 Telstar 1, built by the American telephone company AT&T, relayed the first live television pictures across

the Atlantic. In 1963 Syncom 2 became the first satellite in a geosynchronous orbit, matching the Earth's rotation, and in 1964 Syncom 3 was placed over the Pacific in time to carry live pictures of the Tokyo Olympics to North America. In April 1965 Early Bird, the first commercial communications satellite in geostationary orbit, began carrying telephone calls and television between Europe and North America for the new international consortium Intelsat, of which Japan was one of the founding members.

Within five years of Courier's brief life, the idea it proved had become an industry. Within a generation, it had become infrastructure, as ordinary and as invisible as the pipes beneath a city street.

Death by disagreement

Courier 1B worked well. Messages went up and came down as designed. Then, 17 days after launch, it stopped responding to commands from the ground.

The most likely explanation is a small masterpiece of irony. To prevent anyone else from taking control of the satellite, its designers had given it a security system: commands had to carry access codes that changed with time, according to a clock on board. When the satellite's clock and the clocks on the ground drifted out of step, Courier 1B began to treat its rightful operators as intruders and refused to obey them.

In other words, the first active communications satellite in history was protected against hacking, and it died because its lock and its key stopped agreeing on the time.

Sixty-six years on, that story reads less like a curiosity than a parable for this week's news.

Who holds the switch

Consider first the battlefield. Ukraine's armed forces depend on Starlink, the satellite network of Elon Musk's SpaceX, and on its military version, Starshield, to communicate at the front and to fly the drones that have become central to the war. This week Ukrainian officials disclosed that their use of the service had been restricted. Reuters reported that the White House had ordered the restrictions; drone operations were disrupted. On Thursday Britain's defence secretary said he had been assured by his American counterpart that the curbs had been lifted.

Whatever the reasons, the lesson is stark. A country fighting for its survival discovered that a decisive part of its military communications could be limited, with little warning, by decisions taken in another capital and executed by a private company. The relay that links its soldiers is not, in the end, its own.

Japan should take that lesson personally. Our Self-Defense Forces, our coast guard, our disaster agencies and our businesses rely increasingly on satellites for communications, positioning and observation, and many of the services involved are owned and run by foreign companies or governments. Japanese mobile users can now send messages from ordinary smartphones via satellite in areas without ground coverage, a genuine advance for mountain villages and islands, and for disaster zones when ground networks fail. But convenience should not become dependence without a plan for the day the switch is thrown.

When the ground fails

Japan has also seen what satellites can do when the ground gives way. After the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, tens of thousands of mobile base stations stopped working as power failed and equipment was destroyed, and satellite telephones became a lifeline for local governments cut off from the outside world. After the Noto Peninsula earthquake on New Year's Day in 2024, Starlink terminals were set up at evacuation centres, letting people contact their families when roads and cables were broken.

Those episodes show both sides of the coin. Commercial satellite networks can bring connections to a disaster zone faster than any government programme. They can also be limited by the decisions of their owners and of the governments under whose laws they operate. A sensible country uses them gladly and plans for the day they are unavailable.

Our alliance, our capability

Our view of national security begins with the alliance with the United States, which remains the foundation of deterrence in East Asia. Nothing in the Starlink episode changes that. But an alliance is strongest when each partner brings real capabilities to it, and when neither can be paralysed by a decision it did not take.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Japan has the means to do more. It already operates the Michibiki satellites, which augment American GPS signals over Japan and the Asia-Pacific and make positioning more accurate in our mountainous terrain and crowded cities. It has defence communications satellites of its own. Its H3 rocket gives it independent access to space. The government has set up a large fund through JAXA to support space start-ups and new constellations over the next decade.

What is needed now is a clear national goal: that the communications, positioning and observation on which our defence and disaster response depend should have at least one path that Japan controls, or shares with allies on terms written down in advance, so that no single company or foreign political decision can cut it off. That is not a rejection of commercial services, which are often better and cheaper. It is insurance.

Watching the storms

Consider next the weather. Typhoon No. 30, Champi, formed on Thursday afternoon near the Marshall Islands, far from any weather station. Our forecasters know where it is, how strong it is and how fast it is strengthening because the Himawari-9 satellite, parked 36,000 kilometres above the equator, photographs it every few minutes, as it has photographed every storm in our region since it took over the watch in December 2022.

Japan has kept its own eye on the western Pacific since 1977, when the first Himawari was launched on an American rocket from Florida, two years after the United States sent up GOES-1 on October 16, 1975. Those images are shared freely with our neighbours, from the Philippines to the Pacific islands that lie in Champi's path. Few things Japan does in the world win it so much quiet goodwill.

The lesson here is continuity. A weather satellite gap would be dangerous, and the next Himawari must be in orbit before the current one ages out. The government's plans call for Himawari-10 later this decade with instruments that measure the atmosphere in three dimensions, which should sharpen forecasts of heavy rain and typhoon strength. That programme deserves to be protected from budget squeezes, because the cost of a missed forecast is counted in lives.

