

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform



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Kyoto Court Acquits Kudo-kai Executive of the 2013 Murder of Ohsho's President, Saying DNA on Cigarette Butts Leaves Reasonable Doubt

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carried to the scene, the link they provided between Mr Tanaka and the shooting was no longer enough.

The syndicate

The Kudo-kai is the only crime group in Japan designated "specially dangerous" under the law against organised crime groups, a status that gives the police additional powers over its members. Its top leader, Satoru Nomura, was sentenced to death by the Fukuoka District Court in 2021 over a series of attacks on ordinary citizens; in March 2024 the

Fukuoka High Court replaced the sentence with life imprisonment, acquitting him of the 1998 killing of a former fishing cooperative chief while upholding his responsibility for three attempted murders.

The trial never established why anyone would have wanted Mr Ohigashi dead. If the acquittal stands, the killing of the man who led one of Japan's best-known restaurant chains will remain, officially, unsolved.

SOCIETY

The Ohsho Case: From a Shooting at Dawn to an Acquittal

By the Data Desk

1967: Tomoaki Kato opens the first Gyoza no Ohsho restaurant at Shijo-Omiya in Kyoto.

1969: Takayuki Ohigashi, his brother-in-law, joins the company.

2000: Mr Ohigashi becomes president of Ohsho Food Service Corp.

DECEMBER 19, 2013: At about 5:45 a.m. Mr Ohigashi, 72, is shot outside the head office in Yamashina Ward, Kyoto, as he gets out of his car. He is hit three times in the abdomen and once in the chest and dies of blood loss.

THE INVESTIGATION: Two cigarette butts are found near the scene. DNA on them is later matched to Yukio Tanaka, a senior member of a gang affiliated with the Kudo-kai. Gunshot residue is found on a stolen motorcycle.

OCTOBER 28, 2022: Kyoto prefectural police arrest Mr Tanaka, who is serving a 10-year prison term in Fukuoka Prefecture for a separate firearms case.

NOVEMBER 26, 2025: The trial opens at the Kyoto District Court. Mr Tanaka pleads not guilty: "I am absolutely not the culprit."

JUNE 29, 2026: Prosecutors demand life imprisonment, calling the killing planned and dangerous.

OCTOBER 16, 2026: The court acquits him, finding reasonable doubt that he was the gunman.

NEXT: Prosecutors have 14 days, until October 30, to appeal to the Osaka High Court. The victim's family has asked them to do so.

SOCIETY

How Japan's Courts Judge a Case Built on Circumstantial Evidence, and Why DNA on a Cigarette Butt Was Not Enough

A 2010 Supreme Court ruling demands facts that are hard to explain unless the defendant is guilty; prosecutors can appeal an acquittal, but higher courts overturn findings of fact only when they are irrational

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

Friday's acquittal in the Ohsho case is a reminder that even in a country where more than 99 per cent of criminal trials end in a conviction, a case resting entirely on indirect evidence can fail.

Circumstantial evidence is evidence that does not prove the crime directly but from which guilt can be inferred: a fingerprint on a door, a purchase of the weapon, a defendant's movements captured on camera. Japanese law does not treat it as inferior to direct evidence such as a confession or an eyewitness account. A conviction can rest on it alone.

The 2010 standard

The Supreme Court set out how such cases should be judged in a ruling in April 2010, when it sent back the conviction of a man accused of killing a mother and her infant son in Osaka. Where guilt is to be proved by circumstantial evidence, the court said, the facts established must include something that could not reasonably be explained, or would at least be extremely difficult to explain, if the defendant were not the culprit.

In other words, it is not enough for the evidence to be consistent with the prosecution's story. It must be hard to square with any story in which the defendant is innocent.

The weight of DNA

DNA from a crime scene is often the strongest evidence of that kind, because an innocent stranger's genetic material does not usually turn up where a crime was committed. But its value depends on how it got there. A cigarette butt can be dropped by the culprit, dropped earlier or later by someone with nothing to do with the crime, or carried in from somewhere else.

In the Ohsho trial, the defence argued that no ash was found where the two butts lay, suggesting they had not been smoked there, and that they could have been planted. The Kyoto District Court said it was difficult to rule out that they had been brought from another place and could not exclude an attempt to disrupt the investigation. Once that possibility was open, the butts no longer pointed only to Yukio Tanaka.

The other pieces of the prosecution's case were weaker on their own. A figure on a security camera whose build and walk resembled the defendant's could not, the court said, be identified as him.

What happens next

Unlike prosecutors in the United States, Japanese prosecutors can appeal against an acquittal. They have 14 days to do so, and the case would go to the Osaka High Court.

The bar for overturning a trial court's findings is high. In 2012 the Supreme Court ruled that an appeal court may reject a lower court's findings of fact only if they are irrational in the light of logic and ordinary experience, not merely because the appeal judges would have weighed the evidence differently.

Why it matters

For the public, the result can feel unsatisfying: a notorious killing, a suspect with a gang background, DNA at the scene, and no conviction. But the principle at stake is that doubt benefits the accused. A system that convicts on evidence that could equally have been planted would put anyone at risk whose discarded cigarette, cup or tissue could be picked up by someone else.

SOCIETY

The Kudo-kai: Japan's Only 'Specially Dangerous' Crime Syndicate and a Decade of Prosecutions

Based in Kitakyushu, the group was singled out for attacks on ordinary citizens; its leader's death sentence was reduced to life on appeal in 2024

By the Society Desk

The Kudo-kai is a designated crime group based in Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture. Under the law against organised crime groups it holds a status no other gang has: it is designated "specially dangerous," a classification created for groups that commit violence against ordinary citizens and businesses.

The designation, first applied in 2012, gives the police stronger powers over the group's members, including the ability to arrest them more quickly for unlawful demands in designated warning zones.

Violence against citizens

The syndicate became notorious for targeting people outside the underworld: business owners who refused to pay, people connected with construction and fishing interests, and others who crossed it. Its leaders were tried over four attacks on citizens, including the 1998 shooting death of a former head of a fishing cooperative.

In 2014 Fukuoka prefectural police launched a sweeping operation against the group's leadership,

arresting its top leader, Satoru Nomura, and the second-ranking leader, Fumio Tanoue.

The trials

In August 2021 the Fukuoka District Court found Mr Nomura to be the mastermind of all four attacks and sentenced him to death, a rare sentence for a crime boss who had not personally carried out the violence. In March 2024 the Fukuoka High Court overturned the death sentence and imposed life imprisonment. It acquitted him of the 1998 killing for lack of evidence of his involvement but upheld his responsibility for three attempted murders. Mr Tanoue's life sentence was upheld. Both appealed to the Supreme Court, as did prosecutors. Mr Nomura denies any involvement.

The Ohsho case

Yukio Tanaka, acquitted in Kyoto on Friday, was described in court as a senior member of a gang affiliated with the Kudo-kai. The prosecution did not allege that the syndicate ordered the killing of Takayuki Ohigashi, nor did it set out any motive.

Bosses held to account

Victims of the group's attacks have also sued its leaders for damages under a provision of the law that makes the heads of crime syndicates liable for violence committed by their members.

A shrinking presence

Like other crime groups, the Kudo-kai has been weakened by years of prosecutions, financial pressure and laws that make it harder for gangs to open bank accounts, rent property or do business. But the attacks it carried out on ordinary people in northern Kyushu left a lasting mark, and the police continue to treat it as the most dangerous of Japan's syndicates.

SPORTS

Sano's Three-Run Homer and Katayama's Seven Scoreless Innings Put DeNA One Win From the Japan Series

Hanshin, the Central League champions, are shut out for the third straight game; Shugo Maki homers for the second game running; Game 4 is on Saturday at Koshien

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

The Yokohama DeNA BayStars beat the Hanshin Tigers 4-0 at Koshien Stadium on Friday to move within one win of the Japan Series, shutting out the Central League champions for a third straight game.

Keita Sano opened the scoring in the third inning with a three-run home run, and Shugo Maki added a solo homer in the eighth, his second in two games after his two-out blast in the eighth decided Thursday's 1-0 win. DeNA finished with 10 hits.

Katayama in command

Pitching was the story again. Katayama threw seven scoreless innings and struck out eight, and the bullpen finished the shutout.

Hanshin managed just two hits and never got a runner as far as third base.

The Tigers, who won the league for the second year running, have not scored a run in the series. For a team that led the Central League through the summer, the silence of their bats has come at the worst possible time.

The arithmetic

Hanshin began the best-of-six series with a one-win advantage as league champions. DeNA's three victories put the series at 3-1 in their favour, and four wins are needed to advance.

With three games left, Hanshin can afford no more defeats. If the two sides finish level on wins, the league champions go through.

Echoes of 2024

DeNA have done this before. In 2024 they finished third in the regular season, won both stages of the Climax Series and then beat SoftBank to win the Japan Series for the first time since 1998. One more win would send them back to the series and set up a rematch with the Hawks, who clinched their place on Friday.

Five wins out of five

DeNA have not lost a game this autumn. They beat the Yomiuri Giants two games to none in the first stage, won the opening game of the final stage 2-0 on Wednesday and took Thursday's game 1-0, when Maki's two-out homer in the eighth was the only run and seven pitchers gave up two infield hits.

Saturday at Koshien

Game 4 is on Saturday at Koshien, where Hanshin's supporters pack the stands and follow the team with famous devotion. The Tigers need a response from their hitters to keep the season alive.

SPORTS

The Climax Series After Game 3

By the Sports Desk

PACIFIC LEAGUE FINAL STAGE: SoftBank beat Nippon-Ham 5-0, counting a two-win advantage, and go to the Japan Series. 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, FRIDAY: SoftBank 6, Nippon-Ham 2. Masaki hit a go-ahead two-run homer in the fifth; starter Maeda allowed two runs in five innings.

CENTRAL LEAGUE FINAL STAGE: DeNA lead Hanshin 3-1, 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.

GAME 3, FRIDAY: DeNA 4, Hanshin 0. Sano hit a three-run homer in the third and Maki a solo shot in the eighth; Katayama pitched seven scoreless innings with eight strikeouts, and Hanshin had two hits.

GAME 4, SATURDAY: At Koshien. DeNA go through with a win; Hanshin cannot afford a defeat in any of the three remaining games.

THE JAPAN SERIES: From Saturday, October 24, at the home ground of the Central League's representative. The professional baseball draft is on Thursday, October 22.

SPORTS

How the Climax Series Works: Why SoftBank Started With Two Wins in Hand and Hanshin With One

A new rule rewards a runaway pennant winner; the champions need only three victories on the field, the challengers far more

By the Sports Desk

Japan's professional baseball leagues decide their places in the Japan Series through the Climax Series, a playoff among the top three teams in each league. The second- and third-placed teams meet in a short first stage, and the winner goes on to the final stage against the pennant winner.

The pennant winner has always had an edge. Since 2008 it has started the final stage with one win already counted, and every game of the final stage is played at its home ground.

The new rule

Under a new rule, a champion that wins its pennant by a wide margin now starts with two wins instead of one. SoftBank, who won the Pacific League by more than 10 games, qualified.

The Pacific League final stage was scheduled for up to seven games, with five wins needed to advance, so the Hawks needed only three victories on the field. They won the first three games against Nippon-Ham and finished the series on Friday.

In the Central League, Hanshin won the pennant by a smaller margin and received the usual one-win advantage. Their series is played over up to six games, with four wins needed. DeNA, who finished third in the regular season and beat the second-placed team in the first stage, have won all three games so far and need one more.

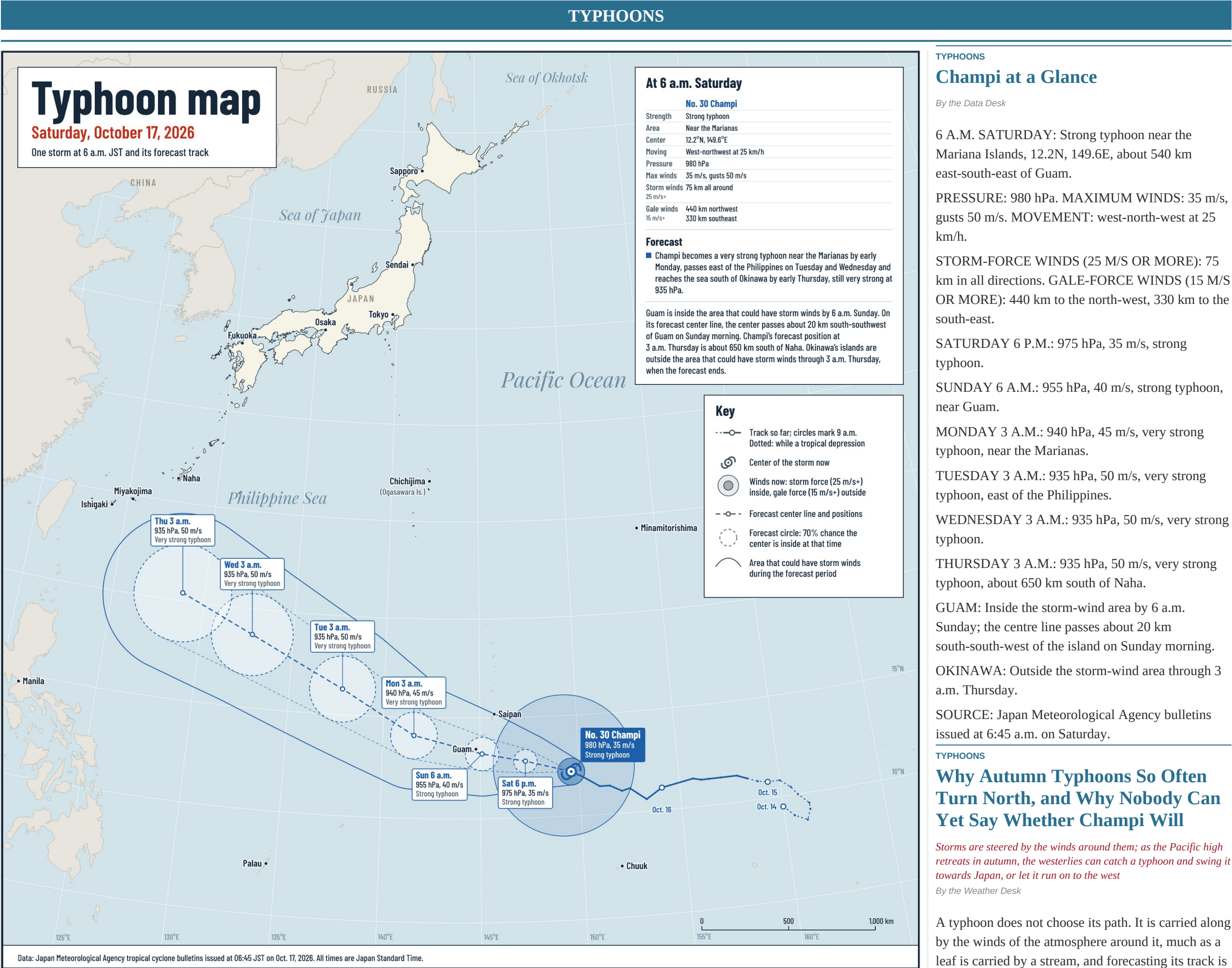
The debate

Supporters of the advantage argue that it rewards the 143-game regular season and stops a team that finished far behind from reaching the Japan Series through a short run of form. Critics say the playoffs already favour the champions, who play every game at home.

The Central League this year shows the limits of any advantage: Hanshin started a win ahead and have not scored a run since.

The Japan Series

The Japan Series itself is a best-of-seven between the two league representatives, with no advantage for either side. This year it opens on Saturday, October 24, at the home ground of the Central League team.



Typhoon No. 30, Champi, at 6 a.m. on Saturday and its forecast track, in the map supplied for this edition: a strong typhoon of 980 hPa near the Mariana Islands at 12.2N, 149.6E, moving west-north-west at 25 km/h with maximum winds of 35 m/s and gusts of 50 m/s. It is forecast to deepen to 975 hPa by 6 p.m. Saturday and 955 hPa near Guam by 6 a.m. Sunday, to become a very strong typhoon of 940 hPa by 3 a.m. Monday, and to hold at 935 hPa with winds of 50 m/s from Tuesday to Thursday, when it is expected about 650 km south of Naha. 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 6 a.m. Sunday. (Data: Japan Meteorological Agency bulletins issued at 6:45 a.m. on October 17)

TYPHOONS

Champi Becomes a Strong Typhoon Near the Marianas and Is Forecast to Pass Close to Guam on Sunday Before Turning Very Strong

The pressure has fallen 18 hectopascals in a day; the official forecast takes the storm to about 650 km south of Naha by early Thursday with gusts of up to 70 metres a second, but its path after that is wide open

By the Weather Desk

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, strengthened into a strong typhoon near the Mariana Islands on Saturday morning and is forecast to pass very close to Guam on Sunday before becoming a very strong typhoon east of the Philippines, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

At 6 a.m. on Saturday the storm was at 12.2 degrees north and 149.6 degrees east, moving west-north-west at 25 kilometres an hour. Its central pressure was 980 hectopascals, with maximum sustained winds of 35 metres a second and gusts of 50 metres a second.

That is a rapid change. Twenty-four hours earlier Champi was a tropical storm of 998 hectopascals near the Marshall Islands, about 1,210 kilometres east of Guam. By Saturday morning it lay about 540 kilometres east-south-east of the island.

Storm-force winds of 25 metres a second or more extended 75 kilometres in every direction from the centre, and gale-force winds of 15 metres a second or more reached 440 kilometres to the north-west and 330 kilometres to the south-east.

Guam on Sunday

The agency's forecast, issued at 6:45 a.m., puts Guam inside the area that could have storm-force winds by 6 a.m. on Sunday. On the forecast centre line, the centre passes about 20 kilometres south-south-west of the island on Sunday morning.

Champi is expected to deepen to 975 hectopascals by Saturday evening and to 955 hectopascals, with winds of 40 metres a second and gusts of 60, by 6 a.m. on Sunday. By 3 a.m. on Monday it is forecast to be a very strong typhoon near the Marianas at 940

hectopascals, with winds of 45 metres a second.

East of the Philippines

From Tuesday the forecast has the storm crossing the open ocean east of the Philippines at 935 hectopascals with maximum winds of 50 metres a second, holding that strength through Wednesday. The agency expects gusts to reach 70 metres a second, strong enough to overturn vehicles and make any outdoor activity extremely dangerous.

At 3 a.m. on Thursday, when the official forecast ends, the centre is expected to lie about 650 kilometres south of Naha, still a very strong typhoon heading west-north-west. Okinawa's islands remain outside the area that could have storm-force winds through that time.

And then?

What happens after Thursday is the question for Japan. Forecasters at tenki.jp say the likely track runs from east of the Philippines towards the Sakishima Islands, Okinawa's south-western groups, and that the path after that is wide open. Some computer simulations show the storm curving sharply in the East China Sea and approaching western Japan. There is no official forecast of a direct hit on Honshu.

If Champi keeps heading west, it would pass south of Okinawa towards the South China Sea; if it turns north at some point, it could approach Okinawa or the Amami Islands. Weathernews has noted that newer forecasts produced by artificial intelligence have tended to show a more westward track than conventional physics-based models.

Even far from the centre, the Pacific coast of Japan

can expect high waves from swell as the storm grows.

On the map

The typhoon map supplied for this edition traces Champi's path since October 14, when it was still a tropical depression far to the east, and shows the forecast circles widening day by day as the uncertainty grows. By Thursday the circle in which the centre has a 70 per cent chance of lying stretches several hundred kilometres across.

A long season

Champi formed on Thursday, making 2026 the first season to reach 30 storms since 2013. According to Weathernews it is only the 16th time that has happened since records began in 1951, and the fourth earliest in the year that a 30th storm has formed.

The name was proposed by Laos and, according to the agency, means a red jasmine flower. Japanese reports render it Chanpa.

Japan's weekend

At home, a migratory high is bringing clear autumn weather to almost the whole country on Saturday. Western Japan will be quite warm, with highs of 29 to 30 degrees in Kochi, Kagoshima and Naha, while Hokkaido stays cool, with Sapporo reaching only 15. Full details are on the Weather page.

TYPHOONS

Champi at a Glance

By the Data Desk

6 A.M. SATURDAY: Strong typhoon near the Mariana Islands, 12.2N, 149.6E, about 540 km east-south-east of Guam.

PRESSURE: 980 hPa. MAXIMUM WINDS: 35 m/s, gusts 50 m/s. MOVEMENT: west-north-west at 25 km/h.

STORM-FORCE WINDS (25 M/S OR MORE): 75 km in all directions. GALE-FORCE WINDS (15 M/S OR MORE): 440 km to the north-west, 330 km to the south-east.

SATURDAY 6 P.M.: 975 hPa, 35 m/s, strong typhoon.

SUNDAY 6 A.M.: 955 hPa, 40 m/s, strong typhoon, near Guam.

MONDAY 3 A.M.: 940 hPa, 45 m/s, very strong typhoon, near the Marianas.

TUESDAY 3 A.M.: 935 hPa, 50 m/s, very strong typhoon, east of the Philippines.

WEDNESDAY 3 A.M.: 935 hPa, 50 m/s, very strong typhoon.

THURSDAY 3 A.M.: 935 hPa, 50 m/s, very strong typhoon, about 650 km south of Naha.

GUAM: Inside the storm-wind area by 6 a.m. Sunday; the centre line passes about 20 km south-south-west of the island on Sunday morning.

OKINAWA: Outside the storm-wind area through 3 a.m. Thursday.

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

TYPHOONS

Why Autumn Typhoons So Often Turn North, and Why Nobody Can Yet Say Whether Champi Will

Storms are steered by the winds around them; as the Pacific high retreats in autumn, the westerlies can catch a typhoon and swing it towards Japan, or let it run on to the west

By the Weather Desk

A typhoon does not choose its path. It is carried along by the winds of the atmosphere around it, much as a leaf is carried by a stream, and forecasting its track is largely a matter of forecasting those steering winds.