The question of time

Consider, finally, time itself. On Thursday the General Conference on Weights and Measures voted in France to abolish the leap second, the occasional extra second added since 1972 to keep atomic time in step with the Earth's slightly irregular spin. From May 2027 the gap will be allowed to grow to an hour before anything is done, which should not happen for centuries.

It is the right decision, and Courier 1B helps explain why. Our world runs on clocks that must agree with one another to tiny fractions of a second: satellite navigation, mobile networks, power grids, stock exchanges, banking systems. Each leap second forced every one of them to cope with a minute 61 seconds long, and some did not. In 2012 the extra second was followed by server failures in Japan and delays in airline procedures; elsewhere it crashed websites and disrupted flight bookings. A rule that injects a deliberate disagreement into the world's clocks every few years was a risk we no longer needed to take.

Satellite systems were part of the argument. America's GPS keeps its own time scale and ignores leap seconds; Russia's GLONASS follows them, which is one reason Moscow wanted a slower path to abolition. When a single second can confuse the machines that guide ships and aircraft, simplicity is a form of safety.

Clocks in orbit

Navigation satellites are, at heart, flying clocks. Each GPS satellite carries atomic clocks and broadcasts the time along with its position, and a receiver works out where it is by comparing the moments at which signals from several satellites arrive. Because radio waves travel about 300 metres in a millionth of a second, an error of a single microsecond becomes an error of hundreds of metres on the ground. Mobile networks, power grids and financial exchanges use the same signals to keep their equipment in step. A disagreement between clocks is no longer an engineering curiosity; it is a way for a whole society's machinery to fail.

Japan Standard Time is kept by the National Institute

of Information and Communications Technology. It and the operators of every critical network should treat the 2027 transition as a project, with testing, not a footnote. The engineers who lost Courier 1B to a clock that drifted would understand.

The weak link is on the ground

Courier 1B's designers worried about someone seizing control of their satellite from the ground. They were right to worry, and the threat has grown. A satellite is only as secure as the systems that command it, and those systems sit in ordinary buildings, connected to ordinary networks.

This week alone, Japan learned of a breach at SourceNext that may have exposed up to 22.5 million customer records, a leak of 11.18 million app members' data at the operator of Burger King's Japanese restaurants, an intrusion that disrupted hospital bookings at 787 medical institutions, and the continuing fallout from the hacking of a company that sends disaster warnings by email, which has led 192 local governments to report suspensions or possible leaks. Government researchers found that some attackers had studied smartphone apps, possibly with the help of artificial intelligence, to find the weaknesses of the servers behind them.

None of those systems is in orbit. All of them show where modern infrastructure is soft. Since October 1, the police and the Self-Defense Forces have been allowed to enter and disable servers used to attack Japan, under the active cyber defence law passed last year. That is a welcome start. But the first line of defence will always be the people who build and run systems, and too many still treat security as a cost rather than a duty.

Satellite signals themselves can be attacked from the ground. In conflict zones from the Black Sea to the Middle East, ships and aircraft have reported false positions in recent years as navigation signals were jammed or spoofed, a tactic that costs an aggressor little and can cause confusion far from any battlefield.

For satellites and their ground stations, the stakes are higher still. A hostile power that could jam, spoof or seize the satellites that guide our ships and time our networks would not need to fire a missile to do grave harm. China demonstrated in 2007 that it could destroy a satellite in orbit with a missile, scattering debris that still threatens other spacecraft. Russia has been accused of developing far more dangerous weapons for space. Defending the relays is now part of defending the nation.

Japan's own history in the sky

Japan's own story with satellites is older and richer than many realise. In November 1963, the first experimental television transmission across the Pacific by satellite, relayed by the American satellite Relay 1 to a receiving station in Ibaraki Prefecture, carried shocking news: President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated. A year later, the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics was carried live across the Pacific by satellite, a showcase of a country rebuilt.

In February 1970 Japan launched its first satellite, Ohsumi, becoming the fourth country to put a satellite into orbit with its own rocket. It has since built world-class weather, observation and navigation satellites, landed spacecraft on asteroids and brought samples home, and secured a seat for a Japanese astronaut on a future American landing on the Moon.

That record is a source of pride and a foundation. It should also be a reminder that capability, once built, has to be maintained, renewed and defended.

What we recommend

First, the government should set a clear goal that every critical function that depends on satellites, from military communications to disaster warnings and the timing of financial and power networks, has a backup path under Japanese or jointly agreed allied control, and publish a timetable for achieving it.

Second, it should agree with the United States and other partners, in peacetime, how commercial satellite networks will be used and protected in a crisis, so that no ally ever again learns in the middle of a war that a vital link can be throttled without consultation.

Third, it should protect the funding of the next generation of Himawari weather satellites and the expansion of Michibiki, which serve not only Japan but a region that looks to us for warning of the storms that strike it every year.

Fourth, it should treat the switch from leap seconds to the leap hour in 2027 as a national technical project, with a test plan for networks, financial markets, broadcasters and the operators of satellite systems.

Fifth, it should raise the security standards required of the companies that run the ground systems on which communications and public warnings depend, with regular audits and clear consequences for neglect. The disaster email that falls silent because a vendor was hacked is a small preview of what a larger failure would look like.

Sixth, it should invest in people. Satellites, ground stations and the software that ties them together are built and defended by engineers, and Japan's space industry, like much of its technology sector, is short of them. Scholarships, better pay in public agencies and closer ties between universities, JAXA and companies would do more for the country's security in orbit than any single new satellite.

None of this is beyond Japan's means. It requires steady funding, clear priorities and a willingness to treat the systems overhead with the same seriousness as the ports, power stations and railways on the ground.

The signal still links us

The sphere in Mr Suzuki's cartoon has been silent for 66 years. It is still up there, probably, a forgotten piece of machinery tumbling through the dark. Its 17 days of life were enough to prove that a machine in orbit could listen to one part of the world and speak to another.

Everything that followed, the live pictures of the Tokyo Olympics, the satellite telephone in a disaster zone, the forecast that tells Okinawa a typhoon is coming, the drone pilot in a trench in Ukraine, descends from that idea. The world still listens. The question this week has posed is who decides what it hears, and whether, on the day it matters most, the relay will answer.

Courier 1B was lost because its keepers could not keep their clocks in agreement with it. Japan's task is simpler to state and harder to achieve: to keep its own hand on the switches that matter, its clocks in agreement, and its allies in step.

ANALYSIS

Thursday's Rout Is a Warning About How the AI Boom Is Financed, Not a Verdict on the Technology

Tokyo's dependence on a handful of chip stocks magnifies every scare; investors and policymakers should respond calmly, and diversify

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

A fall of 3,318 yen in a single day is frightening, and for the millions of Japanese who began investing through the expanded tax-free NISA accounts in recent years, Thursday may have been their first experience of a market in free fall. It is worth keeping it in proportion.

In percentage terms, the drop of about 4.9 per cent was painful but nowhere near the worst days in the Nikkei's history: the 14.9 per cent collapse after Black Monday in 1987, or the 12.4 per cent plunge of August 2024, which was largely reversed within days. And on Friday morning the index opened higher.

What spooked the market

The trigger was not a failure of artificial intelligence but a question about money. A slide in the bonds of CoreWeave, an American company that has borrowed heavily to rent out computing power, suggested that lenders were growing nervous. American inflation figures this week raised the prospect of higher interest rates, which make that borrowing more expensive.

Meanwhile, TSMC reported record profits and said it could not build chips fast enough. Demand for the technology is not the problem. The problem is that a large part of the spending on data centres is financed with debt, by companies whose revenues do not yet cover their costs, and that the price of that debt is rising.

Tokyo's concentration

Japan's market is unusually exposed. Three companies, Advantest, Tokyo Electron and SoftBank Group, accounted for more than 2,100 yen of Thursday's fall, because the Nikkei is weighted by share price rather than by the size of companies. A few stocks tied to one global theme can drag the

whole index, which says less about the Japanese economy than the headlines suggest.

For individual investors, the lesson is the oldest in finance: spread your money. A portfolio that tracks a broad index, such as the Topix, or that includes bonds and overseas assets, will still fall on days like Thursday, but less, and it does not depend on the fortunes of a few companies betting on the same idea.

What policymakers should not do

The Bank of Japan should not let one day of turmoil knock it off course. Inflation is broad, as board member Junko Koeda said on Thursday, and the case for gradually raising rates rests on the economy, not on the stock market. Equally, the government should resist calls to support share prices. Markets that are rescued every time they fall learn to take bigger risks.

What policymakers can do is watch for signs that the stress is spreading from shares into credit markets and banks, where it would matter far more. So far there is little evidence of that in Japan.

The longer view

The AI build-out may yet prove to be one of the great investment booms in history, or partly a bubble, and probably some of both. Booms financed by debt tend to end with shake-outs in which weaker borrowers fail while the technology carries on. Railways in the 19th century and fibre-optic networks in the 1990s followed that pattern.

Thursday was a reminder that Tokyo is now tightly bound to that cycle. Investors who understand that will be better placed to survive it than those who simply follow the index up and down.

ANALYSIS

Takebe Is a Sensible Choice; Now He Must Show That Experience Means Firmness on Pests, Honesty on Rice and Nothing to Hide

The prime minister has chosen competence over loyalty; the opposition is right to ask how the last appointment went wrong

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi needed a safe pair of hands at the agriculture ministry, and in Arata Takebe she appears to have found one.

He knows the ministry, having served as its senior vice-minister. He represents a farming district on the Okhotsk coast. He comes from a political family steeped in farm policy: his father held the same post under Junichiro Koizumi. After the 28-day tenure of Kazuo Yana, the choice signals that the government wants competence and calm rather than another loyalist with something to prove.

The potato test

His first test is already on his desk. The United States wants Japan to open its market to fresh potatoes, and Washington has been pressing for the process to be accelerated. Mr Takebe's answer on Thursday was the right one: Japan understands its partner's expectations but must keep out harmful pests and diseases.

That position deserves to be held firmly. The potato cyst nematode, one of 21 pests the ministry wants addressed, can persist in soil for years and is very hard to eradicate. Hokkaido grows about 80 per cent of Japan's potatoes. A trade concession that let such a pest in would be a disaster for farmers and for food security, the very cause the new minister has made his first priority.