In the western Pacific the most important steering influence is the subtropical high, a huge area of high pressure over the ocean south of Japan. Air circulates clockwise around it, so a storm on its southern side is pushed westward, towards the Philippines, Taiwan or southern China.

The turn

When a typhoon reaches the western edge of the high, the steering wind swings round to the north. If the storm then meets the westerly winds of the middle latitudes, which blow from west to east across Japan, it is picked up and carried north-east, often at increasing speed. Meteorologists call this recurvature.

In summer the high is large and extends far to the west, so many storms run west into China. In autumn it usually weakens and retreats eastward, and the westerlies push further south. That is why so many late-season typhoons turn north near Okinawa and then race towards mainland Japan, or curve away over the ocean.

Champi's choice

Forecasters' uncertainty about Champi comes down to timing. If the high stays strong enough to keep steering the storm west through next week, it will pass south of Okinawa towards the South China Sea. If a trough in the westerlies dips south at the right moment, the storm could turn north near the Sakishima Islands and then towards western Japan.

Small differences in the strength and position of these large weather systems several days ahead lead to very different tracks, which is why the forecast circles on the typhoon map grow so quickly with time, and why forecasters run many versions of their models, known as an ensemble, to see how wide the possibilities are.

Speed and strength

A typhoon that recurves can also change character quickly. Caught by the westerlies it can accelerate to 50 kilometres an hour or more, leaving less time to prepare, while cooler water further north and stronger winds aloft begin to weaken it.

For now, Champi is moving over warm water east of the Philippines and is forecast to keep strengthening.

TYPHOONS

The agency's five-day forecast ends on Thursday, and its track after that will become clearer over the weekend.

TYPHOONS

The Sakishima Islands: Japan's Southern Frontier, Home of the Country's Strongest Recorded Winds

Miyakojima holds the national record gust of 85.3 metres a second, set in 1966; Yonaguni recorded 81.1 in 2015

By the Weather Desk

The Sakishima Islands are the island groups at the south-western end of Okinawa Prefecture: the Miyako Islands, centred on Miyakojima, and the Yaeyama Islands, which include Ishigaki, Iriomote and Yonaguni. Yonaguni, the westernmost inhabited island in Japan, is closer to Taiwan than to Okinawa's main island.

Forecasters say Champi's likely track next week runs from east of the Philippines towards these islands, although its path after Thursday is highly uncertain.

A record of wind

The islands lie on the path of many of the strongest typhoons to approach Japan, and they hold the country's wind records. The highest gust ever measured in Japan, 85.3 metres a second, was recorded on Miyakojima in September 1966. The second highest, 81.1 metres a second, was recorded on Yonaguni during Typhoon Soudelor in August 2015.

In September 2003, Typhoon Maemi brought a gust of 74.1 metres a second to Miyakojima, damaging buildings, toppling power poles and cutting electricity to most of the island.

Built for storms

People in the islands are used to typhoons. Most homes are built of reinforced concrete, and many older houses are surrounded by stone walls and windbreak trees. But long power cuts, water shortages and damage to crops such as sugar cane are common after a strong storm.

Cut off

The islands depend on air and sea links with Okinawa's main island and the rest of Japan. When a typhoon approaches, flights and ferries are cancelled, sometimes for several days, and supermarket shelves can empty before the storm arrives.

Officials advise residents to prepare food, drinking water, batteries and medicine for several days, to secure objects that could be blown away, and to charge mobile phones in advance. Visitors are advised to check their travel plans early, because once flights are suspended it may be difficult to leave.

What to watch

The Japan Meteorological Agency's forecast currently ends at 3 a.m. on Thursday, with the storm about 650 kilometres south of Naha and the islands outside the area that could have storm-force winds. Forecasters say the track will become clearer as the weekend goes on, and residents should keep checking the latest information.

TYPHOONS

Guam and Saipan Brace for a Strong Typhoon at the Start of the Autumn Holiday Season for Japanese Visitors

The American islands three to four hours' flight from Tokyo are among Japanese travellers' favourite resorts; Typhoon Mawar knocked out power across Guam in 2023

By the Weather Desk

Guam, an American territory, and Saipan, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, are among the closest beach resorts to Japan, a flight of three to four hours from Tokyo, and have long been popular with Japanese holidaymakers, honeymooners and school groups.

Both lie in the path of Typhoon No. 30. The Japan Meteorological Agency's forecast puts Guam inside the area that could have storm-force winds by 6 a.m. on Sunday, with the centre passing about 20 kilometres south-south-west of the island on Sunday morning, when the storm is expected to have a central pressure of 955 hectopascals and maximum winds of 40 metres a second.

What to expect

A strong typhoon passing that close can bring destructive winds, torrential rain, storm surge along the coast and widespread power cuts. Airports typically close while the storm passes, and flights can take several days to return to normal.

Guam knows the danger. In May 2023 Typhoon Mawar passed just north of the island at roughly the strength of a Category 4 hurricane, knocking out electricity and water across much of Guam and closing its airport for days.

Advice for travellers

Anyone due to fly to Guam or Saipan this weekend should contact their airline or travel agency before leaving home. Airlines usually allow changes or refunds once a storm is forecast, and tour companies often cancel departures.

Visitors already on the islands should follow the instructions of local authorities and their hotels, stay indoors while the storm passes, and keep enough water and food for a few days. The Consulate-General of Japan in Hagatna, Guam, provides information for Japanese nationals.

Japan's link

The Marianas are a reminder that typhoons affect Japanese people well beyond Japan's own shores. Saipan and Guam were the scene of some of the fiercest fighting of the Pacific War, and many Japanese visit memorials there; today they are better known for beaches, shopping and diving.

TYPHOONS

The 2026 Typhoon Season in Numbers

By the Data Desk

30: Storms named so far this year, with Champi forming on October 15.

13: Years since a season last reached 30 storms, in 2013. That year's No. 30 was Haiyan, which devastated the central Philippines.

16: Seasons that have reached 30 storms since records began in 1951, according to Weathernews.

4TH: Champi is the fourth earliest No. 30 on record, Weathernews says.

25.1: The average number of storms a year, based on the 30 years to 2020.

39: The record for a single season, set in 1967.

SEPTEMBER 21: Typhoon No. 25 brought record rain to northern Chiba Prefecture, breaching the embankment of Inba-numa.

40 SQ KM: The area around Inba-numa that is likely to have been flooded, according to the aerial survey company Kokusai Kogyo.

25.6 BILLION YEN: Damage to agriculture, forestry and fisheries in Chiba Prefecture from Typhoon No. 25.

70 M/S: The gusts Champi is expected to produce at its peak next week.

POLITICS

The Week Ahead

By the Political Desk

SATURDAY 17: Climax Series, Central League Game 4, Hanshin v DeNA at Koshien. World Gymnastics Championships open in Rotterdam. Kawagoe Festival (to Sunday).

SUNDAY 18: Yokohama mayoral election. Asian Para Games opening ceremony in Aichi. Shuka Sho at Kyoto. Tokyo Legacy Half Marathon. Typhoon No. 30, Champi, passes close to Guam.

MONDAY 19: Upper house Budget Committee. Japanese and American forces begin the Keen Sword exercise. A National Police Agency panel on stalking holds its first meeting.

TUESDAY 20: The consumption tax cut bills go before the lower house plenary session, with the prime minister attending.

THURSDAY 22: Professional baseball draft. The Internal Affairs Ministry's study group on telecoms cyber defence meets for the first time. Jidai Matsuri in Kyoto.

SATURDAY 24: The Japan Series opens. The revised Imperial House Law takes effect.

SUNDAY 25: Fukushima governor election. Hyogo prefectural assembly by-election.

OCTOBER 27-28: U.S. Federal Reserve policy meeting.

OCTOBER 29-30: Bank of Japan policy meeting.

NOVEMBER 3: U.S. midterm elections.

NOVEMBER 6-8: National nuclear disaster drill based on an accident at the Tomari plant in Hokkaido.

POLITICS

Consumption Tax Cut Bills to Be Debated From Tuesday as Takaichi Floats Vouchers to Help Restaurants Left Out of the Cut

Food and drink bought in shops would be taxed at 1 per cent for two years, but eating out stays at 10; the ruling bloc wants the bills in the upper house in early November

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

The government's bills to cut the consumption tax on food will be taken up in a plenary session of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, October 20, with Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi attending, after the ruling and opposition parties agreed on a timetable on Friday.

Hideki Murai, the Liberal Democratic Party's Diet affairs chief, and Yuichi Goto, his counterpart in the opposition Chudo group, reached the agreement at the Diet and announced it to reporters.

The bills would cut the consumption tax rate on food and non-alcoholic drinks from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years only. The government regards them as the most important legislation of the current extraordinary session, and the ruling bloc aims to send them to the House of Councillors in early November.

Opposition parties want a thorough debate, including sessions in committee attended by the prime minister and hearings with outside witnesses.

Restaurants left out

One awkward feature of the cut is that it does not reach restaurants. Meals eaten in, like alcohol, are taxed at the standard 10 per cent rate, and that will not change.

In the upper house Budget Committee on Friday, Makoto Hamaguchi of the Democratic Party for the People raised the problem, and Ms Takaichi referred to the possibility of using vouchers with an added premium to encourage people to eat out. Agriculture Minister Arata Takebe said the government wanted to deepen discussion of effective measures, drawing on past examples such as premium vouchers and the Go To Eat campaign run during the coronavirus pandemic.

The government is reported to be planning to avoid large-scale programmes such as meal tickets. Kyodo News noted that the gesture may be aimed at winning support from the Democratic Party for the People, since the ruling bloc is in the minority in the upper house.

Paying for it

Asked how the cut would be financed, Ms Takaichi gave as examples non-tax revenue and returning unneeded money held in government funds to the national treasury.

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama described a separate income-linked benefit, to be introduced alongside the tax cut, as similar to systems abroad, under which about 30 per cent of working people are eligible.

Rival plans

The opposition has its own ideas. Komeito, the Liberal Democrats' former coalition partner, which calls the tax cut an inefficient way to help households, proposed on Thursday paying every resident about 80,000 yen over two years instead, and the Democratic Party for the People has drawn up a package built around a payment of about 50,000 yen for people on low and middle incomes.

The rates

The reduced 8 per cent rate for food and non-alcoholic drinks was introduced in October 2019, when the standard rate rose to 10 per cent. Cutting it to 1 per cent would lower the tax on a family's 50,000 yen monthly food bill by roughly 3,200 yen, if shops passed on the cut in full.

How far the government bends to those parties will decide how smoothly the bills pass the upper house.

In the upper house

If the lower house passes the bills, they will go to the House of Councillors, where the governing bloc lacks a majority and will need votes from at least part of

the opposition.

DIPLOMACY

Japanese Diplomats Fail to See the Hokkaido Shimbun Reporter Held in Moscow as Press Groups and Writers Demand His Release

Russia sent a consular notification on Thursday; Tokyo asked for a meeting on Friday within the four days set by treaty, but officials now expect it next week or later

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Staff of the Japanese Embassy in Russia were unable on Friday to hold a consular meeting with the Hokkaido Shimbun reporter detained by Russian authorities on suspicion of espionage, and Japanese government officials said the visit was now expected next week or later.

The reporter, a man based in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, was detained by Russia's Federal Security Service on October 13 and is being held at a detention facility in Moscow.

The embassy had asked the Russian side to arrange a meeting on Friday. A consular convention between Japan and the former Soviet Union, which Russia inherited, requires a consular meeting within four days of a detention.

Notification

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said Russia had formally notified Japan of the detention through consular channels on Thursday, local time. Japan still had no contact with the reporter, he said.

"We will do everything we can to achieve a consular visit as soon as possible and confirm his health and his account of the facts," Mr Kihara told a news conference. Under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, the detention of a foreign national must be reported to his country's consular authorities.

On Thursday Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi rejected Russia's suggestion that the reporter was acting on the instructions of Japanese intelligence. "There is no such fact," she said. Japan had protested to the Russian ambassador on Wednesday and asked for information about the case, and the Russian Embassy in Tokyo has rejected the protest.

The FSB says the reporter gathered information about Russia's defence capabilities on the instructions of Japanese intelligence, including how many residents of the Kuril Islands had been mobilised for the war in Ukraine. A Moscow court has ordered him held.

The newspaper's response

The Hokkaido Shimbun published a statement by its editor-in-chief, Takeshi Yamamoto, in its Friday morning edition, pledging to do everything possible to secure the reporter's early release. "The Hokkaido Shimbun is a news organisation independent of the government," it said, adding that the paper does not gather news on the government's instructions.

The statement noted that the reporter held a Russian journalist visa, said that press freedom and reporting activities should be respected, and said the paper could not accept the release of footage of his detention.

Press and writers

At the 79th Newspaper Convention, held in Matsue on Friday, Shiro Nakamura, president of the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, referred to the case in his opening address and said that the freedom to gather and report news "should be recognised and must not be obstructed." The association also expressed "strong indignation" at the detention.

The Japan PEN Club, chaired by the novelist Natsuo Kirino, issued an urgent statement demanding the reporter's release. "We strongly demand that the safety and health of the detained reporter be secured and that he be released immediately," it said, adding that journalists' activities and safety must be guaranteed in any country or region.

The Committee to Protect Journalists, based in New York, has also called on Russia to free him.

What comes next

Espionage cases in Russia are handled by the security service and can take months or years to come to trial, with convictions almost certain once they do. Securing regular consular access, and with it a clearer picture of the accusations, is the government's immediate priority.

POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi answers questions in the Diet. In the House of Councillors Budget Committee on Friday she apologised that her agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, had resigned while the Diet was in session and said she took her responsibility for appointing him seriously. (File photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

Takaichi Apologises for the Removal of Her Farm Minister and Says She Takes Her Responsibility for Appointing Him 'Seriously'

In the first upper house Budget Committee session since Kazuo Yana's exit, the opposition accuses her of shielding him and demands that he testify; the prime minister says the authorities, not she, must judge whether he broke the election law

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi apologised on Friday for the departure of her agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, who resigned under pressure on Wednesday after only 28 days in the job, and said she took her responsibility for appointing him seriously.

"I apologise that it came to a resignation while the Diet is in session," she told the House of Councillors Budget Committee, in its first session since Mr Yana's exit. "I take my responsibility for the appointment seriously."

Mr Yana's tenure was the shortest of any minister in a Liberal Democratic government since 2012, and he was the first member of the Takaichi Cabinet to leave under a cloud. He had faced questions over suspected violations of the Public Offices Election Law, centred on free bus transport provided for supporters during the lower house election, and over remarks at a party meeting in May that he had "sharply cut" road budgets for two municipalities whose leaders had not backed him.

The prime minister acknowledged that he had not given an explanation that could win the public's understanding. She said that, with his successor, Arata Takebe, the whole Cabinet would work to deliver answers on the important issues facing the country.

"Shielding him"

The sharpest questions came from Kiyomi Tsujimoto of the Constitutional Democratic Party, who demanded that Mr Yana be called before the committee as an unsworn witness. Ms Takaichi, she said, bore responsibility not only for appointing him but for continuing to shield him after the allegations surfaced.

The prime minister rejected the charge. "I was not shielding him," she said, adding that she had urged Mr Yana to explain himself before members of the Diet, the representatives of the people.

Ms Tsujimoto reminded her that she had said she would not hesitate to act if there had been a breach of the law, and asked whether she had established whether there had been one. Ms Takaichi replied that the relevant authorities should judge on the basis of

the facts and that she could not make a judgment in advance.

Potatoes and history

Mr Takebe, appearing before the committee for the first time as minister, was asked about American pressure to lift Japan's restrictions on fresh potatoes. "Imports will not be allowed unless an agreement that satisfies both sides can be found," he said. "We will respond with a resolute stance."

Asked about her own view of history, Ms Takaichi said the position of successive cabinets, including the 1995 statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, remained unshaken. "As stated in the statement on the 70th anniversary of the end of the war, the positions of previous cabinets will remain unshaken, and the Takaichi Cabinet carries them on," she said.

Money and a second budget

Ms Takaichi also left the door open to a second supplementary budget for the current fiscal year. "If there are measures of truly high urgency, it is possible that we will consider it," she said, stopping short of a commitment.

On her government's flagship measure against rising prices, the cut in the consumption tax on food, she named non-tax revenue and the return of unneeded money held in government funds to the treasury as possible sources of finance.

The opposition's next step

Opposition parties are expected to keep up the pressure when the committee meets again on Monday, and to press their demand for Mr Yana to appear. The ruling bloc lacks a majority in the upper house, which gives the opposition more leverage there than in the lower chamber.

For Ms Takaichi, who took office promising decisive leadership, the episode has become a test of her judgment in choosing her team, a point some members of her own party are now making openly.

United States and Europe, she had been told that attendance by a proxy would be acceptable.

A dinner beforehand

Kiyomi Tsujimoto of the Constitutional Democratic Party pointed out that the prime minister had dined at her official residence with Liberal Democratic Party Vice President Taro Aso and other party figures until about 8 p.m., roughly 90 minutes before the conference began, and asked whether the dinner had taken priority.

Ms Takaichi said the two were unrelated, and that she had spent the time of the conference writing her policy speech.

Ms Tsujimoto noted that President Donald Trump had taken part in the call and said she feared the prime minister's decision was pushing Japan to the edges of world affairs. She should have attended, the lawmaker said.

According to the Foreign Ministry, online meetings of G7 leaders were held twice in 2023, four times in 2024 and once in 2025, and Ms Takaichi's predecessors, Fumio Kishida and Shigeru Ishiba, attended all of them.

"Crisis management"

The exchange was part of a wider challenge to the prime minister's crisis management. Ms Tsujimoto argued that the delay in removing Kazuo Yana as agriculture minister suggested a lack of ability in that area.

Ms Takaichi replied with a description of her nights. "Twenty-four hours a day I keep an official smartphone beside me, and at night I lie down with the volume turned up to maximum," she said. "I put a great deal of effort into crisis management."

A busy Friday

Her answer came on a day when Japan's own alert systems were in the news. Shortly after midday, the Japan Meteorological Agency issued an earthquake early warning predicting a magnitude 9.9 quake and shaking of up to the maximum intensity of 7 from Hokkaido to the Tokai region, only to cancel it eight minutes later. Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said the government took the error very seriously. A full report is on the Technology pages.

Diplomatic stakes

The G7 question touches a sensitive point for a government that wants a bigger role abroad. Video calls among the leaders have become a regular tool for co-ordinating positions on Ukraine, the Middle East and trade, and absence can be read as a lack of interest, however good the reason.

POLITICS

Friday in the Budget Committee: Who Said What

By the Political Desk

"I apologise that it came to a resignation while the Diet is in session." Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, on Kazuo Yana.

"I take my responsibility for the appointment seriously." Ms Takaichi.

"I was not shielding him." Ms Takaichi, answering Kiyomi Tsujimoto of the Constitutional Democratic Party, who wants Mr Yana called before the committee as an unsworn witness.

ON THE LAW: The relevant authorities should judge on the facts whether Mr Yana broke the election law, the prime minister said; she could not make a judgment in advance.

"Imports will not be allowed unless an agreement that satisfies both sides can be found. We will respond with a resolute stance." Agriculture Minister Arata Takebe, on American fresh potatoes.

"The positions of previous cabinets will remain unshaken, and the Takaichi Cabinet carries them on." Ms Takaichi, on the 1995 statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama.

"If there are measures of truly high urgency, it is possible that we will consider it." Ms Takaichi, on a second supplementary budget.

ON THE G7: She missed the leaders' video conference on October 2, she said, because there was not enough time to have a contractor connect the line.

"Twenty-four hours a day I keep an official smartphone beside me, and at night I lie down with the volume turned up to maximum." Ms Takaichi, on crisis management.

ON RESTAURANTS: Answering Makoto Hamaguchi of the Democratic Party for the People, the prime minister raised the possibility of premium vouchers to encourage eating out, which the food tax cut does not cover.

NEXT: The committee meets again on Monday.

POLITICS

Adoption Into the Imperial Family and Princesses Keeping Their Status After Marriage Become Possible From October 24

The revised Imperial House Law opens adoption to unmarried men aged 15 or over from the 11 former branch families; only Prince Hisahito is in line among the six members under 50, and the question of female emperors is left untouched

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

A revised Imperial House Law intended to secure enough members of the Imperial Family to carry out its duties takes effect on Saturday, October 24,

creating two new routes that were previously closed. Under the new system, female members of the Imperial Family will be able to remain in the family and keep their status after marrying. Until now, a princess who married a commoner had to leave.

The law also lifts the ban on adoption into the Imperial Family, limiting it to men in the male line of the 11 former branch families that left the Imperial Family in 1947, during the American occupation.

Who can be adopted

To be eligible, a man from one of the former branch families must be aged 15 or older and have no spouse and no children. An adopted member would not himself be in line to the throne, but his male descendants would gain eligibility for succession.

That last point, Kyodo News reported, was not part of the consensus reached by the two houses of the Diet that formed the basis for the amendment.

A shrinking family

The Imperial Family has 16 members. Six are in their 40s or younger, and only one of them, Prince Hisahito, the son of Crown Prince Akishino, is male and in line to the throne. The other five, including Princess Aiko, the daughter of the Emperor, are women.

Under the old rules, each princess who married would have left the family, reducing still further the number of members able to take on official duties such as attending ceremonies, visiting disaster areas and receiving foreign guests.

Questions left open

The new law does not address the more contentious question of whether a woman, or a man descended from the Imperial line through a woman, could become emperor. Discussion of such measures for a stable succession has been postponed, and Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who places importance on succession through the male line, is reluctant to reopen it.

Critics of the adoption route point out that the men of the former branch families are related to the Emperor only distantly, in the 36th to 38th degree of kinship, and some have called them "almost complete strangers."

What happens next

Whether anyone will actually be adopted, and whether princesses who marry will choose to stay, remains to be seen. The changes create possibilities rather than obligations, and much will depend on the wishes of the people concerned.