The alliance with the United States matters more than any trade dispute. But allies can agree that science, not political pressure, should set quarantine rules, and Mr Takebe's experience should help him say so without drama.

Rice

On rice, the minister promised continuity, with production in line with demand. Consumers will want more than a slogan. Prices remain high, and the government owes households a clear explanation of how its policy will ensure enough rice at reasonable prices, not only stable incomes for farmers.

The appointment that failed

None of this resolves the question the opposition will press in the Diet today: how did Mr Yana come to be appointed, and why did it take so long to remove him? The prime minister has said the responsibility is hers. That is correct, but it is not an explanation.

The government should say what checks it makes on ministerial candidates, whether they were applied in Mr Yana's case and what will change. A complaint has now been filed with prosecutors over the free

ANALYSIS

buses for voters; the law will take its course. The cabinet's credibility depends on showing that it learned something from the episode.

Mr Takebe promised a ministry run with fairness and transparency. If he delivers that, he will have done the government a service well beyond agriculture.

ANALYSIS

Okinawa's Governor Chose Realism on the Ospreys. Tokyo Must Now Show That Co-operation Pays

Accepting the aircraft removes a source of friction in the alliance; the national government owes Okinawa safety, transparency and a fair share

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Governor Genta Koja's decision to accept the U.S. Marine Corps' Ospreys at Futenma is the most significant shift in Okinawa's stance on the American military in more than a decade, and it deserves to be understood on its own terms.

He did not say the aircraft are safe. He said concerns about safety have not been dispelled and that he wants them flown only after safety is carefully confirmed. What he said is that, more than ten years after they arrived, with the Self-Defense Forces now flying the same type, demanding their withdrawal is not realistic. That is a statement of fact, and it took courage to make it.

Why it matters

The security of the south-western islands is now the front line of Japan's defence. China's navy operates aircraft carriers close to our shores; one passed between Okinawa and Miyako this week. The ability to move Marines and Self-Defense Force troops quickly between islands is central to deterring an attack, and the Osprey's speed and range are part of that.

For years the formal opposition of the prefecture made every movement of these aircraft a political event. Ending that opposition does not silence critics, nor should it, but it allows Okinawa and Tokyo to talk about how the aircraft are flown, not whether.

What Okinawa is owed

Co-operation must not be a one-way street. Okinawa still hosts most of the facilities used exclusively by the American military in Japan, on a tiny share of the country's land, and its people bear the noise, the risk and the crimes that sometimes accompany a large foreign presence.

The government plans to convene the Okinawa Policy Council this month for the first time since 2013. It should use the meeting to offer concrete commitments: a promotion budget that reverses years of decline, a timetable for returning land and reducing the burden, and binding arrangements for sharing information about Osprey accidents and maintenance.

The American military, too, has obligations. Openness about safety problems, prompt notification of incidents and respect for local rules on flight hours and routes would do more to sustain the governor's policy than any statement from Tokyo.

A test of the relationship

Governor Koja has taken a political risk by aligning with the national government. If co-operation brings nothing tangible to Okinawa, his successors will return to confrontation, and they will have a strong case.

The alliance is the foundation of our security, and a stable relationship with Okinawa is the foundation of the alliance's presence in Japan. Tokyo should treat the governor's realism as an opportunity, and repay it.

ANALYSIS

If Japan Will Spend More on Defence, It Should Say How Much and How It Will Pay. Silence on 3.5 Per Cent Helps No One

Leaving the figure out of the strategy documents may avoid a row now; it will not avoid the arithmetic later

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The Asahi Shimbun reports that the government will not write a target of 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product for defence into the revised national security documents, despite American calls for Japan to reach that level within five years. The temptation is understandable. The wisdom is doubtful.

Why a number matters

The 2022 documents set a clear goal: spending on defence and related areas worth 2 per cent of GDP by

fiscal 2027. Whatever one thought of the figure, it disciplined the debate. Ministries knew what they had to plan for, the public knew what it would cost, and allies knew what Japan had committed.

A strategy without a number risks becoming a list of wishes, with the hard choices about money deferred to annual budget fights where they are hardest to make well.

The ally is watching

The United States has made allied spending a central theme. NATO members agreed last year to spend 3.5 per cent of GDP on core defence by 2035, and Washington wants the same from its Asian allies. Japan can argue that its circumstances differ, that what matters is capability rather than percentages, and that it alone should decide what it needs. Those arguments are stronger when Japan sets out its own path with figures attached than when it simply declines to give one.

The cost of honesty

The reason for the silence is obvious. Reaching 3.5 per cent would mean roughly 20 trillion yen a year, more than double the current level, at a time when interest rates are rising and the government is cutting taxes on food. Saying so would invite a debate about taxes and borrowing that no government wants before it must.

But that debate is coming anyway. Deterring China, North Korea and Russia, the three powers that threaten our security, requires sustained investment in missiles, ships, aircraft, drones, cyber and space defences and, above all, in people. Pretending otherwise invites a gap between commitments and resources that adversaries will notice before voters do.

What the government should do

It should set out a spending path for the next five years, even if it falls short of 3.5 per cent, together with a credible plan for paying for it through a mix of savings, revenue and borrowing. It should explain to the public why the money is needed, using the same frankness about threats that it uses with allies.

Strength in defence begins with clarity. A government confident of its case should not be afraid to say the number.

ANALYSIS

Twenty-Two Million Records Later: Japan Needs Binding Security Rules for the Companies That Hold Our Data

Voluntary guidance has not stopped a wave of breaches; minimum standards, audits and real penalties would

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The admission by SourceNext that information on up to 22.5 million customers may have leaked would be alarming at any company. At a firm that sells security software, it is a humiliation. But the more important point is that it is not an exception.

In a matter of weeks, Japanese companies have disclosed breach after breach: millions of records linked to a data centre operator, 11.18 million app members at the operator of Burger King's restaurants, a hospital system serving 787 institutions knocked offline, a manga store shut down, and a disaster email service whose hacking has silenced warnings in towns across the country.

The same mistakes

The details differ, but the pattern is familiar. According to reports, attackers abused an interface for retrieving member data at SourceNext and also compromised the program used to decrypt stored passwords. Government researchers found that attackers in other cases studied smartphone apps to find weaknesses in the servers behind them. These are not exotic techniques. They exploit basic failures of design and maintenance.

Storing passwords in a form that can be decrypted, rather than protecting them with one-way methods designed so that they cannot be recovered, is a choice that security experts have warned against for years. Exposing interfaces that return large amounts of personal data without strict limits is another.

Why voluntary rules fail

Japan relies heavily on guidance and voluntary standards for corporate cybersecurity outside a few regulated sectors. The personal information protection law requires companies to report serious leaks, but the penalties for failing to protect data are

modest compared with those in Europe, where regulators can impose fines tied to a company's global turnover.

When the cost of a breach falls mainly on customers, whose passwords and addresses are exposed, companies have too little incentive to spend money on prevention.

What should change

The government should set minimum security standards for companies that hold large amounts of personal data, covering how passwords are stored, how interfaces are protected and how quickly vulnerabilities are fixed, with independent audits for the largest. Penalties for negligence should be large enough to change behaviour. Companies that provide public services, such as disaster warnings, should face stricter requirements still.

The new active cyber defence law lets the police and Self-Defense Forces disable servers used in attacks. That is a useful tool. But no government can defend systems whose owners leave the doors open.

Customers, meanwhile, should change passwords exposed in the leaks and stop reusing them across sites. It is unfair that they should have to, but it is the only protection entirely in their own hands.

ANALYSIS

Ending the Leap Second Is Overdue Common Sense. Making Sure Our Systems Are Ready Is the Real Work

A second added every few years caused more trouble than it was worth; the leap hour hands a problem to our distant descendants, which is fine

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Some decisions are momentous because they change everything. The vote in France on Thursday to abolish the leap second is momentous because, if all goes well, it will change nothing that anyone notices.

For more than half a century, the world's timekeepers have added an extra second to Coordinated Universal Time whenever the gap between atomic clocks and the Earth's rotation threatened to exceed 0.9 seconds. Twenty-seven times since 1972, the clocks have read 23:59:60, or in Japan 8:59:60 in the morning.

The case for change

The leap second made sense when the main users of precise time were astronomers and navigators reading the stars. It makes little sense in a world where computers, networks, satellites and markets must agree on the time to millionths of a second, and where a minute with 61 seconds is a known cause of software failures.

The 2012 leap second was followed by server failures in Japan and delays in airline procedures. The prospect of the first negative leap second, made more likely by a recent speeding-up of the Earth's rotation, alarmed engineers even more.

The leap hour

From May 2027 the gap will be allowed to grow to an hour. At the current pace that will take centuries, and our descendants may decide never to make the adjustment at all. Civil life will not suffer: an hour's drift between the sun and the clock over several hundred years is smaller than the difference between one end of a time zone and the other.

Some will regret loosening the link between clocks and sky. But the drift will be less than a minute in a lifetime, invisible to all but astronomers, who keep time scales of their own.

The work ahead

The decision removes a recurring risk, but it creates a one-time task. Systems that were written to expect leap seconds, or to apply them automatically from official announcements, must be checked. Financial exchanges, power grid operators, mobile networks, broadcasters and the operators of satellite systems should test their software well before May 2027.

Japan's timekeeper, the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology, should publish clear guidance and co-ordinate with industry. The government should treat the transition as part of its work on the resilience of critical infrastructure, alongside cybersecurity.

Time is a public good. The best timekeeping is the kind no one thinks about. Thursday's decision brings us closer to that ideal, provided we do the dull work of getting ready.

ANALYSIS

The Yalu Bridge Is Open. Japan Must Make Sure the Sanctions on North Korea Stay Shut

Warmer ties between Beijing and Pyongyang are a reality; letting them erode the restraints on a nuclear-armed state would be a mistake

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

For twelve years the bridge across the Yalu River between Dandong and Sinuiju stood finished and unused, a symbol of a relationship between China and North Korea that had cooled over Pyongyang's nuclear tests. On Thursday it opened, with a joint ceremony and a video message from North Korea's premier promising new vitality for economic co-operation.