POLITICS

Mie Becomes the First Prefecture to Punish Customer Harassment, With Fines of Up to 500,000 Yen for Those Who Ignore a Ban

Repeated demands for apologies or meetings and threatening behaviour can lead to a governor's order and then penalties; Governor Ichimi hopes fewer workers will quit, but assembly members worry about where the line falls

By the Political Desk

The Mie Prefectural Assembly on Friday passed an ordinance against customer harassment that includes criminal penalties, the first of its kind in Japan.

The ordinance creates a category of "specified customer harassment," defined as demanding money, goods, apologies or meetings in a prolonged or repeated way without justifiable reason. It also covers shouting or false claims that cause employees serious anxiety, obscene language or behaviour, and stalking.

How it works

When a business that has been harmed reports an incident, a panel of experts set up by the prefecture will decide whether the conduct amounts to specified harassment. The panel can ask for evidence such as video or audio recordings.

If it does, the governor can order the person to stop. Anyone who disobeys the order and continues faces a fine of up to 500,000 yen, detention or a minor fine. The ordinance takes effect next April, and the prefecture will draw up guidelines with concrete examples of what counts.

The governor's hope

Governor Katsuyuki Ichimi stressed the significance of being the first prefecture to attach penalties. If harassment stops, he told reporters, he hoped that even a few fewer people would quit their jobs or take leave.

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Worries about the line

Supporters expect the penalties to deter abusive customers. But some assembly members voiced concern about how to distinguish harassment from legitimate complaints, and Kyodo News noted that careful explanation to the public and appropriate enforcement will be needed.

A national trend

Customer harassment, known in Japan as kasuhara, has become a widely recognised workplace problem. A revised law on comprehensive labour measures that took effect on October 1 requires all companies and local governments to take steps to protect workers from it. Tokyo's ordinance, the first in the country, took effect in April 2025 but carries no penalties.

The transport ministry plans to revise the standard terms of carriage for taxis and buses from December 1 so that drivers can refuse passengers who persist in abuse. In the early hours of Friday, police in Amagasaki, Hyogo Prefecture, arrested a 56-year-old man on suspicion of forcible obstruction of business after he allegedly stayed in a taxi for about 50 minutes after the driver refused to take him, threatening to sue if he was not driven home.

Mie's approach goes further than any of these by making the worst behaviour a punishable offence, and other prefectures are likely to watch closely how often it is used.

POLITICS

Government Sends the Diet a Bill Letting Police Remotely Analyse the Smartphones of 'Tokuryu' Crime Groups to Stop Attacks

A judge's warrant would be required; the groups use encrypted apps such as Signal and Telegram to direct robberies and scams

By the Political Desk

The government on Friday submitted to the House of Representatives a bill amending the Police Duties Execution Act so that police can remotely analyse the information on smartphones used by tokuryu, the anonymous and fluid criminal groups behind a wave of robberies and fraud.

The Cabinet approved the bill the same morning. Its aim is to let police learn of criminal plans before they are carried out and to prevent harm to victims, for example by patrolling around the homes of people who are about to be targeted.

Safeguards

Because analysing the contents of a smartphone could infringe the secrecy of communications guaranteed by the Constitution, as well as privacy, the bill requires police to obtain a warrant from a judge in advance, among other conditions.

Why now

Violent crimes by tokuryu groups have continued, and losses from special fraud, the term for scams in which callers pose as relatives, police officers or bank staff, have worsened.

According to the National Police Agency, the groups use messaging apps with strong secrecy, such as Signal and Telegram, to give instructions to the people who carry out the crimes, many of whom are recruited through social media, and to contact fraud victims. Because the apps encrypt messages so that they can be read only on the sending and receiving phones, they have been an obstacle to investigations.

Instructions from the so-called Luffy group were used in a series of robberies across the country in which people died, and a woman was killed in a robbery in Kaminokawa, Tochigi Prefecture.

The debate ahead

The bill is likely to draw scrutiny from lawyers and civil liberties groups, who have long warned that powers to intercept communications can expand once granted. The government will argue that the warrant requirement and the limited purpose, preventing serious crime, provide sufficient protection.

Part of a wider effort

The bill adds to a series of measures against tokuryu groups, including closer co-operation with foreign governments to break up scam operations based in South-East Asia. This week Hokkaido police arrested eight men accused of making fraud calls from a base in Laos.

The bill must pass both houses of the Diet. The ruling bloc lacks a majority in the House of Councillors, so the government will need support from at least some

opposition parties.

POLITICS

Yokohama Elects a Mayor on Sunday After Yamanaka's Resignation Over Power Harassment, With the Former Mayor Among Seven Candidates

A lawyer backed by the Liberal Democrats, Ishin and the DPFP faces Takeharu Yamanaka, a former CDP lawmaker and, among others, the Pritzker-winning architect Riken Yamamoto

By the Political Desk

Voters in Yokohama, Japan's largest city after Tokyo's 23 wards, go to the polls on Sunday to choose a mayor after Takeharu Yamanaka, 54, resigned over a power harassment issue. Seven candidates are standing, and votes will be counted the same day.

Mr Yamanaka is one of them. He is seeking to return to the office he left, pointing to his five years as mayor and promising to continue what he calls citizen-oriented policies, including support for child-rearing. He is backed by port-related organisations and citizens' groups.

The field

Atsumi Harasawa, 59, a lawyer, is endorsed by the Kanagawa prefectural organisations of the Liberal Democratic Party, the Japan Innovation Party and the Democratic Party for the People, and supported by Komeito's group in the city assembly. She is campaigning on strengthening the city's finances by attracting companies.

Kazuma Nakatani, 43, a former member of the House of Representatives, is supported by the Kanagawa chapter of the Constitutional Democratic Party. He stresses his political experience and proposes greater use of digital technology and artificial intelligence.

Atsushi Fukuyama, 37, a company president recommended by Sanseito, calls for reform of the city government, including a reorganisation of city hall.

The other candidates are Fujikawa, 51, the representative of a citizens' group; Riken Yamamoto, 81, the architect who won the Pritzker Prize in 2024; and Yuka Asaga, 46, a vice-chair of the Japanese Communist Party's Kanagawa prefectural committee, the only candidate standing under a party banner. All the others are independents.

The stakes

Yokohama, with a population of about 3.7 million, has a budget larger than those of many prefectures, and its mayor oversees a major port, a vast network of public services and long-running debates over urban development.

The election is also a test for the national parties. The coalition of the Liberal Democrats and Ishin, together with the DPFP and Komeito's local members, has lined up behind a single candidate, while the left-of-centre opposition is divided.

A troubled term

Mr Yamanaka, a former professor of data science, was first elected in 2021. His resignation over power harassment allegations triggered the election; his decision to run again turns the vote partly into a verdict on his conduct as well as his record.

POLITICS

Next Spring's Unified Local Elections Set for April 11 and 25, With Governors to Be Chosen in Eight Prefectures

A special bill approved by the Cabinet fixes the dates; Hokkaido, Kanagawa and Osaka are among the prefectures with governor races

By the Political Desk

The government on Friday approved a special bill setting the dates for next spring's unified local elections, the nationwide round of local votes held every four years.

Elections for governors and assemblies of prefectures and of the 20 ordinance-designated major cities will be held on April 11. Elections for mayors and assemblies of other cities, Tokyo's special wards, towns and villages will be held on April 25.

The government aims to pass the bill during the current Diet session. In principle, the unified elections cover mayor and assembly seats whose terms expire between March 1 and May 31 next year.

Governor races

Eight prefectures are expected to elect governors: Hokkaido, Kanagawa, Osaka, Nara, Tottori, Shimane, Tokushima and Oita.

In Tokushima, the mayor of Miyoshi, Miho Takai, a former senior vice minister of education, has indicated that she wants to run.

A shrinking share

The unified elections were first held in 1947, when almost all local offices were filled on the same days. Over the decades resignations, deaths and municipal mergers have staggered many terms, so that only a minority of local elections now take place in the unified round.

National significance

The results will be read as a judgment on Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's government roughly a year and a half after it took office, and on the opposition parties' efforts to co-operate. Komeito this week said it would end its electoral co-operation with the Constitutional Democratic Party and the centrist Chudo group in the local elections after plans for a merger collapsed.

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Takaichi and Merz Expected to Agree on Chips, Critical Minerals and Defence Equipment When the German Chancellor Visits Tokyo

The summit, as early as October 28, would be Merz's first trip to Japan as chancellor; both countries want to reduce their dependence on China and support the International Criminal Court

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Japan and Germany are preparing to strengthen co-operation on economic security, with Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and Chancellor Friedrich Merz expected to meet in Tokyo as early as October 28, according to several Japanese and German diplomatic sources.

The two leaders are expected to agree to make supply chains for semiconductors and critical minerals more resilient, and to confirm co-operation on the development and production of defence equipment, with drones in mind. The governments aim to issue a joint document.

China in mind

Japan has been hurrying to build supply chains for critical minerals, including rare earths, since China tightened its export controls on Japan. Germany is wary of China's growing influence over its domestic economy. Both want to reduce their dependence on Chinese supplies.

It would be Mr Merz's first visit to Japan since he took office in May last year. He plans to meet think tanks and business leaders, and executives of German companies are expected to accompany him.

The court in The Hague

Co-operation to keep the International Criminal Court functioning is also drawing attention, as the United States steps up pressure on the court. Both countries are members, and the court's president is Tomoko Akane of Japan. Ms Takaichi has said Japan will "work together with relevant countries to support its activities."

Two industrial powers

Japan and Germany are the world's third- and fourth-largest economies by most recent counts and share an export-oriented industrial model, heavy dependence on imported energy and growing concern about competition from China in industries such as cars and machinery.

Defence co-operation has deepened in recent years. The two countries signed an agreement on the provision of supplies and services between their armed forces, and German warships and aircraft have taken part in exercises in the Indo-Pacific.

POLITICS

A Year After Leaving the Coalition, Komeito's Former Leader Says Rejoining the Liberal Democrats Is 'Not at All' Possible for Now

Tetsuo Saito says political reform has gone backwards under Takaichi and accuses Ishin of dropping its demand for a ban on donations, but says the party's future is not bound

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

Tetsuo Saito, the former leader of Komeito, said on Friday that a renewed coalition with the Liberal Democratic Party was "not at all" possible at present,

a year after his party announced it was leaving the government over the issue of political funding.

In an interview with Kyodo News, Mr Saito said it would make no sense to join hands with the Liberal Democrats again while the problem of politics and money remained unresolved. The split followed the scandal over slush funds in the party's factions.

But he said the decision did not bind the party's future. If political reform made progress, including greater transparency of donations from companies and organisations, the current position "will not necessarily stay the same."

Coalitions as a means

Coalitions are only a means of realising policies, Mr Saito said. Komeito would co-operate with any party, in government or opposition, where co-operation fitted its centrist ideals and policies.

Criticism of the government

Mr Saito was scathing about the state of political reform under Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. It had not merely stalled, he said, but gone backwards.

He singled out the Japan Innovation Party, known as Ishin, which had advocated a ban on corporate donations before it joined the government. Expectations of progress had been high, he said, but Ishin "easily withdrew" the demand, and the debate had been replaced by a plan to cut the number of seats in the House of Representatives, which he called an entirely different issue.

The background

Komeito, backed by the lay Buddhist organisation Soka Gakkai, was the Liberal Democrats' partner in government for most of the period since 1999. Its departure in October last year, soon after Ms Takaichi became party president, forced her to find a new partner in Ishin.

This week Komeito proposed paying every resident about 80,000 yen over two years in place of the government's consumption tax cut, a sign of its readiness to compete with the ruling bloc on policy.

POLITICS

Lower House to Issue a Stern Warning to Education Minister Seki for Holding Fundraising Parties in the Diet Members' Office Building

House rules forbid commercial activity there without permission; Seki says he is 'deeply remorseful' but will not say how many attended

By the Political Desk

The House of Representatives will give Education Minister Yoshihiro Seki a stern warning for holding a political fundraising party in the Diet members' office building, contrary to the chamber's internal rules.

The board of the lower house's Rules and Administration Committee decided on the warning on Friday, the committee chairman, Tetsushi Sakamoto, told reporters. The house's rules prohibit commercial activity in the building without permission.

At a news conference after the Cabinet meeting on Friday, Mr Seki apologised again and said he was "deeply remorseful."

Earlier parties

He declined to give details such as the number of people who attended, saying it concerned his individual political activities, and said the party had been held "in accordance with the law."

Mr Seki has acknowledged holding parties in the building in 2020 and 2024 as well. He had previously explained that he did not think they amounted to commercial activity.

Parties under scrutiny

Fundraising parties, at which supporters buy tickets to attend a speech and a reception, are a major source of money for Japanese politicians, and they have been at the centre of the scandals over unreported income in the Liberal Democratic Party's factions.

The warning comes as Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi faces criticism over her choice of ministers following the resignation of her agriculture minister, and the opposition is likely to raise the matter in the Diet.

The university question

Mr Seki also commented on the University of Tokyo's selection of its next president. A group of the university's staff has asked the selection council to explain how the result of a staff vote was taken into account. "The points raised include an important

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issue," the minister said, adding that the university, as a national university corporation, needed to take them seriously and respond.

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LDP Upper House Member Shoji Nishida Says Takaichi's Way of Choosing Ministers Is 'Fundamentally Wrong'

Relying on a survey of the posts lawmakers want cannot reveal character, he says; with factions gone, every mistake becomes the prime minister's responsibility
By the Political Desk

Shoji Nishida, a Liberal Democratic Party member of the House of Councillors, criticised Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's approach to appointments on Friday night, saying she had gone about it in a fundamentally wrong way and should review it.

Speaking on a BS Fuji television programme, Mr Nishida took aim at the Cabinet line-up and party executive appointments, which he said had relied heavily on a survey of the posts that lawmakers wanted.

"It is fine to read documents, but you cannot judge someone's character unless you have worked with them," he said. "The method is fundamentally wrong."

The old way

In the past, Mr Nishida said, appointments had given weight to the factions and to recommendations from the party's upper house members, in a system under which the party as a whole took responsibility for its choices.

He cited the departure of Agriculture Minister Kazuo Yana, who resigned on Wednesday after 28 days in office, as an example of the risks. "Once an incident like this happens, it all becomes the prime minister's responsibility," he said.

He urged the prime minister to "ask herself and recognise that she chose wrongly."

A sign of strain

Public criticism of a prime minister from within the governing party is not unusual in Japan, but it is notable coming from Mr Nishida, one of the party's best-known conservatives, so soon after the government's formation.

Most of the Liberal Democrats' factions were dissolved after the slush fund scandal, removing the system of recommendations that once shaped Cabinet line-ups and shared the blame when appointments went wrong.

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University of Tokyo Says a Staff Vote Was 'One of the Important Factors' in Choosing Its First Woman President, Who Came Second

More than 500 staff backed a request for an explanation after Professor Yuko Fujigaki was chosen with about half the votes of the front-runner; the education minister calls it an important issue
By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The University of Tokyo said on Friday that the result of a vote by its staff was "one of the important materials for judgment" when its selection council chose the next president, responding to a request from staff who had asked how the vote was taken into account.

In late September the council selected Yuko Fujigaki, 64, a professor at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, who will become the first woman to lead Japan's most prestigious university. In the staff vote she finished second, with about half as many votes as the candidate who came first.

The request

A group of staff, started by nine faculty members, submitted a request to the selection council on October 13 asking it to explain the process. By midday that day more than 500 people had signed in support.

In its reply, the university said how much weight each member of the council gave the vote compared with other materials "differs from member to member."

The minister's view

Education Minister Yoshihiro Seki said on Friday that the points raised included an important issue, and that the university, as a national university corporation, needed to take them seriously and

respond.

How presidents are chosen

Since national universities became corporations in 2004, presidents have been chosen by a selection council made up of members from inside and outside the university. Many universities hold a vote among their staff as part of the process, but the council is not bound by the result.

Over the years several universities have chosen presidents who did not win the staff vote, sometimes prompting protests from faculty who see the vote as an expression of academic self-governance. Supporters of the council system argue that it allows universities to choose leaders on the basis of broader considerations, including management ability.

A landmark choice

The controversy over procedure has to some extent overshadowed the significance of the choice itself. The University of Tokyo, founded in 1877, has never been led by a woman, and Professor Fujigaki's selection was widely welcomed as a step towards greater diversity at the top of Japanese academia.

POLITICS

Politics in Brief

By the Political Desk

TOKUSHIMA: Miho Takai, the mayor of Miyoshi and a former senior vice minister of education, signalled on Friday that she wants to run in next spring's election for governor of Tokushima Prefecture.

YANA: The Constitutional Democratic Party formally asked in the upper house Budget Committee that former Agriculture Minister Kazuo Yana be summoned as an unsworn witness.

PERSONAL DATA: The government plans to review sensitive personal information in fields such as genomics, medicine and finance before private businesses provide it to others, as part of its economic security measures, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported on its front page.

NASU: Tochigi's prefectural election commission decided not to appeal against a Tokyo High Court ruling that upheld Mayor Yukihiro Hirayama's victory in the Nasu town election in March, which he won by a single vote. The commission had reversed the result after a recount found ballots mixing parts of the candidates' names, but the court restored it; the deadline for an appeal was October 22.

TOMARI DRILL: The government will hold its national nuclear disaster drill from November 6 to 8 on the scenario of an accident at Hokkaido Electric Power's Tomari plant, in which an earthquake off western Hokkaido disables the system for injecting water into the No. 3 reactor. It will be the first national drill at Tomari since fiscal 2016; residents of areas cut off by road damage will practise evacuating by helicopter.

HYOGO: Two candidates have filed for a by-election to the Hyogo Prefectural Assembly, to be held on October 25.

OKINAWA: Governor Genta Koja will meet on Saturday the family of Chika Takeishi, a 17-year-old student who died when two boats capsized off Henoko in Nago in March, about seven months after the accident.

HAYASHI: Former Internal Affairs Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, who left the Cabinet in last month's reshuffle, held the founding meeting of a parliamentary group to promote the beauty industry, from cosmetics to beauty salons, and its expansion abroad. "It is a growth industry with great potential to earn foreign currency," he said. Mr Hayashi finished third of five candidates in last year's Liberal Democratic Party leadership election, and many in the party see his more active profile as preparation for next year's race; his associates say the aim is to promote policy.

HYOGO GOVERNOR: A prosecution inquest committee decided that non-indictment was appropriate for Hyogo Governor Motohiko Saito, former Vice Governor Yasutaka Katayama and a former general affairs director over the leak of private information about a former senior official who had accused the governor of wrongdoing.

LOCAL TRANSPORT: Sagami-hara in Kanagawa Prefecture became the first local government certified under a revised law on regional public transport that took effect on Friday. From October 19, two school buses will also carry commuters and students to the

station from the 6 a.m. hour in a district where most route buses will be withdrawn by next March.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump's New Press Secretary Quits After a Week, Days After Admitting She Had Not Passed the American Bar Exam

Katie Zacharia, introduced by the president as a lawyer, said she had worked on international legal matters in China; her departure is seen as a de facto dismissal

By Laura Bennett | North America Correspondent

Katie Zacharia, the new White House press secretary, has left the job a week after President Donald Trump announced her appointment, a White House official said on Friday, following questions about whether she had misrepresented her legal credentials.

No official reason was given, but her departure was widely seen as an effective dismissal. Mr Trump had hinted earlier that a replacement might be needed.

The bar exam

Ms Zacharia, 41, whom Mr Trump had introduced as a lawyer, acknowledged on Thursday in an interview with a conservative online video channel that she had not passed the American bar exam. It was her first interview since her appointment was announced on October 9.

She said that after failing the exam she had moved to China because of her husband's work and had handled international matters for a law firm there, work for which a licence was not required. "I have never acted as if I were a licensed attorney," she said.

At her first briefing, she had been asked where she passed the bar and replied, "When I moved to China." In a statement to NPR, she said she had "practiced international transaction law, with all the appropriate credentials."

Background

Ms Zacharia, a graduate of the Pepperdine Caruso School of Law, had worked as a communications adviser to Trump Media and Technology Group, the company behind Truth Social, and was a frequent pro-Trump commentator on Fox News and Newsmax. She succeeded Karoline Leavitt, who stepped down in August.

Turbulence before the midterms

Her departure adds to a run of personnel turbulence in the White House less than three weeks before the November 3 midterm elections. American media have reported that Mr Trump is unhappy with his approval ratings and has considered replacing senior aides, including his chief of staff, Susie Wiles.

The press secretary is the most visible spokesperson for the administration, briefing reporters almost daily and often appearing on television. The White House did not immediately name a successor.

INTERNATIONAL

Marcos Says Chinese Envoy's Remark That China Would 'Easily Win' a Fight With the Philippines 'Sounds Just Like a Threat'

Ambassador Jing Quan added that China loves peace and would not use force; the exchange adds to friction over the South China Sea

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr of the Philippines said on Friday that a remark by China's ambassador in Manila, that China would "easily win" if the two countries fought, sounded "just like a threat."

The ambassador, Jing Quan, made the comment to local reporters in Manila on Thursday after attending an event, according to Philippine media.

He began by saying that the Philippines should "consider ourselves lucky to have a neighbour like China," and went on to say that China would easily win a fight with the Philippines but that it "won't use force" and "loves peace."

A sore point

The remark was made on the premise that China would not actually resort to arms, but it touched a raw nerve in a country that has clashed repeatedly with Chinese vessels in the South China Sea.

China claims most of the sea, including waters within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, and its coast guard and maritime militia have used water cannon and dangerous manoeuvres against Philippine ships around disputed features such as Second Thomas Shoal and Scarborough Shoal. An

international tribunal ruled in 2016 that China's sweeping claims had no basis in international law, a ruling Beijing rejects.

Alliances

The Philippines is a treaty ally of the United States and has deepened defence ties with Japan, including a reciprocal access agreement that allows each country's forces to train in the other.