China is entitled to build bridges with its neighbours. The question for Japan, and for every member of the United Nations, is what travels across them.

The sanctions

Security Council resolutions adopted after North Korea's nuclear and missile tests ban its exports of coal, iron, textiles and seafood, cap its imports of petroleum and prohibit sales of machinery and vehicles. China voted for those resolutions. It has a duty to enforce them on its own border, the route by which most of North Korea's trade flows.

Enforcement has weakened in recent years. The panel of experts that monitored compliance for the Security Council was disbanded in 2024 after Russia vetoed its renewal, and Moscow itself has deepened military co-operation with Pyongyang, receiving troops and munitions for its war in Ukraine. A new road bridge into China adds to the ways in which goods can move.

Why it matters to Japan

North Korea continues to develop nuclear weapons and missiles capable of reaching our territory; it fired a short-range ballistic missile on Monday. It has never properly accounted for the Japanese citizens it abducted. Sanctions are among the few non-military levers available to bring it to negotiate on either issue.

What Japan should do

Japan should work with the United States, South Korea and like-minded partners to strengthen independent monitoring of North Korea's trade, including through satellite observation of the border and shipping, and to publish evidence of violations. It should press China, privately and publicly, to show that the new bridge will not become a channel for banned goods.

Japan should also be clear that it does not oppose contact or trade that respects the sanctions. Humanitarian goods, food and medicine are not the problem.

China says it implements the resolutions. The opening of the Yalu bridge is a good moment for it to demonstrate that, and for Japan to insist that it does.

EDITORIAL

Today's Numbers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

3,318.34: Yen lost by the Nikkei on Thursday, its third-largest one-day fall in points.

2,100: Yen of that fall accounted for by Advantest, Tokyo Electron and SoftBank Group together.

22.5 MILLION: Customer records that may have leaked at SourceNext.

192: Local governments reporting suspended disaster emails or possible leaks after the Arcadia hack.

30: Storms this season after Champi's formation, the most since 2013.

17: Days that Courier 1B, the first active repeater communications satellite, worked in 1960.

27: Leap seconds added since 1972; there will be no more.

3.5: Percentage of GDP the United States wants Japan to spend on defence.

6: Terms won by Arata Takebe in the House of Representatives.

84,892: Passengers who watched cormorant fishing on the Nagara this season.

0.2: Tons of water leaking an hour from a valve at the Onagawa No. 2 reactor.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Japan Morning Post corrects errors of fact as soon as they are identified: corrections@japanmorningpost.com. Thursday's typhoon pages said the depression near the Marshall Islands was forecast to become Typhoon No. 30 by 6 a.m. Friday; it was named at 3 p.m. Thursday.

The notes supplied for today's edition give the new farm minister's name as Shin Takebe; it is read Arata Takebe. They name Typhoon No. 30 Champa; it is Champi, a name from Laos. They refer to detained Russian journalists; the detainee is a Japanese correspondent of the Hokkaido Shimbun held by Russia. The official absent from the G20 meeting was the Treasury secretary, not the secretary of state. The Yokohama pitcher is Shoki Oda, not Shohei. Friday's early Nikkei gain exceeded 1,000 yen at one point, not 700. The leap hour, not the abolition, takes effect on May 20, 2027. Items from earlier in the month, including the judo world championships, the Asian Games medal table, the sumo tour of Bangkok and Masanori Ishikawa's retirement, are not reported again.

Not used because they could not be confirmed: a school roof collapse said to have killed more than 30 students; a forest fire in Abashiri; the world's oldest shipwreck off Turkey; false ship signals off the Senkaku Islands; a plan to shorten the major league season; and a figure of 1 trillion yen for FIFA's development spending.

THE WEEK AHEAD

FRI. 16: Upper house Budget Committee; Climax Series Game 3; NLCS Game 4; Asian Para Games begin; CEATEC closes. SAT. 17: Kawagoe Festival; gymnastics worlds open; Onagawa No. 2 to shut down. SUN. 18: Para Games opening; Shuka Sho; Champi near Guam. MON. 19: Budget Committee; Keen Sword; stalking panel. THU. 22: Baseball draft; Jidai Matsuri. SAT. 24: Japan Series. SUN. 25: Fukushima governor election. OCT. 29-30: Bank of Japan meeting. NOV. 3: U.S. midterms.

TYPHOON AND MARINE ADVISORIES

6 a.m. Friday. No. 30, Champi: tropical storm, 11.4N, 155.7E, about 1,210 km east of Guam; 998 hPa; winds 20 m/s, gusts 30; west at 15 km/h. Strong typhoon near the Marianas by early Sunday, 965 hPa; very strong east of the Philippines by early Tuesday, 950 hPa; about 980 km south-east of Naha by early Wednesday, 940 hPa. Guam in the storm-wind area by early Sunday, Saipan by early Monday. Emergencies at sea: 118.