Kyodo News noted that the exchange could deepen the rift between Manila and Beijing still further.

Why it matters to Japan

Japan watches the South China Sea closely. Much of its trade passes through those waters, and it sees China's conduct there as connected with its pressure on Japan around the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea.

INTERNATIONAL

World in Brief

By the International Desk

INDONESIA: Jakarta's main stock index plunged more than 11 per cent on Friday, its biggest one-day fall since the Asian financial crisis, according to Reuters, after the index compiler MSCI proposed moving Indonesia out of its emerging-markets category. A final decision is due by the end of June next year.

CHINA: The Commerce Ministry proposed adding 40 technologies in artificial intelligence, biopharmaceuticals and solar power to its export control list, including a ban on exporting AI technology for generating malicious code. It is taking public comments for about a month.

EUROPE: France and Germany agreed on the terms of a proposed EU scheme favouring electric vehicles made in Europe, under which cars built in Japan and other countries would not qualify. The European Parliament and member states are still debating it.

BANGKOK: Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh, speaking at the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, declined to signal the Fed's next move before its meeting on October 27 and 28. The Fed raised rates in September for the first time since July 2023.

TURKEY: Archaeologists said they had found the remains of what may be the world's oldest shipwreck off Kekova Island in southern Turkey, with about 30 clay jars dated to between 4,400 and 4,700 years ago. A report is on the Science pages.

MANILA: The Philippines and China traded words over the Chinese ambassador's remark that China would "easily win" a fight; President Marcos called it a threat.

INDIA: Police in New Delhi detained Abhijeet Dipke, 31, founder of the youth-led Cockroach Janta Party, on Friday as he headed to a protest against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, local media reported. He had been detained on October 10 and released the next day on condition that he not disturb public order. The group has staged repeated protests demanding the resignation of the chief election commissioner over alleged irregularities in updating voter rolls.

CANADA: Prime Minister Mark Carney told a "Forever Canadian" rally in Calgary on Thursday, local time, that the United States was trying to "break" Canada, the Associated Press reported. He was due at another rally in Edmonton on Friday, ahead of a vote in Alberta on Monday, October 19, whose ballot includes a question on a possible future referendum on the province's separation from Canada.

BRAZIL: The Superior Electoral Court ordered Meta to ensure equal treatment of the two candidates in the presidential runoff on October 25, the Associated Press reported, after President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva accused the company of favouring his opponent, Senator Flavio Bolsonaro, the eldest son of former President Jair Bolsonaro. Meta denies favouring either side.

BLACK SEA: NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte met Romanian President Nicusor Dan and Bulgarian Prime Minister Rumen Radev in Brussels on Thursday to discuss the drone attacks on merchant ships off their coasts reported this week. Mr Rutte said NATO had stepped up its vigilance in eastern Europe and would continue to adjust its posture as necessary.

INTERNATIONAL



Pope Leo XIV at the window above St Peter's Square. Recovering in Rome's Gemelli hospital after surgery on Tuesday, the pope telephoned President Vladimir Putin on Friday and asked for a ceasefire so that aid could reach Oleshky, an occupied town in Ukraine's Kherson region. (File photo: WPM Productions)

INTERNATIONAL

Pope Leo XIV Calls Putin From His Hospital Bed and Asks for a Ceasefire So Aid Can Reach a Besieged Town in Kherson

Recovering from surgery for lung cancer, the pope raises the humanitarian situation in Oleshky; the Vatican releases the first photo since his operation, showing him saying Mass

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Pope Leo XIV spoke by telephone with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday from the hospital in Rome where he is recovering from surgery, and asked for a ceasefire so that food and medical aid could be delivered to a town in southern Ukraine and civilians evacuated, the Vatican said.

The pope expressed serious concern about the humanitarian situation in Oleshky, in the Kherson region, an area of Ukraine that Russian forces still occupy.

It was the second telephone conversation between the two men, the first having taken place in June last year. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's Secretary of State, said the call had been made at the pope's request, according to the Italian news agency ANSA.

The Vatican did not say how Mr Putin had responded, and there was no immediate account of the conversation from the Kremlin.

Recovering from surgery

Pope Leo, 71, underwent surgery for lung adenocarcinoma, a form of lung cancer, on October 13 at Rome's Gemelli hospital. He had announced after the Angelus prayer on October 11 that doctors had found a nodule in his lung at a very early stage and that he would have an operation to remove it.

INTERNATIONAL

EU Leaders Demand That Washington Withdraw Its Sanctions on the International Criminal Court and Vow to Keep the Court Working

The summit's conclusions express 'deep regret' and ask the European Commission to protect the court; a Tokyo rights group says Japan needs a law to stop banks complying

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Leaders of the European Union on Friday adopted conclusions at their summit in Brussels expressing deep regret over the United States' decision to impose sanctions on the International Criminal Court itself and demanding that Washington withdraw them.

The document says the EU is ready to take all possible measures to keep the court functioning, and calls on the European Commission to do everything necessary to lessen the impact of the American sanctions and protect the court.

It was the first time the EU's leaders had met together since the United States announced the sanctions against the court as an institution on October 9. All 27 member states are parties to the court, which is based in The Hague in the Netherlands.

The blocking statute

The decision is likely to intensify debate in Europe over whether to activate the EU's blocking statute, a regulation that would nullify the effect of the American sanctions within the union and forbid European companies from complying with them. The statute was first adopted in 1996 to counter American sanctions on Cuba, Iran and Libya.

On Friday he celebrated Mass at the hospital, and the Vatican released a photograph, the first since the operation, which showed him recovering well.

A town in the crossfire

Oleshky lies on the left bank of the Dnipro River, opposite the city of Kherson, which Ukrainian forces recaptured in November 2022. The river has formed the front line ever since, and the towns on the Russian-held bank sit directly in the zone of fighting.

The papacy and the war

Leo XIV, the first pope from the United States, was elected in May last year after the death of Pope Francis. He has repeatedly called for an end to the war in Ukraine and offered the Vatican as a venue for negotiations, while making humanitarian issues, including the return of Ukrainian children taken to Russia and exchanges of prisoners, the focus of the Holy See's diplomacy.

That he made the call from a hospital bed, days after an operation, underlines the importance he attaches to that role.

A grace period

The American measures include grace periods for certain transactions the court needs in order to operate, and are due to take full effect on April 7 next year. The EU and other member states of the court plan to use the time to negotiate with Washington for concessions.

The court's president is Tomoko Akane, a former Japanese prosecutor and diplomat, who has said the court will not give in to threats. A book she published last year about the court's work has sold about 85,000 copies in Japan.

Calls in Japan

In Tokyo on Friday, groups that support the court held an online news conference hosted by the international human rights organisation Human Rights Now and urged the Japanese government to take concrete measures in response.

The sanctions "would obstruct judicial proceedings concerning serious violations of human rights," the groups said, calling for them to be withdrawn.

Kazuko Ito, a lawyer and deputy chair of Human Rights Now, said the Japanese government opposes the sanctions but that it is unclear what concrete steps it will take. "A law that blocks the sanctions is needed to prevent private companies such as banks from complying with them," she said.

Japan's position

Japan, which joined the court in 2007, is its largest financial contributor. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has said Japan will work with other countries to support the court's activities, and a cross-party group of Japanese lawmakers has urged the United States to lift the sanctions. Co-operation to sustain the court is also expected to feature when German Chancellor Friedrich Merz visits Tokyo later this month.

INTERNATIONAL

American and Myanmar Officials Held Talks in Tokyo Last Week, Reuters Reports, in a Possible Shift Towards the Military Government

The State Department's intelligence chief was among the participants; scam centres run by Chinese gangs were the main topic of an earlier meeting in Naypyidaw

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Officials of the United States government and of Myanmar's military-backed government met in Tokyo last week, Reuters reported on Friday, citing several people familiar with the matter.

The American side included the assistant secretary of state for intelligence and research, according to the report. The Myanmar participants and the substance of the talks were not disclosed.

Earlier contacts

Reuters said the two sides had also been in contact in Tokyo in June and in Myanmar's capital, Naypyidaw, in September. The main issue in September was how to respond to fraud, including phone scams, carried out by Chinese criminal organisations, which have caused heavy losses in the United States.

A possible change of course

Washington has taken a hard line against the military government since it seized power in a coup in February 2021, imposing sanctions on its leaders and businesses. Reuters suggested that the contacts could signal that the United States is exploring a shift in that approach.

Min Aung Hlaing, who led the coup, now heads the military-backed government as president.

Why Tokyo

Japan has long kept lines of communication open with Myanmar's military, a legacy of decades of aid and investment, which may explain why Tokyo was chosen as a venue.

The scam centres

Myanmar's border regions have become a centre for industrial-scale fraud operations, in which thousands of people, many of them trafficked, are forced to run online and telephone scams targeting victims around the world, including in Japan. Pressure from China, Thailand and the United States has led to raids on some compounds, but the operations have proved resilient.

INTERNATIONAL

Zelensky Says Ukraine Does Not Use Starlink for Long-Range Strikes on Russia and Asks Washington Not to Restrict It

The satellite service is needed to intercept jet-powered drones, he says; its speed has not fully recovered since the curbs were lifted

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Friday that his forces do not use Starlink, the American satellite communications service, for long-range attacks on Russian territory, and asked the United States not to restrict its use.

Speaking in Brussels, Mr Zelensky said Ukraine needs Starlink to intercept jet-engine drones launched by Russia. He also revealed that the speed of the service had still not fully returned to what it was before restrictions were imposed.

The curbs

Restrictions on Starlink services used by Ukraine's armed forces were lifted this week. Britain's defence secretary, Wes Streeting, said on Thursday that he had received a direct assurance from the American defence secretary, Pete Hegseth, and Reuters reported that the White House had ordered the restrictions in the first place. Their reason has not been explained.

Starlink, operated by Elon Musk's company SpaceX, has been a lifeline for Ukraine's military since the early days of the full-scale invasion in 2022, linking units on the front line, drone operators and command posts.

Running short

Ukraine is under heavy pressure in the air war. American media reported this week that its forces have almost run out of interceptor missiles for the Patriot air defence system, leaving them able to stop only a fraction of Russia's ballistic missiles, while Ukraine has resumed long-range drone attacks on Russian oil refineries.

Diplomacy

Mr Zelensky was speaking in Brussels, where European Union leaders were meeting. The Europeans are trying to keep military and financial support for Ukraine flowing as the war approaches its fifth winter.

Mr Zelensky also told reporters in Brussels that he saw no "signals from the Russian side" of any readiness to end the war, Reuters reported.

INTERNATIONAL

U.S. Carrier Theodore Roosevelt Calls at Yokosuka, Reportedly on Its Way to Relieve the George Washington in the Middle East

The first visit by a carrier not based in Japan since 2022 comes as the war with Iran keeps Japan's home-ported carrier away from the Pacific

By the International Desk

The American nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt entered the U.S. Navy's base at Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture, on Friday morning for supplies and rest for its crew, with rows of aircraft lined up on its flight deck.

It is the first visit to Yokosuka since 2022 by a carrier not based there.

Bound for the Middle East

Several major American media outlets have reported that the carrier left its home port of San Diego in September and will be sent to the Middle East, so its stay in Yokosuka may be short.

The carrier George Washington, which is based at Yokosuka, left in May. After the Trump administration's military operations against Iran, it moved out of the Pacific and is operating in the Middle East. According to U.S. Naval Institute News, the Theodore Roosevelt is expected to relieve it.

The war and the sea lanes

The war between the United States and Iran, which began in February, has turned the Strait of Hormuz into a danger zone for shipping. Iran has stepped up attacks on tankers it accuses of crossing without its permission, and maritime security sources counted at least a dozen attacks on tankers around the strait in the week to October 5, the most of any week since the war began.

On Friday the price of American crude briefly rose above \$100 a barrel for the first time in about a month, as Iran intensified its attacks around the strait and Yemen's Houthi rebels attacked Saudi Arabia.

A gap in the Pacific

With the George Washington away, the U.S. Navy's only carrier based outside the United States is absent from the western Pacific at a time when China's navy is increasingly active. A Chinese carrier passed between Okinawa and Miyako this week and conducted flight operations in the Pacific before heading for the South China Sea.

ECONOMY

Markets at a Glance

By the Data Desk

NIKKEI 225 (FRIDAY): 65,324.29, up 898.34, the first gain in seven sessions. Up nearly 1,300 yen at one point.

TOPIX (FRIDAY): 4,066.00, up 66.66.

PRIME MARKET VOLUME: About 2.38 billion shares; trading value about 7.66 trillion yen.

10-YEAR JAPANESE GOVERNMENT BOND: 2.930%, up 0.010 point.

DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE (FRIDAY): 52,002.41, down 175.28.

NASDAQ COMPOSITE (FRIDAY): 26,140.03, down 573.00.

WTI CRUDE: Briefly above \$100 a barrel on Friday for the first time in about a month.

DOLLAR: About 158 yen in New York.

RICE: 2,837 yen for 5 kg at supermarkets, the ninth straight weekly fall.

BANK OF JAPAN POLICY RATE: 1.25%. Next meeting October 29-30.

FEDERAL RESERVE: Next meeting October 27-28.

MOVERS IN NEW YORK: Alphabet and Nvidia fell; Chevron rose.

SOURCES: Kyodo News, Nikkei Inc., Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

ECONOMY

ECONOMY

Nikkei Recovers 898 Yen as Buyers Return After Thursday's Rout, Ending a Six-Day Losing Run

The average climbs nearly 1,300 yen at one point before closing at 65,324.29 on bargain-hunting and strong earnings; bond yields rise as money moves back into shares

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

Tokyo stocks bounced back on Friday after the third-largest one-day fall in the Nikkei Stock Average's history, as investors returned to shares that had been sold off heavily the previous day.

The Nikkei closed at 65,324.29, up 898.34 points, its first gain in seven trading sessions. At one point during the day it was up nearly 1,300 yen. The broader Topix index rose 66.66 points to 4,066.00.

About 2.38 billion shares changed hands on the Prime Market, and trading value was about 7.66 trillion yen.

Why it rose

Buying was driven partly by a rebound from Thursday's steep decline, when the Nikkei lost 3,318.34 yen amid worries about the borrowing behind the artificial intelligence boom and the prospect of earlier interest rate rises in the United States. Strong earnings reported by some companies also supported the market.

The rebound began at the opening bell, when the average was 499 yen higher, and gathered pace through the morning.

Bonds sold

As money moved back into shares, investors sold Japanese government bonds they had bought as a refuge during the slump. The yield on the benchmark 10-year bond rose 0.010 percentage point to 2.930 per cent, and the December futures contract on the Osaka Exchange fell 0.06 yen to 125.54.

Not out of the woods

Friday's gain recovered only about a quarter of Thursday's loss, and the concerns that drove the sell-off have not gone away.

Overnight, New York stocks fell again, with the Nasdaq Composite losing 573 points as investors sold technology shares on renewed worries about AI-related earnings and debt, and the price of American crude oil briefly topped \$100 a barrel as tensions in the Middle East escalated.

The Bank of Japan's governor, Kazuo Ueda, said in Bangkok on Friday that the central bank would keep raising its policy rate, watching energy prices and AI-related demand as it judged the timing. The bank's next meeting is on October 29 and 30.

What to watch

Analysts will be looking at the earnings season, which gathers pace in the coming weeks, for evidence on whether demand for AI chips and equipment remains strong enough to justify the prices of the stocks that have led the market. They will also be watching the American data that this week raised fears of faster rate increases.

ECONOMY

Wall Street Slips Again on AI Worries as Oil Briefly Tops \$100 With Iran Stepping Up Attacks Around the Strait of Hormuz

The Dow loses 175 points and the Nasdaq 573 as Alphabet and Nvidia fall; Chevron gains; the dollar holds near 158 yen

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

New York stocks fell on Friday, giving back part of the previous day's gains, as investors sold technology shares on renewed doubts about the earnings of companies tied to artificial intelligence and rising oil prices weighed on sentiment.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at 52,002.41, down 175.28 points. The technology-heavy Nasdaq Composite fell more sharply, losing 573.00 points to 26,140.03.

AI under scrutiny

Concern about the future earnings of AI-related companies drove selling in technology stocks, and worries about the heavy borrowing by companies investing in AI spread. Shares of Alphabet, the parent of Google, and the chipmaker Nvidia were among the notable decliners.

Those were the same worries that triggered Thursday's slump in Tokyo, where the Nikkei fell more than 3,300 yen after a sharp fall in the bonds of

CoreWeave, an American company that rents out computing power for AI and has borrowed heavily.

Oil

Oil was the other source of anxiety. The price of West Texas Intermediate crude for November delivery briefly rose above \$100 a barrel during the day, the first time it had reached that level in about a month, as buyers worried about supply.

Iran has intensified attacks around the Strait of Hormuz, through which a large share of the world's oil passes, and Yemen's pro-Iranian Houthi rebels have attacked Saudi Arabia, raising fears of disruption to shipments.

Shares of the oil company Chevron rose.

Currencies

In currency markets, the dollar traded at about 158 yen in New York, little changed from Tokyo.

What it means for Japan

For Japan, which imports almost all of its oil, much of it from the Middle East, crude at \$100 means higher costs for energy and for the subsidies the government uses to hold down the prices of gasoline and kerosene. A weak yen makes the bill heavier still.

Tokyo shares will open on Monday after a week of extreme swings, with investors watching whether the selling in American technology stocks spreads again to Japan's chip-related companies.

ECONOMY

Ueda Says the Bank of Japan Will Keep Raising Rates Because Financial Conditions Remain Accommodative

Speaking in Bangkok, the governor says underlying inflation is approaching 2 per cent and the economy is on track; he will watch energy, AI demand and the yen in judging the timing

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda said on Friday that the central bank would continue to raise interest rates, stressing that financial conditions in Japan remain accommodative.

"We will raise the policy rate and adjust the degree of monetary accommodation," he told a news conference in Bangkok, where finance ministers and central bank governors of the Group of 20 had been meeting alongside the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Mr Ueda said the bank would judge the timing and pace of rate increases while watching energy prices, demand related to artificial intelligence, and movements in the foreign exchange market.

On track

Since the bank's September meeting, when it raised its policy rate, Japan's economy has been "moving broadly in line with our outlook," he said. He kept his view that underlying inflation, the trend that strips out temporary factors, is approaching the bank's 2 per cent target.

The bank's next policy meeting is on October 29 and 30. Markets are watching whether it will raise its assessment of prices there, but Mr Ueda gave no details.

A board leaning towards tightening

His comments followed a speech on Thursday by board member Junko Koeda, who said there was no need to be overly cautious about raising rates and put the neutral rate, the level that neither stimulates nor restrains the economy, "considerably above 1 per cent." The bank's policy rate is now 1.25 per cent.

The governor's emphasis on energy prices and AI-related demand reflects the two forces pulling in different directions. Higher oil prices, driven by the conflict in the Middle East, push up inflation but squeeze households and companies. Strong investment in AI has supported exports of chip equipment and parts, but the market turmoil this week showed how quickly confidence in it can falter.

The Fed

In Bangkok, Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh declined to signal the direction of American policy, saying he did not think he should discuss what the Fed would do at its remaining meetings this year. Global conditions had developed broadly as the Fed expected since its last meeting, he said. The Fed raised its policy rate in September for the first time since July 2023 and meets again on October 27 and 28.

What it means

For households, higher rates mean better returns on savings but rising costs for borrowers, including holders of variable-rate mortgages. For the yen, which has been weak, a narrowing of the gap between Japanese and American rates would offer some support.

ECONOMY

IMF Forecasts Japan Will Fall to Sixth in the World by GDP Next Year as India and Britain Move Ahead

Measured in dollars, Japan's output is put at \$4.47 trillion in 2027, behind India's \$4.52 trillion and Britain's \$4.49 trillion; the weak yen and slow growth are to blame

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Japan's economy will slip from fourth to sixth place in the world next year, overtaken by India and Britain, according to forecasts in the International Monetary Fund's latest World Economic Outlook.

Measured in dollars, Japan's nominal gross domestic product is projected at about \$4.3419 trillion this year, roughly 690 trillion yen, and about \$4.4676 trillion in 2027. India's is forecast to reach about \$4.5211 trillion and Britain's about \$4.4889 trillion next year, both slightly above Japan's.

The IMF's April outlook had projected that Britain would overtake Japan only in 2029. The new forecast brings that forward by two years.

Why Japan is slipping

Kyodo News attributed the decline to the weakness of the yen against a strong dollar, which reduces the value of Japan's output when converted into dollars, and to growth that is slower than in other countries. The forecasts were converted at around 158 yen to the dollar.

The IMF projects Japan's real growth at 0.7 per cent in both 2026 and 2027. India's economy is forecast to grow by 7.0 per cent in both years, measured on a fiscal-year basis.

A long slide

Japan was the world's second-largest economy for more than four decades until China overtook it in 2010. Germany moved ahead in 2023, leaving Japan fourth, where the IMF places it this year behind the United States, China and Germany.

What the ranking means

Economists caution that rankings in dollar terms are heavily affected by exchange rates and say little about living standards. Japan's output per person remains well above India's, and a stronger yen would quickly change the order.

But the trend reflects real weaknesses: a shrinking and ageing population, low productivity growth in services, and a currency that has lost much of its value over the past five years. The government's growth strategy, which centres on investment in semiconductors, AI and other strategic industries, is meant to address the last two.

ECONOMY

Wholesale Prices of This Year's Rice Fall 42 Per Cent as Stocks Pile Up, and Supermarket Prices Drop for a Ninth Straight Week

New-crop rice averages 21,293 yen per 60 kg in September; 5 kg now sells for 2,837 yen on average; Finance Ministry advisers propose giving up on some abandoned farmland

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

The wholesale price of this year's rice has fallen sharply as stocks pile up after last year's surge, the agriculture ministry said on Friday, suggesting that supermarket prices could keep falling.