MARKET REFERENCE

Thursday: Nikkei 225 64,425.95, down 3,318.34; Topix 3,999.34, down 97.44. Friday open: 64,925, up 499. New York, Thursday: Dow 52,177.69, up 556.21; Nasdaq 26,713.03, up 20.16. WTI crude \$97.97, up \$2.88. Dollar about 158 yen. Bank of Japan rate about 1.25 per cent. Gasoline 170.10 yen a litre.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

Front: the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TG2, CC). Typhoon map, Japan and United States weather maps: supplied for this edition. Arata Takebe, the Yalu River Bridge, the OpenAI illustration, the Onagawa plant and Shugo Maki: file images, WPM Productions. Cartoon: Taro Suzuki. U.S. government works are public domain and credited; agency news photographs are not reproduced.

SYMBOLS, UNITS AND TIMES

Map symbols: sun, sunny; cloud, cloudy; cloud with strokes, rain; an arrow, one sky giving way to another; a slanting stroke, one sky with the other at times. Highs in red, this morning's lows in blue, in degrees Celsius; the U.S. map is in Fahrenheit. Wind in metres a second (1 m/s is 3.6 km/h). Japan is 9 hours ahead of GMT, 13 ahead of New York and 16 ahead of Los Angeles; Guam is one hour ahead of Japan. Japanese names are given family name last. A person arrested is presumed innocent until convicted.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Police 110. Fire and ambulance 119. Coast guard 118. Disaster message dial 171. Police consultation and suspected fraud calls #9110. Consumer hotline 188. Panasonic washer-dryer repairs 0120-878-303. Customers of companies reporting leaks should change their passwords wherever they reused them.

OPINION AND SOURCES

The editorial is the view of the editorial page and takes its subject from the day's cartoon; Analysis

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

articles are the judgment of their writers. Reports draw on the Friday morning papers, Kyodo News, the Hokkaido Shimbun, Sports Hochi, the Financial Times, Reuters, CNN, the BBC, Politico, TheStreet and Xinhua; on official statements in Japan and abroad; on the Japan Meteorological Agency and Weathernews for weather; and on the U.S. National Weather Service for the American map.

READER SERVICES

The Japan Morning Post, Volume 2026, Number 288, is published daily by WPM Productions, Tokyo. Subscriptions: subscriptions@japanmorningpost.com. Letters: letters@japanmorningpost.com. Advertising: advertising@japanmorningpost.com. Today's crossword solution appears tomorrow; Thursday's solution is published today.

TOMORROW'S EDITION

Saturday: Climax Series Game 3, the first upper house Budget Committee session since the minister's resignation, the Bank of Japan governor in Bangkok, NLCS Game 4, Champi's track towards the Marianas and the Hokkaido Shimbun correspondent held in Russia.

MORE INSIDE TODAY

Nikkei Plunges 3,318 Yen, Its Third-Largest Fall on Record, as Fears Over AI Debt and an Early U.S. Rate Rise Sweep Through Chip Stocks — Page 1

Takaichi Names Arata Takebe Farm Minister to Steady Her Government After Yana's Exit — Page 1

The Nikkei's Biggest One-Day Falls, in Points and in Percentages — Page 2

Why a Fall in One American Company's Bonds Shook Tokyo: CoreWeave and the Borrowed Money Behind the AI Boom — Page 2

From Washington to Kabutocho: How a Hotter Inflation Report in America Ends Up Knocking Thousands of Yen Off the Nikkei — Page 2

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, Forms Near the Marshall Islands and Is Forecast to Become a Very Strong Typhoon After Passing Close to Guam — Page 3

Champi at a Glance — Page 3

How to Read the Typhoon Map: Forecast Circles, Storm-Warning Areas and What 'Strong' and 'Very Strong' Mean — Page 3

From Koguma to Champi: How the 14 Members of the Typhoon Committee Name the Storms, and Why Some Names Are Never Used Again — Page 4

Supercomputers and Machine Learning Disagree on Champi's Path: What the Two Kinds of Forecast Model Do, and How Forecasters Use Them — Page 4

If Champi Turns North: What Residents of Okinawa and the South-Western Islands Can Do Now, While the Storm Is Still Far Away — Page 4

The Reporter Held in Russia: The Third Day — Page 5

The Week Ahead — Page 5

Komeito Proposes Paying Every Resident About 80,000 Yen Over Two Years Instead of the Government's Cut in the Tax on Food — Page 5

New Farm Minister Sets Out His Priorities: Food Security, Demand at Home and Abroad, and Caution on American Potatoes — Page 6

Opposition Demands Budget Committee Session With Takaichi Over Failed Appointment as Ruling Party Holds to Its Diet Timetable — Page 6

Talks on Cutting 45 Proportional Seats Stay Deadlocked as the LDP Floats Tougher Rules for Candidates Revived on Party Lists — Page 6

Cabinet Public Relations Office Seeks 5.9 Billion Yen for Government Videos, With Most of the Work to Go to Private Firms, Tokyo Shimbun Reports — Page 7

Dividends and Other Investment Income Will Count Toward Medical Premiums and Co-Payments for Those 75 and Over From August 2029 — Page 7

Transport Ministry Considers Letting Foreign Ships Register Under the Japanese Flag in an Emergency So the Government Can Direct Them to Carry Supplies — Page 7