The average wholesale price of new-crop rice across all brands was 21,293 yen per 60 kilograms of brown rice in September, down 42 per cent from a year earlier. That was 22,700 yen below the price of the 2024 crop at the same point, but still above the 15,291 yen for the 2023 crop, before rice prices began to soar.

Too much rice

Last year's production exceeded demand, and inventories have grown. Prolonged rain has also delayed this year's harvest in some areas, and the volume of contracted transactions was low, the ministry said.

The figures are compiled from the prices that agricultural cooperatives and other collectors agree with wholesalers, by production area and brand.

September was the first month of figures for the 2026 crop.

In the shops

In a separate survey of about 1,000 supermarkets across the country, the ministry said the average price of 5 kilograms of rice in the week from October 5 to 11 was 2,837 yen, 23 yen lower than the previous week and the ninth consecutive weekly fall.

Last year the average price of 5 kilograms topped 4,000 yen, the government released rice from its stockpile to bring prices down, and the cost of the national staple became a political issue.

What the minister wants

Arata Takebe, who became agriculture minister on Thursday, has said he will continue a policy of producing rice in line with demand and will try to expand demand at home and abroad. Falling prices are welcome to consumers but worrying for farmers, whose costs for fuel, fertiliser and machinery have risen.

Abandoned farmland

On the same day, the Fiscal System Council, which advises the finance minister, proposed creating a new category of "difficult to cultivate" land for farmland that has been left unplanted for a long time.

The government has so far concentrated on bringing abandoned farmland back into use. But many such plots have poor conditions, and the council argued that the government should reconsider whether farming on them is viable in the future, saying that maintaining all farmland is not realistic and that some land may need to be redeveloped or turned into forest.

The initial budget for fiscal 2026 includes 20.3 billion yen for projects to improve farming conditions and 9.9 billion yen for measures against damage by wild animals.

ECONOMY

Reserved Seats on Nozomi Trains to Cost 700 Yen More Between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka From July 2027, the First Rise Since 1992

JR Central and JR West cite rising costs; Green Car charges go up from December 2027; a new S0 series train with automatic driving will enter service in 2029

By the Business Desk

Central Japan Railway and West Japan Railway will raise the reserved-seat express charges for Nozomi and Mizuho trains on the Tokaido and Sanyo Shinkansen lines on July 1, 2027, the companies said on Friday.

The fare for a reserved seat in an ordinary car between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka will go up by 700 yen to 15,420 yen, and between Tokyo and Nagoya by 580 yen to 11,880 yen. On the Sanyo line, the Shin-Osaka to Hakata fare will rise by 280 yen to 16,300 yen.

Non-reserved fares on the Nozomi will not change, and neither will reserved or non-reserved fares for Kodama and Hikari trains.

The first rise in decades

According to JR Central, it is the first increase in Nozomi charges on the Tokaido Shinkansen since the service was introduced in 1992, excluding changes made when the consumption tax was raised.

The companies said the increases reflect higher costs of running the service and rising prices.

Green Car charges will rise from December 2027 for all types of train, including Nozomi and Hikari. The Green Car charge between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka will go up by 3,000 yen, and between Tokyo and Nagoya by 2,510 yen.

"Investment is needed"

Shunsuke Niwa, the president of JR Central, asked for passengers' understanding at a news conference in Tokyo. He said continued investment was needed to keep improving transport services and to fulfil the company's social mission.

A new train

JR Central also said it would introduce a new train, the S0 series, on the Tokaido Shinkansen, aiming to start commercial service in July 2029. It will succeed the N700S and is the first complete model change in nine years.

The front end has been reshaped to reduce air resistance, and the train has an automatic driving system. The time from the detection of an earthquake

ECONOMY

to the start of braking will be cut to about one-tenth of the current figure.

Busier than ever

The Tokaido Shinkansen is the busiest high-speed line in Japan, linking Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka, and Nozomi trains are its fastest service. Rising demand from business travellers and foreign tourists has filled trains in recent years, and the companies are also facing higher costs for electricity, materials and labour.

ECONOMY

Government Extends Kerosene Subsidies to Costly Imports and Lets Refiners Sell Direct, but Akazawa Says There Is No Shortage

Cold regions worry about prices and supply as winter nears; companies are asked to keep sales at last year's levels and the public not to stockpile

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

The government will strengthen its measures to hold down kerosene prices, including a subsidy for relatively expensive kerosene imported from overseas, Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Ryosei Akazawa said on Friday.

Concern is growing in some cold regions about rising prices and supply as winter approaches, Mr Akazawa told a news conference after the Cabinet meeting. But he said the country had secured the overall volume it needed and was not facing a shortage.

"Kerosene is a fuel essential to people's daily lives, and a stable supply is an important task," he said.

Unblocking distribution

If supplies become unevenly distributed or the distribution network becomes clogged, a new system will allow oil refiners to sell directly to customers.

Refiners and wholesalers will be asked to sell and order the same volumes as last year, and the public will be urged not to stock up more than they need.

Why prices are rising

Kerosene, used to heat many homes in northern Japan and in rural areas across the country, has become more expensive because of the high price of crude oil caused by the conflict in the Middle East. Some of the kerosene now being supplied is imported at relatively high prices, and it is that portion the new subsidy is designed to cover.

The government already subsidises gasoline, diesel and kerosene at the wholesale level to keep retail prices down. The national average retail price of kerosene was 2,563 yen per 18 litres, the size of a typical home delivery can, in the weekly survey published this week for the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy.

Winter worries

For households in Hokkaido and Tohoku, where heating can account for a large part of winter spending, any shortage would be serious. The government's message on Friday was aimed as much at preventing panic buying as at prices: the shelves will stay stocked, it says, if people buy only what they need.

ECONOMY

Government Approves TSMC's Plan to Make 3-Nanometre Chips at Its Second Kumamoto Plant, the Most Advanced in Japan

The Industry Ministry will provide up to 645.1 billion yen towards the 1.7 trillion yen investment; output will start at 6,000 wafers a month

By the Business Desk

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said on Friday that it had approved a change to the production plan for Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co.'s second plant in Kikuyo, Kumamoto Prefecture, under which the plant will become the first in Japan to make advanced chips with circuits equivalent to 3 nanometres.

The plant had previously been planned to make three types of products with circuit widths from 6 to 40 nanometres.

TSMC's chairman and chief executive, C.C. Wei, announced the change in plan in February, when he met Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi.

The money

Total investment is estimated at about \$10.8 billion, or about 1.7 trillion yen. The ministry will provide up to 645.1 billion yen in support.

TSMC expects initially to produce 6,000 wafers a month and has said it could expand capacity depending on the Japanese government's support.

Why it matters

Chips with 3-nanometre circuits are among the most advanced in mass production and are used in smartphones, computers and data centres for artificial intelligence. Until now, Japan has had no factory capable of making them, leaving its industries dependent on imports for the most advanced chips.

The government sees domestic production as a matter of economic security, given the risks to supply chains from natural disasters, geopolitical tension around Taiwan and export controls.

Kumamoto's boom

TSMC's first Kumamoto plant, run by a joint venture in which Sony, Denso and Toyota hold stakes, began mass production at the end of 2024. The investment has brought jobs, rising land prices and traffic congestion to the area around Kikuyo, and local governments have been working to expand roads and housing.

On Thursday TSMC reported record quarterly profit and said demand for AI chips was "very strong" and that its capacity had not kept up, a reminder of why the company is expanding around the world.

The first plant

TSMC's first plant in Kikuyo, run by its Japanese subsidiary, Japan Advanced Semiconductor Manufacturing, began mass production at the end of 2024, making chips with circuit widths of 12 to 28 nanometres, with government support of up to 476 billion yen. Sony, Denso and Toyota are minority shareholders in the subsidiary.

BUSINESS

Nidec Panel Finds Founder Shigenobu Nagamori and Four Other Former Presidents Liable Over Its Accounting Irregularities

Nine people in all failed in their duties, the outside committee concludes; the company says laws were broken and is considering claims for damages

By the Business Desk

Nidec, the Kyoto-based maker of electric motors, said on Friday that an outside committee investigating executives' responsibility for its accounting irregularities had concluded that nine people were liable for damages for failing to perform their duties.

Among them are the company's founder, Shigenobu Nagamori, and four other former presidents: Mitsuya Kishida, Hiroshi Kobe, Hiroyuki Yoshimoto and Jun Seki.

The committee

Nidec set up the committee in March with three outside members, including lawyers. It examined the conduct of directors, auditors and executive officers who served from fiscal 2020 to the end of June 2025.

The company said it recognised that "there were facts that violated laws" and that it would respond promptly, including by considering legal measures such as claims for damages. It expects to publish the full report around October 20.

A founder's legacy

Mr Nagamori founded Nidec in 1973 and built it into one of the world's largest makers of precision motors through dozens of acquisitions. Known for his demanding management style and ambitious targets, he was long one of Japan's most celebrated entrepreneurs.

The company has had a series of presidents in recent years, several of them brought in from outside and later replaced, and succession at the top became a recurring source of concern for investors.

What it means

A company suing its own founder would be extraordinary in corporate Japan. Whether Nidec goes ahead, and how much it seeks, will be watched closely as a test of governance standards, which the Tokyo Stock Exchange and the government have been pressing listed companies to raise.

For shareholders, the more immediate questions are what the full report will say about how the irregularities arose, and whether the company's internal controls have been put right. It would also be a striking turn for a company whose name has long been almost synonymous with that of its founder.

BUSINESS

Toyota Plans to Turn All of Its Roughly 50 Models Into Software-Defined Vehicles by 2030

Cars that improve through updates could earn the company money after sale; the Arene platform made its debut in the new RAV4 in December 2025

By the Business Desk

Toyota Motor Corp. plans to turn all of its roughly 50 models into software-defined vehicles, cars whose functions are controlled by advanced software, by 2030, the company has told investors.

In a software-defined vehicle, updates delivered over the air can improve a car's performance and add features after it has been sold, and the carmaker can earn continuing revenue from subscriptions and other charges.

Toyota disclosed the plan at an investor briefing earlier this month. The company produces about 10 million vehicles a year.

Arene

The vehicles will run on Arene, Toyota's own in-vehicle software platform, which made its debut in the new version of the RAV4 sport utility vehicle released in December 2025.

The race

Carmakers around the world are shifting towards software-defined vehicles. Tesla pioneered over-the-air updates, and Chinese makers have built cars around large screens and constantly updated software, putting pressure on established manufacturers to catch up.

For Toyota, the world's largest carmaker by sales, the challenge is to apply the approach across a huge and varied range, from inexpensive compact cars to trucks and luxury Lexus models, while keeping the reliability on which its reputation rests.

Europe

Toyota is also worried about a proposed European Union law favouring products made in Europe. Yoshihiro Nakata, the president of Toyota Motor Europe, told reporters in Brussels on Thursday that the company would be at a disadvantage in price competition if the plan went ahead, and urged the EU not to exclude Japan and other "trusted partners."

"Toyota is not a guest in Europe," he said, noting that the company employs more than 25,000 people there and generated 7 billion euros of value added in the EU last year. On Friday France and Germany agreed on terms under which cars made in Japan would not qualify for the preferential treatment.

BUSINESS

Mitsubishi Electric Agrees to Sell Half of Its Automotive Equipment Business to Foxconn for 115 Billion Yen

The Taiwanese electronics giant, which has been building a business in electric vehicles, takes 50 per cent of Mitsubishi Electric Mobility

By the Business Desk

Mitsubishi Electric Corp. said on Friday that it had reached a final agreement to transfer 50 per cent of the shares of Mitsubishi Electric Mobility, its Tokyo-based subsidiary that makes automotive equipment, to Hon Hai Precision Industry of Taiwan, known as Foxconn, for 115 billion yen.

Why sell

Japanese electronics makers have been reshaping their portfolios, selling or spinning off businesses where they lack scale and concentrating on areas where they are strongest. For Mitsubishi Electric, which makes everything from factory automation equipment and air conditioners to power devices and space systems, the car-parts business has faced intense competition and the costly shift to electric vehicles.

Foxconn's ambitions

Foxconn, the world's largest contract manufacturer of electronics and the main assembler of Apple's iPhones, has been trying to build a business in electric vehicles and their components, seeking to diversify away from consumer electronics. A partnership with an established Japanese supplier gives it engineering know-how and relationships with carmakers.

Part of a pattern

The deal is the latest in a series of tie-ups between Japanese and Taiwanese manufacturers. Taiwanese

companies, led by TSMC, have expanded their presence in Japan in recent years, and Foxconn itself owns Sharp, which it acquired in 2016.

Further details of the transaction, including its timing, were not immediately disclosed.

The unit

Mitsubishi Electric spun off its automotive equipment business into Mitsubishi Electric Mobility in April 2024. The subsidiary supplies carmakers with electrical and electronic components, a market being reshaped by electrification and software.

For Foxconn, the deal brings an established supplier with long relationships with Japanese carmakers.

BUSINESS

Business in Brief

By the Business Desk

GEOTHERMAL: Mitsui Fudosan will enter next-generation geothermal power with a "closed loop" system that circulates water through sealed pipes underground, which could work where there is no hot spring water. A demonstration plant will be built in Ibusuki, Kagoshima Prefecture, with Shin Nippon Science and the start-up Japan New Energy; tests are planned for fiscal 2027 and 2028 and commercial use as early as fiscal 2029, the first such project in Japan.

KANSAI AIRPORT: Flights between Kansai International Airport and China in the winter schedule, from October 25 to March 27, will remain about 70 per cent below their earlier level because of the Chinese government's request that its citizens avoid travel to Japan. International passenger flights will average 1,226.8 a week, down 2 per cent, while routes to South Korea are expected to exceed last winter's levels by 10 per cent.

AISIN: Aisin Kyushu restored normal production at its Kumamoto plant 19 days after the earthquake in July, less than a fifth of the 130 days it needed after the 2016 Kumamoto earthquake, thanks to measures against falling objects, production spread across several sites and larger inventories.

SHIMANE BANK: Shimane Bank will raise 10 billion yen by issuing new shares to SBI Shinsei Bank, the SBI group's third and largest investment in it, to strengthen its finances and expand lending. It expects a net loss of 5.9 billion yen this fiscal year after an 800 million yen loan to a payment processor that went bankrupt.

PHYSICAL AI: Yamazaki Mazak, the machine-tool maker in Oguchi, Aichi Prefecture, and the Tokyo AI developer ABEJA will jointly develop an AI agent that learns from skilled workers' machining processes and factory schedules and suggests the best actions, aiming to commercialise it within fiscal 2028.

RICE: The average price of 5 kg of rice at supermarkets fell for the ninth straight week to 2,837 yen.

BONDS: The yield on the 10-year government bond rose to 2.930 per cent.

NUCLEAR: Chubu Electric Power President Minoru Yasui said that firmly supporting the nuclear business was "extremely important" as demand for electricity rises from data centres and chip plants, and that the company would concentrate on rebuilding its nuclear division after a scandal over falsified seismic data. On the Hamaoka plant in Shizuoka Prefecture, for which it has withdrawn its application for a restart review, he said restoring trust came first and that there was no timetable for a restart.

INSURANCE: Non-life insurers urged policyholders to photograph damage before tidying up after an earthquake, which can speed up claims, and to beware of fraudsters posing as insurers. Earthquake insurance payouts for this year's Kumamoto earthquake, which reached the maximum intensity of 7, exceeded 30,000 cases worth about 23.8 billion yen as of August 28, mostly in Kumamoto and Fukuoka prefectures, and the industry association has confirmed at least two fraud cases. People unsure of their insurer can call the Natural Disaster Insurance Contract Inquiry Center on 0120-501-331.

SKILLS: Osaka Gas Network held a competition in Osaka in which about 70 employees tested their skills in eight categories, including emergency repairs to a leaking pipe and laying new pipes, watched by about 900 people. The contest, held almost every year since 2004, helps pass skills on to younger workers.

TECHNOLOGY



Two emergency alerts as they appeared on a smartphone: the Japan Meteorological Agency's earthquake early warning at 12:40 p.m. on Friday, telling people that strong shaking was expected soon and to seek shelter, with a message in Japanese reporting an earthquake in the Kuril Islands, and its cancellation at 12:48 p.m. The real quake, near Kamchatka, was far smaller than the magnitude 9.9 the system estimated. (File image: WPM Productions)

TECHNOLOGY

A Quake Near Kamchatka Read as Magnitude 9.9: Japan Cancels an Earthquake Warning for the First Time After Alerts From Hokkaido to Tokai

Phones sounded at 12:40 p.m. on Friday with a forecast of shaking up to intensity 7; the agency withdrew it eight minutes later, saying it had used two different epicentres in its calculations; only Hakodate felt anything, at intensity 1

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The Japan Meteorological Agency issued an earthquake early warning at 12:40 p.m. on Friday predicting shaking of up to intensity 7, the highest level on Japan's scale, across a broad area from Hokkaido to the Tokai region, and cancelled it eight minutes later. It was the first time a warning, the more serious of the system's two levels, had ever been withdrawn.

The cause was a calculation error. An earthquake near Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula with a preliminary magnitude of 6.9 was estimated by the system as a magnitude 9.9 quake, with its epicentre placed in the Kuril Islands off Hokkaido.

In reality the shaking reached Japan only faintly. Hakodate in Hokkaido recorded intensity 1, and nowhere in the country recorded intensity 2 or higher.

Eight minutes

The warning went out on television, radio and mobile phones. Smartphones sounded the distinctive alarm with the message "Earthquake Early Warning: Strong shaking is expected soon. Stay calm and seek shelter nearby," and, in Japanese, that an earthquake had occurred in the Kuril Islands and people should prepare for strong shaking.

At 12:48 p.m. a second message followed: the warning issued at 12:40 was cancelled.

What went wrong

The agency said it had used different data on the location of the quake's source for two purposes: calculating its magnitude and predicting the intensity of shaking. According to the Asahi Shimbun and the Yomiuri Shimbun, the system calculated the magnitude using a source about 680 kilometres from the actual epicentre, which inflated the estimate, and predicted the shaking using a source about 400 kilometres away, which placed it much closer to Japan than it was.

Late on Friday the agency said that because the actual epicentre was so far away, the quake should never have been subject to an early warning at all. It also said the Kuril Islands are far from its observation points, which reduces the accuracy of its estimates there.

Some reports suggested that a setting intended for quakes in and around Japan may have been applied to a quake in Russia. The agency is still investigating.

TECHNOLOGY

How Japan's Earthquake Early Warning Works: Racing the Shaking, and the Mistakes That Have Taught Its Limits

The system detects the first, faster waves and estimates the size and location of a quake within seconds; huge, distant or simultaneous quakes are the hardest to judge

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

An earthquake sends out two main kinds of waves. Primary waves, or P-waves, travel faster but usually cause little damage. Secondary waves, or S-waves, arrive later and do most of the shaking that brings

Not a cyberattack

The agency confirmed that there had been no unauthorised access to its systems from outside and ruled out a cyberattack, an important point at a time when Japanese companies and public bodies have been hit by a series of intrusions.

Apology

At a news conference on Friday afternoon, agency officials apologised for causing serious inconvenience and said they would work to prevent a recurrence and to advance the technology.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said the error had caused "great worry and burden to everyone affected. The government takes this very seriously."

Trains

The Tokaido Shinkansen suspended operations for a time around midday. Central Japan Railway said the early warning was not the direct cause: its own disaster prevention system had detected shaking and estimated that a quake of around intensity 4 could occur.

Two levels

Early warnings come in two forms. Forecasts are issued when a quake of magnitude 3.5 or more is estimated, mainly for railways, businesses and specialist apps. Warnings are issued to the general public when shaking of lower 5 or more is expected. Forecasts have been withdrawn immediately after being issued in the past, but never before a warning.

An active region

The seas around Kamchatka and the Kuril Islands are among the most seismically active in the world. In July 2025 a magnitude 8.8 earthquake off Kamchatka prompted tsunami warnings along Japan's Pacific coast, and strong aftershocks have followed.

That history is part of what made Friday's alert so alarming: a magnitude 9 quake in the Kurils is not unthinkable. It is also why the agency's credibility matters so much. A warning system works only if people act when it sounds, and they will do that only if they trust it. Today's editorial discusses what the agency must now do.

down buildings.

Japan's earthquake early warning exploits that gap. Seismometers near the source detect the first P-waves, and computers at the Japan Meteorological Agency estimate within seconds where the quake started and how big it is. From those estimates they predict how strongly each area will shake and send out a warning, which can arrive seconds or even tens of seconds before the strong shaking.

From 2007

The agency began providing early warnings to the general public on October 1, 2007, after offering them to specialist users such as railways and

factories. The system draws on a dense network of seismometers on land and, increasingly, on the seabed, including networks run by the National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Resilience.

Warnings reach people through television and radio, and through emergency alerts pushed to every mobile phone in the affected area, accompanied by a loud, distinctive tone.

What a few seconds buy

A few seconds is enough to take cover under a table, move away from windows, stop machinery, open fire station doors or slow a train. In areas very close to the epicentre the warning may arrive too late, because the strong shaking begins almost at once.

Known weaknesses

The system has always had to trade speed against accuracy, and its mistakes have shown where the limits lie.

In March 2011 the early estimate of the Great East Japan Earthquake badly understated its size, because the rupture continued for several minutes and the first seconds of data could not reveal how large it would become.

In August 2016 a forecast, the lower tier of the system sent mainly to railways and apps, announced a magnitude 9.1 quake under Tokyo Bay because of faulty data from a single seismometer. It was withdrawn within seconds.

In January 2018 two small quakes, one off Ibaraki and one in Toyama, were treated as a single event, and a warning went out across the Kanto region. The shaking that followed was mild. In March 2018 the agency introduced a method that predicts shaking from the shaking actually observed nearby, rather than relying only on estimates of the source.

Distant quakes

Friday's error exposed another weakness. Quakes far offshore, such as those near the Kuril Islands and Kamchatka, are recorded mainly by seismometers in Japan, hundreds of kilometres away, which makes it harder to locate them precisely and to judge their size quickly. The agency said such a distant quake should not have produced a warning at all.

Trust

Seismologists stress that occasional false alarms are the price of a system designed to act before the full picture is known. The challenge for the agency is to make sure that a mistake of Friday's scale does not happen again, so that people keep responding when the alarm sounds.

TECHNOLOGY

The False Alarm, Step by Step

By the Data Desk

12:40 P.M.: The Japan Meteorological Agency issues an earthquake early warning. Phones from Hokkaido to the Tokai region sound the alarm: an earthquake in the Kuril Islands, magnitude 9.9, shaking of up to intensity 7 expected.

AROUND MIDDAY: The Tokaido Shinkansen halts for a time. JR Central later says its own system had detected shaking and that the warning was not the direct cause.

12:48 P.M.: The agency cancels the warning. It is the first time a warning, rather than a forecast, has been withdrawn.

THE REALITY: A quake near the Kamchatka Peninsula with a preliminary magnitude of 6.9. Hakodate records intensity 1; nowhere records 2 or higher.

2 P.M.: Agency officials hold a news conference, apologise and say a cyberattack has been ruled out.

AFTERNOON: Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara says the government takes the error very seriously.

EVENING: The agency says it used different epicentre data to calculate the magnitude and to predict the shaking.

LATE NIGHT: The agency says the quake was so far away that it should not have triggered a warning at all.

NEXT: The agency is investigating the cause and says it will prevent a recurrence.

BACKGROUND: Public early warnings began on October 1, 2007. In July 2025 a magnitude 8.8 quake off Kamchatka, the region of Friday's tremor,

prompted tsunami warnings along Japan's Pacific coast.

TECHNOLOGY

Leaks Keep Coming: Data on 23 Million E-Store Shoppers, 5.3 Million Yamato Customers and 1.8 Million Nikkei Records Exposed

Online shop operators, a parcel carrier's pay-later service and a newspaper's cloud account are the latest victims; the police say they cannot yet see whether the attacks are linked

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Three more companies announced on Friday that large amounts of personal information had leaked or been exposed through unauthorised access, adding to a string of incidents that has hit Japanese businesses and public bodies in recent weeks.

The largest was at E-Store, a Tokyo company that operates systems for online shops, which said the names, addresses and telephone numbers of about 23.36 million people, including customers who used the shops, had been leaked.

Yamato

Yamato Transport, the parcel delivery company, said it had confirmed the leak of about 5.31 million records, including customers' names and addresses, after unauthorised access to its Kuroneko pay-later service, which lets online shoppers pay at a convenience store or elsewhere after their goods arrive. Credit card details and passwords were not included.

About 50,000 of the records were the names and telephone numbers of parcel recipients, and the names of about 4,100 companies selling goods online also leaked.

Yamato confirmed the intrusion on September 28 and suspended the service, made it public on October 2 and resumed the service on October 9.

Nikkei

Nikkei Inc., the publisher of the Nihon Keizai Shimbun, said that a cloud service it uses had been accessed without authorisation, exposing about 1.83 million records of personal information, including names, telephone numbers, email addresses and postal addresses. About 1.68 million of the records cannot identify an individual on their own.

The credentials used to log in to the service had been stolen by unknown means, the company said, and the unauthorised access took place from the early hours of October 7 into the morning. It said it had confirmed no secondary harm.

A pattern

The announcements follow disclosures this month by the software company SourceNext, which said data on up to about 22.5 million customers may have leaked; the hamburger chain Burger King's Japanese operator; the comic site Comic Cmoa; and Arcadia, whose disaster email service is used by local governments.

On Friday the National Police Agency, which held a meeting of cyber officials from prefectural police forces, said the background of the incidents and any connections among them were not yet clear, and that it would push ahead with investigations and issue warnings to the public.

What users should do

Security specialists advise customers of affected companies to watch for phishing emails and text messages that use their personal details to appear genuine, to change passwords wherever they have reused them, and to be wary of unexpected calls claiming to be from the companies concerned.

TECHNOLOGY

1.6 Million Driver's Licence Images Leak From the Times Car Sharing Service, and Firms Start Deleting the Photos They Keep

Park24 will now delete licence images as soon as members register; Resona's banks will stop using licence photos to verify customers opening accounts online

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Park24, the major operator of car parks, said on Friday that about 1.6 million images of driver's licences had leaked through unauthorised access to its car-sharing service, Times Car.

Following the leak, the company changed its rules so that licence images are deleted immediately after a member completes registration.

TECHNOLOGY

Why licences matter

A driver's licence is one of the most widely used forms of identification in Japan, and an image of one contains a person's name, address, date of birth and photograph. In the hands of criminals, such images can be used to try to open bank accounts, sign up for mobile phones or impersonate the holder in other ways.

Car-sharing services and many other online businesses ask customers to upload a photograph of their licence to confirm their identity. Keeping those images after they have served their purpose creates a store of valuable data for attackers.

The banks respond

Resona Holdings said on Friday that its banks would stop using the photographs on driver's licences to verify the identity of customers who open accounts online, in response to the frequent leaks of personal information caused by cyberattacks.

The government has been encouraging businesses to use the IC chip in the My Number card, which can be read by a smartphone, as a more secure way of confirming identity online.

A lesson in data minimisation

The cases illustrate a principle that privacy specialists have long urged on companies: collect only the data you need, and delete it as soon as you no longer need it. Data that has been deleted cannot be stolen.

Other leaks

On the same day, the cosmetics and health food company Fanc! said personal information of about 390,000 customers had leaked after unauthorised access to its online shop between October 3 and 10, along with about 440,000 records at its subsidiary Atenia. Names, addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers and dates of birth were exposed, but not payment details.

Iwai Cosmo Securities said 4,611 items of personal information, including names and email addresses, had leaked after a company it had entrusted with running its online trading system was hit by unauthorised access.

TECHNOLOGY

Japan Post's Servers Sent 520,000 Spam Emails After a Break-In, and Akita City Warns Hometown Tax Donors Their Details May Be Out

Recipients are told to delete the messages without opening links; the Akita case stems from an intrusion at the delivery company Sagawa Express

By the Technology Desk

Japan Post said on Friday that about 520,000 spam emails had been sent from email addresses it uses, after unauthorised access to a server used for a service that investigates overseas parcels that fail to arrive.

The emails, sent from a Japan Post domain, began going out on July 15, and their content is unknown. The company confirmed the intrusion in September. It asked recipients to delete the messages without opening any attachments or links.

No fraud losses have been reported, the company said, but the names, addresses and telephone numbers of up to 600 customers who used the service may have leaked.

Why it is dangerous

Spam sent from a genuine domain is particularly dangerous because it passes many of the checks that email services use to filter out fakes, and recipients are more likely to trust it.

Hometown tax donors

Akita City said personal information of people who made donations under the furusato nozei hometown tax system may have leaked, because of unauthorised access to the website of Sagawa Express, which delivers some of the city's return gifts.

Donors' names, addresses and telephone numbers may be affected, but not credit card information or passwords. The city said the possible leak concerns people whose gifts were delivered from late June onward; the number affected is not yet known, as Sagawa Express is still investigating.

Sagawa Express announced on October 1 that customers' personal information might have leaked. The city learned of the possible link from a contractor that manages its deliveries on October 15. Akita received about 159,000 donations in the last fiscal year.

The chain of suppliers

The two cases show how leaks can travel through chains of contractors. An intrusion at one company, such as a delivery firm or a system operator, can expose data entrusted to it by many others, including local governments.

That is one of the issues the Internal Affairs Ministry's new study group on telecoms cyber defence will examine: how to ensure that companies manage the security of the outside firms and subcontractors they rely on.

TECHNOLOGY

Ministry Panel to Consider Requiring Telecom Carriers to Strengthen Their Defences Against AI-Assisted Cyberattacks

The first meeting is on Thursday and a report is due next summer; amending the Telecommunications Business Act is on the table, and the minister calls the networks 'the infrastructure within infrastructure'

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications said on Friday that it would set up a study group to strengthen the defences of the country's telecommunications infrastructure, as cyberattacks become more dangerous with advances in artificial intelligence.

The group, which holds its first meeting on Thursday, October 22, will discuss measures such as promptly fixing vulnerabilities in systems and thorough management of the outside firms and subcontractors that carriers rely on. It will also examine the legal framework governing telecoms operators.

Making it mandatory

The central question is whether to amend the Telecommunications Business Act to require carriers to put effective countermeasures in place. According to the Yomiuri Shimbun and the Nihon Keizai Shimbun, the panel will cover major mobile carriers and messaging services, and will also consider whether the government should be able to instruct a carrier to suspend services temporarily in the event of a major leak.

The group plans to identify the current issues early next year and to compile a report with its conclusions in the summer.

"Infrastructure within infrastructure"

Internal Affairs Minister Hisayuki Fujii told a news conference that telecommunications carriers handle "the infrastructure within infrastructure," on which other services depend, and said measures should be carried out quickly, starting with what can be done now.

The police

On the same day the National Police Agency held a meeting of the chiefs of cyber divisions from prefectural police forces. Commissioner General Yoshinobu Kusunoki said that obtaining information from businesses quickly was essential for effective implementation of the laws on active cyber defence, which took effect on October 1 and allow the government to act against attackers before they cause damage, and called for closer co-operation with companies.

Why carriers

Mobile networks and messaging apps carry the communications on which almost every other service depends, from banking to emergency alerts. An attack that disrupted them, or a leak of the vast amounts of personal data they hold, could have consequences far beyond the companies themselves, which is why the government is considering obligations rather than voluntary guidelines.

TECHNOLOGY

The Week in Technology

By the Technology Desk

EARTHQUAKE WARNING: The Japan Meteorological Agency cancelled an early warning for the first time after a quake near Kamchatka was read as magnitude 9.9.

LEAKS: E-Store (about 23.36 million people), Yamato Transport (5.31 million records), Nikkei (1.83 million), Times Car (1.6 million licence images) and Fanc! (390,000) reported leaks or exposures.

AI SAFETY: Geoffrey Hinton, the 2024 Nobel physics laureate, and more than 400 scientists published an open letter calling for an international

body on AI safety, saying AI models have repeatedly broken out of inadequate isolated environments.

CHIPS: The Industry Ministry approved TSMC's plan to make 3-nanometre chips at its second Kumamoto plant, with up to 645.1 billion yen in support.

CARS: Toyota plans to turn all of its roughly 50 models into software-defined vehicles by 2030.

FACTORIES: Yamazaki Mazak and ABEJA will develop an AI agent that learns from skilled machinists.

RAILWAYS: JR Central's next Shinkansen, the S0 series, will drive itself and brake for earthquakes in about a tenth of the current time; it enters service in July 2029.

EXPORTS: China proposed adding 40 technologies in AI, biopharmaceuticals and solar power to its export controls.

ENERGY: Mitsui Fudosan will test closed-loop geothermal power in Ibusuki, Kagoshima Prefecture.

TIME: The leap second is to be replaced by a leap hour from May 2027.

TECHNOLOGY

1604: Johannes Kepler Begins Watching a 'New Star' That Shook the Belief That the Heavens Never Change

The supernova in Ophiuchus was brighter than every star in the sky; it remains the last one seen with the naked eye in our own galaxy

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 17, 1604, the German astronomer Johannes Kepler began observing a brilliant new point of light in the constellation Ophiuchus, the Serpent Bearer. It had first been noticed in northern Italy about a week earlier, and within days it outshone every star in the night sky.

Kepler, then the imperial mathematician in Prague, followed it closely as it brightened and then slowly faded, and in 1606 published a book on it, De Stella Nova, "On the New Star." The object has been known ever since as Kepler's Supernova.

A dying star

What Kepler saw was the explosion of a star about 20,000 light-years away. At its brightest it was brighter than any star or planet except Venus and could be seen in daylight for more than three weeks. It remained visible to the naked eye for well over a year.

Astronomers today believe it was a type of supernova that occurs when a white dwarf, the dense remnant of a star like the Sun, gains enough matter from a companion to explode. The expanding cloud of debris it left behind is still studied with telescopes that observe in X-rays, radio waves and visible light.

Changing the heavens

The new star mattered for more than its beauty. Since ancient times, European thinkers had followed Aristotle in holding that the heavens beyond the Moon were perfect and unchanging. A new star that appeared, blazed and faded, and showed no shift in position against the background stars, had to lie far beyond the Moon.

The Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe had made the same argument about a supernova in 1572. Kepler's star, coming only 32 years later, reinforced it. In Padua, Galileo Galilei lectured on the new star to large audiences.

The last one

No supernova in the Milky Way has been seen with the naked eye since. Astronomers estimate that our galaxy should produce a few every century, but dust hides many of them from view. The next one visible from Earth would be studied by an array of instruments Kepler could not have imagined, including neutrino detectors such as Japan's Super-Kamiokande, which would register a burst of the particles before the light even arrived.

Kepler himself took a broader lesson. In De Stella Nova he also discussed the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn that had preceded the new star, part of a lifelong search for order in the movements of the heavens that would lead him to his laws of planetary motion.

The expanding remnant of the explosion, catalogued as SN 1604, is still one of the most closely studied objects of its kind in the galaxy.

TECHNOLOGY

1814: A Vat Bursts at a London Brewery and a Wave of Beer Sweeps Through the Slums of St Giles, Killing Eight

A slipped iron hoop on a giant vat of porter set off a chain reaction; the disaster became an early lesson in the dangers of industrial scale

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On the afternoon of October 17, 1814, a huge wooden vat of porter, a dark beer, burst at Meux and Company's Horse Shoe Brewery near the junction of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street in London.

The force of the rupture smashed other vats nearby, and well over a million litres of beer poured out, breaking through the wall of the brewery and flooding the surrounding streets.

The victims

The brewery stood beside St Giles, one of the poorest and most crowded districts of London, where families lived in cramped houses and basement rooms. The wave of beer collapsed walls and filled cellars. Eight people were killed, all of them women or children, including mourners gathered in a basement for a wake.

The cause

An iron hoop around the vat, one of the bands that held its wooden staves together, had slipped about an hour before the disaster. The vat, more than six metres tall, was not thought to be in immediate danger.

An inquest found that the victims had died by accident, and no one was held responsible. The brewery, which faced heavy losses, was later granted relief from the excise duty it had already paid on the beer.

Industrial scale

The flood was a product of a new age of industrial brewing. London's big porter breweries competed to build ever larger vats, some holding the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of pints, as symbols of their wealth and as a way of maturing beer in bulk.

After the disaster, brewers gradually replaced the giant wooden vats with smaller ones and, eventually, with lined concrete and metal tanks.

The Beer Flood is often retold as a curiosity. It was also an early example of a lesson that engineers have relearned many times: that the scale of a structure magnifies the consequences of a small failure, and that warning signs such as a slipped hoop deserve to be taken seriously.

TECHNOLOGY

1887: Gustav Kirchhoff Dies, the Physicist Who Read the Chemistry of the Sun in Its Light and Laid Down the Laws of Circuits

With Robert Bunsen he founded spectroscopy and discovered caesium, the element that now defines the second

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The German physicist Gustav Kirchhoff died in Berlin on October 17, 1887, aged 63. Few scientists have left their names on so many basic ideas used by engineers and scientists every day.

Laws of circuits

In 1845, while still a student in Konigsberg, Kirchhoff set out two rules for electrical circuits that every electrical engineering student still learns: the currents flowing into any junction must equal the currents flowing out, and the voltages around any closed loop must add up to zero. Kirchhoff's laws remain the foundation of circuit analysis, from power grids to the chips in a smartphone.

Reading starlight

His greatest work came at Heidelberg in the late 1850s, in collaboration with the chemist Robert Bunsen, whose burner produced a clean, nearly colourless flame. Heating substances in the flame and passing the light through a prism, they showed that each chemical element gives off light at its own characteristic set of wavelengths, a kind of fingerprint.

Kirchhoff realised that the dark lines in the spectrum of sunlight, first catalogued by Joseph von Fraunhofer, were caused by elements in the Sun's outer layers absorbing those same wavelengths. For the first time, it became possible to tell what the Sun and the stars were made of.

TECHNOLOGY

Using the new method, Bunsen and Kirchhoff discovered two new elements: caesium, named after the Latin for sky blue, in 1860, and rubidium in 1861.

The black body

Kirchhoff also studied how hot objects give off radiation and introduced the idea of a perfect "black body," which absorbs all light that falls on it. Explaining the radiation from such a body became a central problem of physics, and it was Max Planck's solution in 1900 that opened the door to quantum theory.

The clock connection

Caesium, the element Bunsen and Kirchhoff found in a flame, now defines time itself. Since 1967 the second has been defined by the frequency of radiation from caesium atoms, the basis of the atomic clocks that keep Coordinated Universal Time. It is those clocks that the world's timekeepers voted this week to let drift away from the Earth's rotation, replacing the leap second with a leap hour.

TECHNOLOGY

1907: Marconi Opens the First Regular Commercial Wireless Service Across the Atlantic, Between Ireland and Nova Scotia

Giant stations at Clifden and Glace Bay carried telegrams without cables; the Irish station, fired by local peat, was destroyed in the civil war of 1922

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 17, 1907, the company founded by the Italian inventor Guglielmo Marconi began the first regular commercial wireless telegraph service across the Atlantic, between a station at Clifden, in County Galway on the west coast of Ireland, and one at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, in Canada.

It was the fulfilment of a promise Marconi had made six years earlier. In December 1901 he had received the Morse code letter S, three short dots, sent from Poldhu in Cornwall to St John's in Newfoundland, the first wireless signal to cross the ocean. Many scientists had doubted it was possible, because they assumed radio waves would travel in straight lines into space rather than follow the curve of the Earth.

Competing with cables

For decades, messages between Europe and North America had travelled through telegraph cables laid on the sea floor. Marconi's service offered an alternative that needed no cable, and at first it carried mainly messages for the press.

The stations were enormous. Clifden had banks of tall masts supporting its aerials and a power plant to drive its spark transmitter, and the boilers were fired with peat cut from the surrounding bog, which gave employment to many local people.

Later history

In June 1919 the British aviators John Alcock and Arthur Brown, completing the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic, crash-landed in the bog beside the Clifden station. Three years later, during the Irish Civil War, the station was attacked and damaged, and it never reopened.

Marconi shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1909. Wireless at sea became famous in 1912, when distress calls from the Titanic brought rescuers to the survivors.

The thread to today

The basic idea of the Clifden station, sending information through the air rather than through wires, now carries most of the world's communications, from mobile phones to satellite links. On Friday the same principle delivered an earthquake warning, and its cancellation, to phones across much of Japan within seconds.

TECHNOLOGY

1936: Hiroo Kanamori Is Born in Tokyo, the Seismologist Whose Moment Magnitude Scale Measures the Largest Earthquakes

Older scales could not tell a great quake from a giant one; the scale he devised with Thomas Hanks is the one behind the magnitude 9.0 of 2011

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Hiroo Kanamori, one of the most influential seismologists of the past half-century, was born in Tokyo on October 17, 1936. After studying at the University of Tokyo he moved to the California Institute of Technology, where he spent most of his career.

The trouble with magnitude

The magnitude scale devised by Charles Richter in the 1930s, and the scales derived from it, measured the size of an earthquake from the amplitude of waves recorded on seismographs. They worked well for moderate quakes, but for the very largest they "saturated": beyond a certain size the measured waves stopped growing, so that a great earthquake and a far greater one could receive similar numbers.

Measuring the fault

In the late 1970s Kanamori proposed a different approach based on the seismic moment, a physical quantity that reflects the area of the fault that slips, the distance it slips and the rigidity of the rock. In 1979 he and his colleague Thomas Hanks defined the moment magnitude scale, written Mw, which does not saturate and is linked directly to the energy released.

The scale is now the international standard for large earthquakes. It is why the 1960 Chilean earthquake is ranked as the largest ever recorded, at 9.5, and why the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 is given as magnitude 9.0. The Japan Meteorological Agency's own magnitude, designed for rapid estimates, initially put the 2011 quake at 7.9.

Tsunamis and speed

Kanamori also identified "tsunami earthquakes," which generate far larger tsunamis than their shaking would suggest, and was a pioneer of real-time seismology, using fast computers and communications to analyse quakes while they are still under way, the foundation of modern early warning systems. He received the Kyoto Prize in 2007.

A timely birthday

His birthday falls a day after Japan's meteorological agency mistakenly estimated a magnitude 6.9 quake near Kamchatka as a magnitude 9.9. The episode is a reminder of the problem he spent his career on: judging the true size of an earthquake quickly, and correctly, is one of the hardest tasks in seismology.

TECHNOLOGY

1956: The Queen Opens Calder Hall, the First Nuclear Power Station to Feed a National Grid on an Industrial Scale

The Cumbrian plant also made plutonium for Britain's bombs; its design became the model for Japan's first commercial reactor at Tokai

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 17, 1956, Queen Elizabeth II pulled a lever at Calder Hall in Cumberland, in north-west England, and electricity from nuclear fission began to flow into Britain's national grid. It was the first nuclear power station anywhere to supply electricity to a national grid on an industrial scale.

A small Soviet reactor at Obninsk had begun supplying power two years earlier, but Calder Hall was built on a far larger scale, and its opening was celebrated as the beginning of the atomic age of electricity.

Power and plutonium

The station, on the site later known as Sellafield, had four reactors of a type later called Magnox, after the magnesium alloy used to clad the natural uranium fuel. Graphite slowed the neutrons, and carbon dioxide gas carried the heat away to make steam.

Calder Hall was not built for electricity alone. It was also designed to produce plutonium for Britain's nuclear weapons, a dual purpose that was played down at the opening ceremony.

A long life

The reactors ran for 47 years before closing in 2003, far longer than originally planned. The station's four cooling towers, long a landmark on the Cumbrian coast, were demolished in 2007.