Politics in Brief — Page 8

Gunman, 16, Kills Three Children and a Teacher at an Elementary School in Bend, Oregon, Before Being Shot Dead — Page 8

Restrictions on Ukraine's Military Use of Starlink Are Lifted, Britain Says, as Reuters Reports the White House Ordered Them — Page 8

China and North Korea Open the Yalu River Bridge, Finished in 2014 and Left Idle for 12 Years, as Their Ties Warm — Page 9

Maduro and His Wife Plead Not Guilty in New York to New Charges of Conspiring to Torture Opponents and Detained Americans — Page 9

Trump Calls Off Plan to Stream the Firing-Squad Execution of the Fort Hood Gunman After an Outcry at Home and Abroad — Page 9

Markets at a Glance — Page 10

American Wholesale Prices Jump 6.3 Per Cent, the Fastest in Almost Four Years, While Retail Sales Beat Forecasts — Page 10

G20 Finance Chiefs Share Serious Concern About Inflation in Bangkok but Issue No Statement as the American Treasury Secretary Stays Away — Page 10

TSMC Posts Record Quarterly Profit on Booming Demand for AI Chips and Says It Cannot Build Capacity Fast Enough — Page 11

Beer Cartel Investigation Turns to What Top Executives Knew About Price Talks Among the Four Big Brewers — Page 11

Lawson and FamilyMart Raise Interim Profits on Better Product Ranges, While Seven-Eleven Japan's Operating Profit Falls — Page 11

Lawsuits, Licences and Listings: A Week That Showed How Much Is Now Riding on the Companies Building Artificial Intelligence — Page 12

SourceNext Says Up to 22.5 Million Customer Records May Have Leaked After Attackers Misused a Member Data Interface — Page 12

Burger King's Japanese Operator, a Hospital Booking System and a Manga Store Are Hit as Researchers Find Attackers Mining Apps for Weak Points — Page 12

Why a Single Second Caused So Much Trouble: Crashed Servers, Grounded Bookings and the Compromise Over Satellites That Ended the Leap Second — Page 13

CNN Signs a Multi-Year Deal With Google as More Than 400 News Organisations Join a Programme That Pays for Articles Used in AI Features — Page 13

1846: "Gentlemen, This Is No Humbug": A Public Operation Under Ether in Boston Launches the Age of Surgical Anaesthesia — Page 14

1923: Walt and Roy Disney Found a Small Cartoon Studio in Los Angeles That Will Pioneer Sound, Colour and the Animated Feature Film — Page 14

1998: Jon Postel, Who Edited the Internet's Rule Books for 28 Years and Ran Its Address System, Dies at 55 — Page 15

2003: Apple Releases iTunes for Windows, Opening Its Music Store and the iPod to the Vast Majority of Computer Users — Page 15

Hokkaido Police Arrest Eight Men Over Phone Scams Run From a Base in Laos, After Their Transfer to Japan — Page 16

United States: Much Cooler, Windy Air Sweeps South, Dropping Dallas to 65 and Houston to 76, While Los Angeles Swelters at 94 Under a Heat Advisory — Page 17

Wind Advisory, Freeze Warning, Heat Advisory: How America's Weather Service Ranks Its Alerts, and Why Denver's Watch Became a Warning — Page 17

Tohoku Electric Will Shut Down the Onagawa No. 2 Reactor Around Saturday Because a Feedwater Valve Is Leaking Water — Page 18

Warm Sunshine for Most of Japan, With Highs of 26 to 27 From Sendai to Kagoshima and 30 in Naha, While Rain Moves From Akita and Aomori to Niigata — Page 18

Narita Airport Stages a Large Drill Simulating a Failed Landing and Fire on a Boeing 767, With About 1,100 Taking Part — Page 19

Prosecutors Will Disclose 57 New Pieces of Evidence Before the Retrial in the Hino Case, Decades After a Man Was Convicted of Murder — Page 19

Maki's Eighth-Inning Homer Gives DeNA a 1-0 Win at Koshien and a 2-1 Lead Over Hanshin, Who Have Not Scored in Two Games — Page 20

Kurihara's Walk-Off Grand Slam Beats Nippon-Ham 6-2 and Leaves SoftBank One Win From a Third Straight Japan Series — Page 20

Brewers Beat the Dodgers 6-2 to Lead the NLCS 3-0; Ohtani, Batting Sixth, Singles in the Eighth and Sasaki Gives Up a Run — Page 21

Shinji Nakano Wins Keirin Bronze at the Track Cycling World Championships in Shanghai; Yumi Kajihara Takes Silver in the Elimination — Page 21

Daiki Hashimoto Says He Will Not Give Up First Place as He Seeks a Fourth Straight All-Around World Title in Rotterdam — Page 22

Sports in Brief — Page 22

The First Relay. The World Still Listens. What a Satellite That Lived for 17 Days in 1960 Can Teach Japan About Control, Time and Trust in Orbit — Page 23

Thursday's Rout Is a Warning About How the AI Boom Is Financed, Not a Verdict on the Technology — Page 24

www.japanmorningpost.com | newsdesk@japanmorningpost.com | 1-2-3 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0004

© 2026 WPM Productions | Page 26 of 26