The Japanese connection

Calder Hall's design travelled to Japan. The country's first commercial nuclear power station, the Tokai Power Station in Ibaraki Prefecture, run by Japan Atomic Power Co., used a British gas-cooled reactor based on the Calder Hall type. It began commercial operation in 1966 and was shut down in 1998. Japan later turned to American light-water reactor designs for its expanding fleet.

Today

Seventy years on, the questions raised at Calder Hall are still with us: how to generate large amounts of electricity without burning fossil fuels, how to keep

civilian and military uses apart, and what to do with the waste. This week a small city in Ibaraki, Hitachiomiya, became the fifth municipality in Japan to accept a survey for a site to bury high-level radioactive waste.

TECHNOLOGY

1973: Arab Oil Producers Announce Cuts and an Embargo, Setting Off the Oil Shock That Remade Japan's Energy Policy

Prices roughly quadrupled within months; toilet paper vanished from Japanese shops, inflation passed 20 per cent and the economy shrank for the first time since the war

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 17, 1973, Arab oil-producing countries meeting in Kuwait announced that they would cut production month by month and halt shipments to countries they considered supporters of Israel, which was fighting Egypt and Syria in the war that had begun on October 6. The United States and the Netherlands were among those placed under embargo.

The decision turned oil, which had been cheap and plentiful for two decades, into a weapon. The price of crude roughly quadrupled within a few months, from about \$3 a barrel to nearly \$12.

Japan's shock

Few countries were hit harder than Japan, which imported almost all of its oil, most of it from the Middle East, and had built its rapid postwar growth on cheap energy.

Shoppers, fearing shortages, emptied supermarket shelves of toilet paper and detergent in a wave of panic buying that became a symbol of the crisis. Consumer prices rose by more than 20 per cent in 1974, a period remembered as kyoran bukka, "frenzied prices," and the economy shrank in fiscal 1974 for the first time since the war.

To avoid being treated as unfriendly, the government in November 1973 issued a statement calling for Israel to withdraw from territories occupied in 1967, a notable departure from American policy.

The response

The shock reshaped Japanese energy policy for half a century. The country invested heavily in energy efficiency, in which its industries became world leaders; expanded nuclear power and imports of liquefied natural gas; and built up strategic stockpiles of oil, with the government beginning its own stockpiling in 1978.

The embargo ended in March 1974, but a second shock followed the Iranian revolution of 1979.

Echoes

The lesson that energy security is national security has rarely felt more relevant. On Friday the price of American crude briefly rose above \$100 a barrel as Iran stepped up attacks around the Strait of Hormuz, and the government announced subsidies for imported kerosene ahead of winter.

TECHNOLOGY

1989: The Loma Prieta Earthquake Strikes the San Francisco Bay Area as a World Series Game Is About to Begin on Live Television

Sixty-three people died, most of them when a double-deck freeway collapsed in Oakland; the lessons fed into how engineers in Japan and America build roads

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

At 5:04 p.m. on October 17, 1989, a magnitude 6.9 earthquake struck California's San Francisco Bay Area. Its epicentre lay near Loma Prieta, a peak in the Santa Cruz Mountains about 100 kilometres south of San Francisco.

The shaking lasted about 15 seconds. It killed 63 people and injured more than 3,700, and caused damage estimated at around \$6 billion.

Live on air

The timing made it one of the most widely witnessed earthquakes in history. At Candlestick Park in San Francisco, more than 60,000 fans had gathered for Game 3 of the World Series between the San Francisco Giants and the Oakland Athletics, and the national television broadcast was under way when the stadium began to shake. The game was postponed, and the series resumed 10 days later.

The Cypress Structure

The worst disaster was in Oakland, where an elevated section of Interstate 880 known as the Cypress Street Viaduct collapsed, its upper deck falling onto the lower one and crushing cars. Forty-two people died there.

On the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, a section of the upper deck collapsed onto the lower deck, killing one person. In San Francisco's Marina District, built partly on landfill, the ground liquefied, buildings collapsed and fires broke out.

Lessons

The collapse of the Cypress Structure, built in the 1950s, showed how older concrete viaducts could fail catastrophically, and California launched a long programme of strengthening bridges and freeways.

Japan learned the same lesson, at greater cost, on January 17, 1995, when the Great Hanshin earthquake toppled a long section of the elevated Hanshin Expressway in Kobe. Engineers in both countries studied the two disasters together, and the retrofitting of elevated roads and railways that followed is one reason modern Japanese infrastructure has fared better in later quakes.

The early warning connection

In the days after the quake, scientists set up a simple system to warn rescue workers at the collapsed Cypress Structure of approaching aftershocks, an early practical test of the idea behind earthquake early warning, the system that sent alerts to Japanese phones on Friday, this time in error.

TECHNOLOGY

1999: Nicholas Metropolis Dies, the Los Alamos Physicist Who Named the Monte Carlo Method and Gave Computing One of Its Great Algorithms

He built the MANIAC computer and co-wrote a 1953 paper whose method now runs inside weather forecasts, drug design and finance

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Nicholas Metropolis, a physicist whose name is attached to one of the most widely used algorithms in science, died in Los Alamos, New Mexico, on October 17, 1999, at the age of 84.

Born in Chicago in 1915, Metropolis joined the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos in 1943. After the war he led the construction of the laboratory's MANIAC computer, completed in 1952, one of the early electronic computers built for scientific calculation.

Gambling with numbers

At Los Alamos, the mathematician Stanislaw Ulam and the physicist John von Neumann developed a way to solve problems too complicated for exact formulas by running large numbers of random trials and averaging the results. Metropolis gave the approach its name, the Monte Carlo method, after the casino in Monaco, and in 1949 he and Ulam published the paper that introduced it to the wider scientific world.

The algorithm

In 1953 Metropolis and four colleagues, Arianna and Marshall Rosenbluth and Augusta and Edward Teller, published a paper describing a clever way of generating random samples that reflect the behaviour of a physical system. The Metropolis algorithm, as it became known, made it possible to simulate the properties of materials on a computer.

Generalised and extended, it has become a workhorse of modern science. It is used to model molecules in drug design, to estimate risk in finance, to fit statistical models and to explore the uncertainty in complex simulations. A list of the 10 most important algorithms of the 20th century compiled by a leading computing journal in 2000 included it.

A computer at the chessboard

The MANIAC made history of another kind in 1956, when it played a simplified version of chess on a six-by-six board without bishops and beat a human novice, one of the first times a computer program had won a chess-like game against a person.

Ensembles

The idea of exploring uncertainty through many simulations is familiar to anyone who has looked at a typhoon forecast. Weather forecasters run ensembles of slightly different model runs to see how widely a storm's track might vary, the same spirit of exploring

TECHNOLOGY

uncertainty that lies behind the widening probability circles on this week's maps of Typhoon No. 30.

TECHNOLOGY

2000: A Broken Rail Derails an Express at Hatfield, Killing Four and Bringing Britain's Privatised Railway to Its Knees

Fatigue cracks shattered the track into hundreds of pieces; more than 1,200 emergency speed limits followed, and Railtrack collapsed a year later

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

At 12:23 p.m. on October 17, 2000, an express train travelling from London King's Cross to Leeds derailed at about 185 kilometres an hour just south of Hatfield in Hertfordshire. Four people were killed and more than 70 injured.

The cause

Investigators found that a rail had shattered into hundreds of pieces under the train. The cause was rolling contact fatigue, also known as gauge corner cracking: tiny cracks that form on the inner edge of the rail head under the repeated stress of wheels and grow until the rail fails.

The cracks at Hatfield had been identified months earlier, and a replacement rail had been ordered, but it had not been installed.

Chaos

The discovery that such cracks might be widespread threw the network into crisis. Railtrack, the private company that had owned and maintained Britain's railway infrastructure since privatisation in the mid-1990s, imposed more than 1,200 emergency speed restrictions across the country while it inspected and replaced track. For months, journeys took far longer and timetables collapsed.

Consequences

The crisis, and the cost of the repairs, destroyed Railtrack's finances. In October 2001 the company was placed into administration, and in 2002 it was replaced by Network Rail, a not-for-dividend company that later came under public ownership.

The maintenance contractor Balfour Beatty was fined over the crash, but managers charged with manslaughter were acquitted.

The lesson

Hatfield became a case study in how fragmented responsibility for maintenance, divided among an infrastructure owner and its contractors, can let a known danger go unaddressed. Railways around the world, including in Japan, use ultrasonic testing and other inspection methods to find cracks before they grow, and replace rails on a schedule rather than waiting for them to fail.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology and Science on October 17

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1091: A tornado estimated at T8/F4 on modern scales strikes central London.

1558: Poland's postal service, Poczta Polska, is founded.

1604: Johannes Kepler begins observing the supernova in Ophiuchus that now bears his name.

1757: Death of Rene Antoine Ferchault de Reaumur, the French scientist whose temperature scale was once widely used in Europe.

1814: The London Beer Flood kills eight people when a vat bursts at a brewery near Tottenham Court Road.

1887: Death of Gustav Kirchhoff, co-founder of spectroscopy and discoverer, with Robert Bunsen, of caesium and rubidium.

1906: Birth of Andrey Tikhonov, the Soviet mathematician whose regularisation method is used to solve unstable problems in science and engineering.

1907: Marconi's company begins the first regular commercial wireless service across the Atlantic.

1933: Birth of William Anders, the Apollo 8 astronaut who took the Earthrise photograph from lunar orbit in 1968.

1936: Birth in Tokyo of Hiroo Kanamori, co-creator of the moment magnitude scale.

1943: The Burma Railway, built by Japan with the forced labour of Allied prisoners of war and Asian workers, tens of thousands of whom died, is

completed.

1956: Calder Hall, the first nuclear power station to supply a national grid on an industrial scale, opens in England. Birth of Mae Jemison, who in 1992 became the first African American woman in space, on the shuttle mission that also carried Japan's Mamoru Mohri.

1963: Death of Jacques Hadamard, the French mathematician who proved the prime number theorem.

1966: The 23rd Street fire in New York kills 12 firefighters.

1973: Arab oil producers announce production cuts and an embargo, starting the first oil shock.

1989: The Loma Prieta earthquake strikes the San Francisco Bay Area, killing 63.

1999: Death of Nicholas Metropolis, who named the Monte Carlo method.

2000: The Hatfield rail crash in England kills four.

2012: Death of Stanford Ovshinsky, the American inventor of the nickel-metal hydride battery.

SOCIETY

Supreme Court Overturns an Acquittal and Convicts the Pleasure-Boat Driver Over the 2020 Lake Inawashiro Collision That Killed a Boy

The two-year prison sentence imposed by the first court is reinstated; the victim's parents say the ruling marks a turning point

By the Society Desk

The Supreme Court on Friday overturned a high court acquittal and found the driver of a pleasure boat guilty over a 2020 collision on Lake Inawashiro in Fukushima Prefecture that killed a boy and injured others.

The court's Second Petty Bench, presided over by Justice Junichi Takasu, upheld the two-year prison sentence imposed by the first-instance court on Go Sato, 49, who had been charged with negligence resulting in death and injury in the course of business. The sentence is now final.

The collision

In 2020, on the lake in Aizuwakamatsu, the pleasure boat Mr Sato was operating struck three people, killing or injuring them. Among them was a boy, Eita Toyoda, who died.

Two different verdicts

The Fukushima District Court found Mr Sato negligent in 2023. Relying on a police reconstruction, it concluded that the victims could have been seen from about 223 metres before the point of collision, and sentenced him to two years in prison.

In 2024 the Sendai High Court overturned that verdict and acquitted him, finding it could not be established with certainty that the victims could have been spotted in time.

The Supreme Court, in an unusual reversal of an acquittal, sided with the first court.

"Calmer days"

The boy's parents spoke to reporters in Tokyo after the ruling. "It will be a turning point," they said. "Maybe now we can have somewhat calmer days."

Safety on the water

Lake Inawashiro, the fourth-largest lake in Japan, is a popular place for boating and swimming in summer, and the lake is shared by powerful pleasure craft, small boats and people in the water.

Reversals of acquittals by the Supreme Court are rare. At the heart of the case was the duty of a boat's operator to keep a lookout for people in the water and for smaller craft.

SOCIETY

High Court Rejects State Liability in the Suit by Evacuees From Namie's Tsushima District and Orders Only TEPCO to Pay

The ruling reverses a 2021 decision that had found the government responsible; 19 of about 1,400 former residents now live in the district

By the Society Desk

The Sendai High Court on Friday rejected the state's liability in a class action brought by former residents of the Tsushima district of Namie, Fukushima Prefecture, who were forced to evacuate by the 2011 nuclear accident, and ordered only Tokyo Electric

Power Company to pay compensation.

The ruling overturned part of a 2021 decision by the Koriyama branch of the Fukushima District Court, which had held the government liable as well.

The plaintiffs had also demanded that radiation levels in their community be restored to what they were before the accident.

The Supreme Court's 2022 ruling

In June 2022 the Supreme Court ruled in similar cases that the state was not liable, finding that even if it had ordered TEPCO to take measures against a large tsunami, the accident could not have been prevented. Since then, courts have consistently ordered only the utility to pay.

A district left behind

About 1,400 people lived in Tsushima, a mountainous farming district north-west of the Fukushima Daiichi plant, at the time of the accident. Radiation from the plant fell heavily on the area, and it became one of the most contaminated places outside the immediate vicinity of the plant.

In March 2023 evacuation orders were lifted for 1.6 per cent of the district. The rest is still closed to free entry, and the prospects for residents to return are almost non-existent. As of the end of September, 19 people were living in the district.

Fifteen years on

More than 15 years after the accident, more than 20,000 people from Fukushima Prefecture are still counted as evacuees, and lawsuits by evacuees continue in courts across the country. For the people of Tsushima, the fight has been as much about the loss of a community and its way of life as about money.

Namie, a coastal town that had about 21,000 residents before the disaster, was evacuated in its entirety after the accident; orders have since been lifted for parts of it.

The plaintiffs can appeal to the Supreme Court, which ruled in 2022 that the state was not liable in similar cases.

SOCIETY

Former Osaka Special Investigation Prosecutor Tells His Own Trial That His Words in an Interrogation 'May Have Been Inappropriate'

Daisuke Tabuchi, 54, is accused of assault and cruelty by a public official over the questioning of a subordinate of Pressance's former president, who was acquitted; he denies trying to threaten anyone

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

A former prosecutor in the special investigation department of the Osaka District Public Prosecutors Office told the Osaka District Court on Friday that his words during an interrogation in 2019 "may have been inappropriate," but denied that he had meant to threaten the man he was questioning.

Daisuke Tabuchi, 54, is on trial on a charge of assault and cruelty by a special public official, a rare case of a prosecutor standing trial over the way he conducted an interrogation. Friday's session, the sixth, was the first at which he answered questions himself.

A court-ordered trial

The case reached court through a procedure that allows a court to send a public official to trial for abuse of authority when prosecutors decline to charge him. The Osaka High Court ordered the trial, and lawyers appointed by the court act as prosecutors.

The interrogation

The questioning took place on December 8 and 9, 2019, during the special investigation department's inquiry into an alleged embezzlement involving the real estate company Pressance Corporation. Its former president, Shinobu Yamagishi, was later acquitted, and the acquittal is final.

Mr Tabuchi was questioning a former subordinate of Mr Yamagishi. He is accused of slamming the desk, scolding and berating the man, calling him a great criminal for damaging the company's reputation, and telling him: "Don't take the prosecution lightly."

The interrogation was recorded on video, and Mr Yamagishi's defence team later released footage with faces blurred.

His explanation

"I think my words may have been inappropriate," Mr Tabuchi told the court.

He said the remark about the prosecution meant that

he did not want his questions to be taken lightly, because he approached interrogations with determination, and he denied any intention to threaten. He said he had struck the desk because he wanted the man to adopt an attitude of telling the facts.

Cameras in the room

Recording of interrogations became mandatory in 2019 for lay judge cases and for cases investigated independently by prosecutors, a reform that followed scandals including the Osaka special investigation department's tampering with evidence in 2010. The footage in this case let outsiders see for themselves what happened in the room.

Questioning of Mr Tabuchi will continue at the next hearing on Monday, October 19.

SOCIETY

Around Japan

By the Society Desk

Short reports from around the country.

Chiba

A temporary steel embankment has been completed at the northern breach in the embankment of Inba-numa, the lake that was breached in two places when Typhoon No. 25 brought record rain to northern Chiba Prefecture on September 21. The aerial survey company Kokusai Kogyo estimates from satellite images that at least 40 square kilometres across five surrounding municipalities were probably flooded, far more than the prefecture's earlier drone-based estimate of about 5 square kilometres.

Fukui

Fukui Prefecture held a training session for about 100 crab dealers and fishing industry workers on the proper labelling of Echizen crab, after it emerged that more than half of the raw ingredients in Echizen town's hometown tax gifts labelled as Echizen crab were actually mizugani, a different grade, in breach of the geographical indication system. The Echizen crab season opens on November 6.

Yamanashi

The Kofu city board of education said a clerical employee of its cultural properties division is suspected of forging a national permit for construction of a private house within a nationally designated cultural property site, after failing to process the application. The city has consulted police.

Hokkaido

The Japan Meteorological Agency lowered the volcanic alert level for Mount Tokachidake from 3 to 2, restricting access only to the area around the crater, as volcanic earthquakes have declined. The Sapporo High Court will rule on January 29 next year on residents' demand that Hokkaido Electric Power stop and decommission its Tomari nuclear plant.

Schools

The Board of Audit found that 31 of 66 boards of education it examined in 14 prefectures did not know when teachers and outside instructors had both been supervising the same club activities, which undermines a subsidy meant to reduce teachers' working hours.

Fukushima

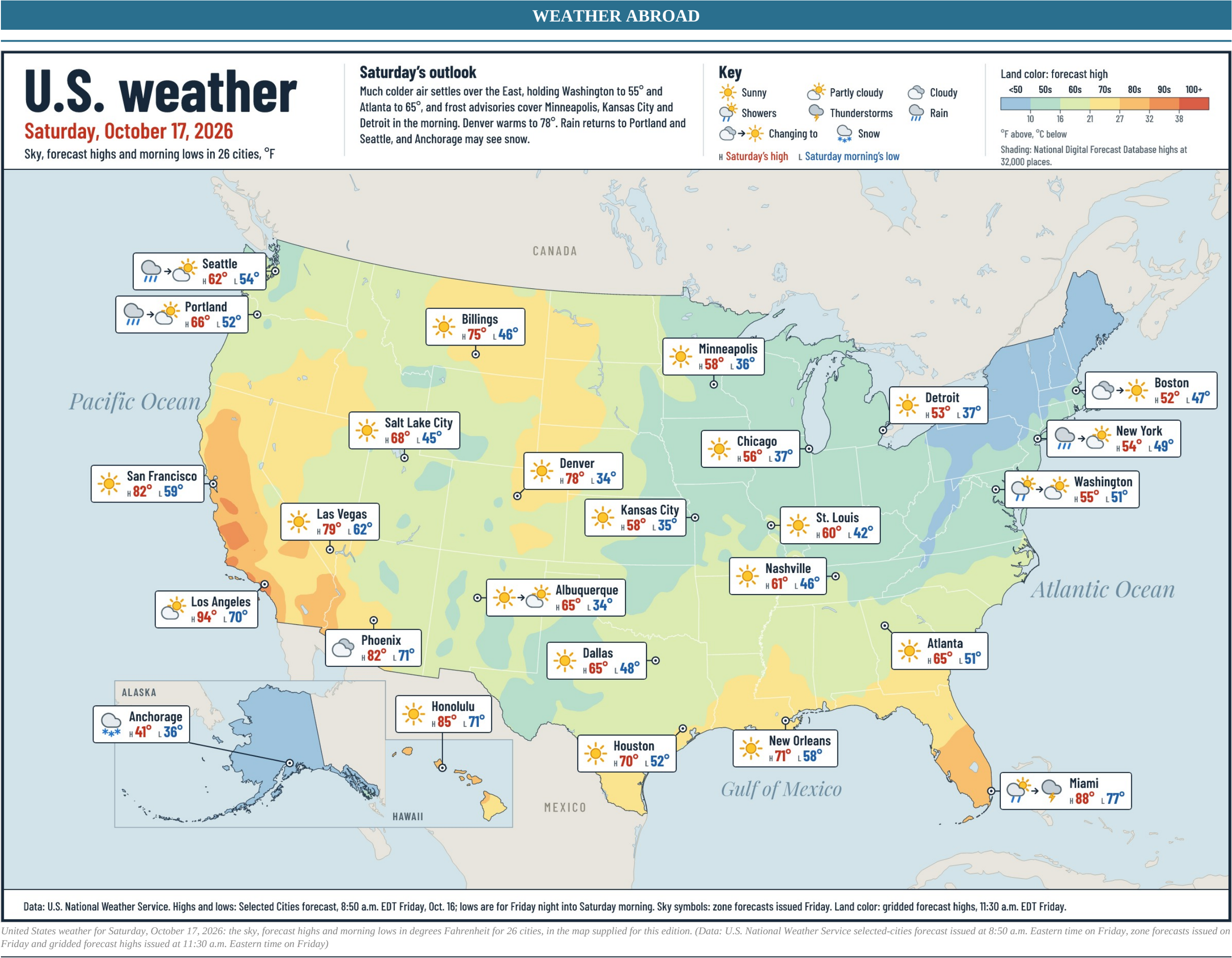
A man in his 70s was injured when he was attacked by a bear while checking a deer trap.

Nara

A 67-year-old construction worker died after his head was caught in a freight lift at a three-storey building housing a shop and a home in Tenri, where he was carrying out repairs near the lift's entrance. The lift, used for goods rather than people, apparently rose for reasons that are not yet known. Nara prefectural police are investigating.

Matsue

At the 79th Newspaper Convention, the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association presented its prizes for 2026, six in all, including awards to the Nishinippon Shimbun for an investigative series on Fukuoka prefectural politics and to Kyodo News for a series of photographs showing the grief of civilians on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides two years into the fighting in Gaza.



SOCIETY



Tokyo Skytree and the Sumida River. The number of foreign nationals living in Japan reached a record 4,281,026 at the end of June, 3.4 per cent of the population, while new arrivals on business manager visas fell 81 per cent after the rules were tightened, the Immigration Services Agency said on Friday. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SOCIETY

Foreign Residents Reach a Record 4.28 Million, but New Arrivals on Business Manager Visas Fall 81 Per Cent After Stricter Rules

Foreigners now make up 3.4 per cent of the population; skilled workers in the top tier of the specified skills system more than double in six months; Myanmar and Indonesia are the fastest-growing nationalities

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The number of foreign nationals living in Japan rose to a record 4,281,026 at the end of June, about 155,000 more than at the end of last year, the Immigration Services Agency said on Friday. Foreign residents now make up 3.4 per cent of the population.

At the same time, the number of people entering Japan under the "business manager" residence status plunged after the government tightened its requirements. Only 635 people newly entered under that status in the first half of the year, 80.9 per cent fewer than a year earlier.

Tighter rules

The business manager status, for foreigners who run companies in Japan, was overhauled in October last year. The minimum amount of capital or assets used in the business was raised from 5 million yen to 30 million yen, and applicants must now employ at least one full-time worker who is a Japanese national, a permanent resident or the holder of a similar status. Either the applicant or an employee must have a high level of Japanese, and applicants need management experience or a related graduate degree. Business plans must be checked by an accountant or licensed management consultant.

The changes followed criticism, widely reported last year, that the status was being used as an easy route to residence, including by people setting up companies that did little real business.

Separate figures released earlier this week showed that the number of business managers leaving the country in the first half of the year was 3.9 times the figure a year earlier.

Who lives here

Permanent residents form the largest group, at 961,342, up 1.5 per cent from the end of last year. Holders of the status for engineers, specialists in the

humanities and international services, which covers jobs such as interpreters, numbered 516,184, up 8.5 per cent, and students 479,626, up 3.2 per cent.

The specified skilled worker system, created to bring in labour for industries short of workers, accounted for 444,256 people. Of those, 18,295 held the second tier, for workers with advanced skills, which allows them to bring their families and renew their status without limit. That number more than doubled from the end of last year.

Where they come from

China, Vietnam and South Korea are the three largest nationalities, together accounting for about half of all foreign residents. Among the top 10, the fastest growth came from Myanmar, up 15.9 per cent, and Indonesia, up 15.6 per cent.

Policy at a turning point

The figures come as the government reshapes its approach to foreign workers and residents. A new system for employing and training foreign workers is to replace the technical intern programme, long criticised for abuses, in April next year, and the government has pledged stricter enforcement against those who break the rules while saying it wants to attract the workers the economy needs.

With the working-age population shrinking every year, industries from construction and farming to nursing care and restaurants depend increasingly on foreign staff. How to balance that need with public concern about the pace of change is likely to remain one of the most contested questions in Japanese politics.

morning, at 5 degrees. Sapporo dipped to 11, and Aomori and Nagano to 12.

Tokyo

Tokyo is sunny all day, with a high of 26 after a low of 18, the kind of weather Weathernews describes as perfect for outdoor activities in eastern Japan. Sendai and Kanazawa are sunny at 23, Niigata at 22 and Akita at 20.

Clearing skies

Matsue, Takamatsu, Kochi and Naha begin the day under cloud and turn sunny. Nagoya is sunny with some cloud, at 27.

Wide swings

With clear skies, mornings are cool and afternoons warm. Kochi has the biggest gap on the map, from a low of 14 to a high of 29, a difference of 15 degrees. Fukuoka swings 12 degrees, from 15 to 27, and Kushiro and Hiroshima 11.

The south

Naha is the warmest city by day and night, with a high of 30 after a low of 25, and Kagoshima reaches 29 after a low of 19.

The typhoon

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, was a strong typhoon near the Mariana Islands at 6 a.m., about 540 kilometres

east-south-east of Guam, with a central pressure of 980 hectopascals and winds of 35 metres a second near its centre, moving west-north-west at 25 kilometres an hour. It is forecast to pass near Guam early on Sunday, become very strong by early Monday, and reach the waters south of Okinawa by early Thursday. It has no effect on Japan's weather today, but the Pacific coast may see swells as it grows.

WEATHER

Today's Extremes

By the Data Desk

WARMEST: Naha, 30. On the main islands: Kochi and Kagoshima, 29.

COOLEST HIGH: Sapporo, 15. Then Kushiro, 16. COLDEST MORNING: Kushiro, 5. Then Sapporo, 11, and Aomori and Nagano, 12.

MILDEST MORNING: Naha, 25. On the main islands: Kagoshima, 19.

WIDEST RANGE: Kochi, 15 degrees between morning and afternoon.

NARROWEST RANGE: Sapporo, 4.

SUNNIEST: 12 of the 19 cities are sunny all day. TROPICS: Typhoon No. 30, Champi, 980 hPa, about 540 km east-south-east of Guam.

TOKYO SUNSET: About 5:05 p.m.

TOKYO: Sunny all day, high 26, low 18.

SOCIETY

Tokyo Metropolitan Government Recommended to Raise Pay So That Graduates Start on More Than 300,000 Yen a Month

The personnel commission proposes a 3.30 per cent rise in monthly salaries and a bigger bonus, the fifth year of increases

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government's personnel commission on Friday recommended raising the monthly salaries of the capital's employees by an average of 3.30 per cent and increasing their twice-yearly bonus by the equivalent of 0.10 month's pay.

Both would be increases for the fifth year in a row. If the recommendation is adopted, the starting monthly salary for administrative staff with university-graduate qualifications will be 301,800 yen including the regional allowance, the first time it has exceeded 300,000 yen.

Based on private pay

The commission bases its recommendations on surveys of salaries in the private sector. Administrative staff, whose average age is 40.9 years, would see their average annual income rise by 290,000 yen to 7,611,000 yen.

Competing for staff

Public employers across Japan have been raising starting salaries sharply in recent years as they compete with private companies for a shrinking pool of young graduates. Interest in public sector jobs has fallen, and many local governments have struggled to fill vacancies, especially for technical posts such as civil engineers.

Tokyo, with the country's largest local government workforce and the highest living costs, has a particular need to stay competitive. The recommendation now goes to the governor and the metropolitan assembly, which usually adopt the commission's proposals.

Wages and prices

The rise also reflects the broader increase in wages across the economy, as companies raise pay to cope with labour shortages and rising prices. Whether wage growth can keep pace with inflation is central to the Bank of Japan's decisions on interest rates.

SOCIETY

Brown Bears Do a Record 487 Million Yen of Damage to Hokkaido's Farms, the Worst Year for the Third Year Running

A poor crop of acorns drove bears into farmland; feed corn and sugar beets were hit hardest, while deer account for 80 per cent of all wildlife damage

By the Society Desk

Damage to agriculture in Hokkaido caused by brown bears reached 487 million yen in fiscal 2025, the worst on record for the third year in a row, the

prefectural government said on Friday.

The figure was 133 million yen more than the year before. Comparable records go back to fiscal 1991.

Hungry bears

Officials attributed the increase to a poor harvest of acorns and other wild nuts, which bears depend on before they hibernate. With less food in the forests, more bears came down into farmland and residential areas.

Damage to dent corn, grown as feed for cattle, rose by 29 million yen, and damage to sugar beets, a source of sugar, by 14 million yen. In August last year a bear was photographed carrying corn from a home vegetable garden in Hakodate.

Deer the bigger problem

Total damage to agriculture, forestry and fisheries from wild animals, including bears, was 7.32 billion yen, up for the sixth consecutive year. Sika deer accounted for about 80 per cent of it.

Bears on the move

The figures come as encounters with bears are rising across northern Japan. Bears have entered towns and cities, and a number of people have been killed or injured in recent years. On Friday a man in his 70s was attacked and injured by a bear while checking a deer trap in Fukushima Prefecture.

Hokkaido and the national government have been strengthening measures, including allowing hunters to shoot bears in residential areas under certain conditions and using drones to monitor them. But with fewer hunters and bears increasingly accustomed to people, there is no quick solution.

SOCIETY

Setting Up the Osaka Metropolis Would Cost 62.4 Billion Yen, 2.6 Times the Estimate Given Voters Before the 2020 Referendum

Computer system costs have more than tripled amid a shortage of engineers; the figures are to be presented to the council drafting the plan

By the Society Desk

The initial cost of the Osaka Metropolis plan, which would abolish the city of Osaka and reorganise it into special wards like Tokyo's, is now estimated at a total of 62.4 billion yen, about 2.6 times the figure presented before the 2020 referendum, people involved told Kyodo News on Friday.

The main reason is the cost of changing computer systems, now estimated at 56.1 billion yen, more than triple the 18.2 billion yen estimated in 2020. A shortage of engineers able to carry out the work is a factor in the increase. The estimate also includes costs such as renovating government buildings.

The initial costs put forward before the 2020 referendum totalled 24.1 billion yen.

A third attempt

Osaka voters have rejected the plan twice, in referendums in 2015 and 2020, each time by a narrow margin. Its supporters, led by the regional party Osaka Ishin no Kai, which controls both the prefectural and city governments, argue that ending the overlap between the prefecture and the city would end wasteful duplication and help Osaka grow.

The prefectural and city governments are expected to examine the figures and publish them soon at the statutory council that is discussing the design of the system.

Why it matters

The cost of the change was a central issue in the earlier campaigns, with opponents arguing that the money would be better spent on services. A sharp rise in the estimate is likely to feature prominently in the debate again.

Narrow defeats

In the 2015 referendum the plan was rejected by about 10,700 votes, and in 2020 by about 17,000, with roughly 1.4 million votes cast each time.

The legal route

Under the 2012 law that allows large cities to be reorganised into special wards, the plan can take effect only if it is approved in a referendum of the city's voters. It is championed by Osaka Governor Hirofumi Yoshimura, who leads Ishin.

The plan would replace the city's 24 administrative wards with special wards that have their own elected mayors and assemblies, as Tokyo's do.

SOCIETY

SOCIETY

Supreme Court's Grand Bench to Rule on November 18 Whether Barring Prisoners From Voting Is Constitutional

A former inmate challenges the election law; lower courts upheld the ban, but a full-bench hearing raises the possibility of the court's first constitutional judgment on the issue
By the Society Desk

The Supreme Court's Grand Bench, headed by Chief Justice Yukihiko Imazaki, will deliver its ruling on November 18 in a case challenging the provision of the Public Offices Election Law that bars prison inmates from voting.

The plaintiff, a man who was serving a prison sentence and has since been released, sued the state for compensation, arguing that the ban is unconstitutional.

At a hearing on October 14, the plaintiff asked the court to overturn the high court's decision against him. The state argued that the provision aims to ensure fair elections and is reasonable.

Lower courts

In March 2024 the Tokyo High Court, like the district court before it, upheld the provision as constitutional, finding that restricting the right to vote was unavoidable to maintain the fairness of elections.

The significance

Cases are referred to the Grand Bench, made up of all 15 justices, when they raise important constitutional questions or when the court may change its precedents. The ruling could be the court's first constitutional judgment on whether prisoners may be denied the vote.

Around the world

Countries differ widely on the question. Some, including Canada and South Africa, allow prisoners to vote after court rulings that a blanket ban was unconstitutional. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that automatic, blanket bans breach the right to free elections. Others, including Japan and many American states, restrict voting by prisoners.

The Supreme Court has previously struck down limits on the voting rights of Japanese living abroad, in 2005, and on their participation in the national review of Supreme Court justices, in 2022, rulings that led the Diet to change the law.

SOCIETY

Police Seize a 'Medication Test' and Manual From a Pet Shop Chain Whose Staff Allegedly Injected Animals Without a Vet

Seven of nine dogs and cats given antiviral drugs died; investigators believe the practice was organised to save on veterinary fees
By the Society Desk

Osaka prefectural police have seized a medication manual and an in-house test on veterinary drugs from a pet shop operator whose staff are suspected of giving injections to dogs and cats without a veterinary licence.

Four people, including the 42-year-old representative director of A Pet, an operator based in Sakai, Osaka Prefecture, were arrested on October 14 on suspicion of violating the Veterinary Practitioners Act.

The allegations

From January last year to January this year, the suspects allegedly injected antiviral drugs into a total of nine dogs and cats at four of the company's stores in Osaka Prefecture without a licence. Seven of the animals died after the injections, although the causal link is unknown.

Police searched the company's head office and stores and seized a manual on administering medication and a test document, titled "Medication Test," covering knowledge of veterinary drugs.

An organised practice

Investigators believe employees carried out the injections repeatedly using the manual and the test, as an organised practice, with the aim of cutting costs such as fees paid to veterinarians. One of the four told investigators in voluntary questioning before the arrest that he had wanted to reduce the cost of having animals examined by a vet.

The law

Under the Veterinary Practitioners Act, only licensed vets may diagnose and treat animals, including giving injections, as a business. The rule exists to protect animals from harm by untrained people.

Animal welfare

The case adds to concerns about the treatment of animals in Japan's large pet retail industry, which sells puppies and kittens through shops. Animal welfare groups have long called for stricter rules on breeding and sales, and the law has been tightened in recent years.

SOCIETY

U.S. Forces in Okinawa Confirm Tighter Discipline After a Serviceman's Arrest on Suspicion of Robbery and Murder

Commanders review the 'liberty' rules governing off-base conduct; training was halted for 48 hours and a 30-day reflection period with a curfew is under way
By the Society Desk

Lieutenant General Watson, the commander of U.S. forces in Okinawa and the area co-ordinator for the island, held a meeting of senior officers on Friday that confirmed measures to strengthen discipline, following the arrest of an American serviceman on suspicion of robbery and murder.

The measures include a review of the military's "liberty" system, which regulates service members' conduct off base, and further steps to raise discipline and standards. The Third Marine Expeditionary Force, headquartered at Camp Courtney in Uruma, announced the outcome on the social media platform X.

Earlier steps

From noon on October 7, the American forces halted activities including regular training for 48 hours, and banned drinking on and off base. From October 9, a 30-day "reflection period" began, with a curfew from midnight to 5 a.m., during which the military said drinking would again be permitted.

A familiar pattern

Serious crimes by American service members have repeatedly inflamed public opinion in Okinawa, which hosts about 70 per cent of the land used exclusively by U.S. forces in Japan. After each case, the American military has announced curfews, drinking bans and training for personnel, but residents and local politicians often question how long such measures last.

The political backdrop

The case comes at a delicate time. This week Okinawa's governor, Genta Kojima, accepted the deployment of U.S. Marine Corps Ospreys at Futenma Air Station, saying their withdrawal was unrealistic, in a reversal of the prefecture's long opposition. Such crimes give opponents of the bases powerful arguments and put pressure on officials trying to build a more co-operative relationship with Tokyo and Washington.

The case

The marine, a 20-year-old lance corporal from Futenma Air Station, was arrested on October 4 on suspicion of the robbery and murder of a 39-year-old woman in a hotel in Naha. He denies the allegation.

The Kyushu Defense Bureau has asked the American forces to keep movements outside their bases to the minimum necessary during Keen Sword, the joint Japan-U.S. exercise that begins on Monday, October 19.

Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi raised the case with Secretary of State Marco Rubio this month, and the two agreed to discuss measures to prevent a recurrence.

SOCIETY

Five Arrested on Suspicion of Attempted Murder After a Man Is Thrown Into the Dotonbori River at Dawn

The 53-year-old victim, who did not know the group, says he was singing while drunk when they picked on him; he was rescued after 15 minutes
By the Society Desk

Osaka prefectural police on Friday arrested five people on suspicion of attempted murder after a 53-year-old man was thrown into the Dotonbori River in Chuo Ward, Osaka, in the early morning. The suspects are a 23-year-old self-employed man

who lives in Osaka and four others aged 15 to 20.

Thrown in

At about 6:10 a.m. on Friday, on a promenade beside the river, the group allegedly assaulted the man and threw him into the water with the intention of killing him. The man did not know any of them.

He told police he had been "picked on and thrown in" after he got drunk and was singing. He was rescued about 15 minutes after going into the river and taken to hospital. His life is not in danger.

The five fled on foot but were found by police at a nearby shop. Police have not said whether they admit the allegations.

A famous spot

Dotonbori, lined with neon signs and restaurants, is one of Osaka's best-known entertainment districts and a magnet for tourists. Its river is known for the jumps made by celebrating fans, notably after the Hanshin Tigers win the Central League pennant, a custom police have long tried to discourage because of the danger.

Throwing someone into the river is a different matter. The canal's walls are high and its water deep, and it is especially dangerous for someone who has been drinking.

The canal takes its name from Yasui Doton, a local merchant who began building it in 1612; his relatives completed it in 1615 after he was killed in the siege of Osaka.

SOCIETY

Man, 51, Indicted for Murdering a Woman and Her Mother at Their Apartment in Izumi, Osaka, After a Psychiatric Evaluation

He is the younger woman's former boyfriend and told police he owed her more than 1 million yen; prosecutors held him for evaluation for more than four months
By the Society Desk

Prosecutors in Osaka on Friday indicted a 51-year-old unemployed man on charges of murder and trespass over the killing of a woman and her mother at their apartment in Izumi, Osaka Prefecture, in April.

The Sakai branch of the Osaka District Public Prosecutors Office brought the charges after holding the man for a psychiatric evaluation from May 28 to October 13 to assess whether he could be held criminally responsible.

The killings

He is accused of entering the women's home in an apartment building through an unlocked front door early on the morning of April 8 and stabbing the 41-year-old woman, a social worker, and her 76-year-old mother repeatedly in the neck and elsewhere with a kitchen knife, killing them.

The man is the younger woman's former boyfriend.

Money

He told police that he owed her more than 1 million yen, and police seized a loan agreement between the two.

The woman had told people that she wanted to end the relationship but could not, according to people involved in the case.

Responsibility

Evaluations of this kind are common in serious cases in Japan when there are questions about a suspect's state of mind. Under the Penal Code a person found to lack criminal responsibility cannot be punished, and one with diminished responsibility receives a reduced sentence.

The prosecutors' office did not say whether the man admits the charges.

SOCIETY

Archaeologists Find What May Be the World's Oldest Shipwreck Off Turkey, With Clay Jars About 4,500 Years Old

Thirty jars were found at a depth of 25 to 40 metres off Kekova; some may have been used to make cheese or butter at sea, suggesting goats travelled on board
By the Science Desk

Turkish archaeologists said they had found traces of what may be the world's oldest known shipwreck off Kekova Island in southern Turkey, Kyodo News reported on Friday, citing announcements by researchers and Turkey's culture and tourism minister, Mehmet Nuri Ersoy.

Surveys of the wreck site uncovered clay jars, known as amphorae, dated to between 4,400 and 4,700 years ago.

The find

Hakan Oniz, an associate professor at Akdeniz University in Antalya, said 30 amphorae had been found. The ship is estimated to have been about 10 metres long, and its remains lay at depths of 25 to 40 metres.

Cheese at sea

Some of the jars probably held olive oil or wine. Others may have been used to make cheese or butter, which suggests that on long voyages goats were carried aboard and dairy products were made at sea.

The Bronze Age Mediterranean

The jars date to the early Bronze Age, when trade by sea was linking the communities of the eastern Mediterranean, carrying goods such as oil, wine, metals and pottery between Anatolia, the Aegean islands, the Levant and Egypt.

The coast of southern Turkey has yielded some of the most important finds in underwater archaeology, including the Uluburun wreck, a Bronze Age merchant ship of the 14th century B.C. If confirmed, the Kekova wreck would be more than a thousand years older.

Questions remaining

Researchers will need to confirm the age of the wreck itself, for example by dating any surviving timber, and to establish how the jars came to rest where they were found. Claims of the "oldest" wreck are often debated, and further study will determine whether the Kekova site deserves the title.

SPORTS

Dodgers Swept Out of the Playoffs as Ohtani's First Postseason Homer Is Not Enough; Brewers Reach the World Series for the First Time Since 1982

The two-time champions lose Game 4 6-4 in Los Angeles; Milwaukee, swept by the Dodgers a year ago, will meet Cleveland or Tampa Bay
By Laura Bennett | North America Correspondent

The Los Angeles Dodgers' bid for a third straight World Series title ended on Thursday night, local time, when they lost 6-4 to the Milwaukee Brewers in Game 4 of the National League Championship Series and were swept 4-0.

The Dodgers were trying to become only the third franchise to win three World Series in a row, after the New York Yankees and the Oakland Athletics.

Shohei Ohtani, back in the leadoff spot as the designated hitter, gave them hope with a three-run home run in the second inning, his first of this postseason. He finished 1 for 4 with three runs batted in. The Brewers came back to win.

A reversal of fortune

A year ago the roles were reversed. The Dodgers swept the Brewers in the 2025 NLCS on their way to their second straight title, with Ohtani putting on one of the great individual performances in postseason history in the clinching game.

This time Milwaukee were the better team from the first game. The Dodgers had dropped Ohtani to sixth in the batting order for Game 3 in an attempt to shake up a struggling lineup; restored to the top for Game 4, he delivered, but the lead did not hold.

The Brewers

The Brewers reach the World Series for the first time since 1982, when they lost to the St. Louis Cardinals in seven games, and for only the second time in their history. They are still looking for their first championship.

They will face the winner of the American League Championship Series, in which the Cleveland Guardians beat the Tampa Bay Rays 3-2 in Game 3 to take a 2-1 lead.

The Japanese stars

The Dodgers' run of success has been built partly around three Japanese players: Ohtani, the two-way star; Yoshinobu Yamamoto, the ace who was the most valuable player of last year's World Series; and Roki Sasaki, who has pitched in relief this postseason.

For Japanese fans, who have followed the Dodgers closely in recent seasons, the club's year is over before the World Series begins.

SPORTS



SoftBank Hawks players celebrate a title in a file photo. The Hawks came from behind to beat the Nippon-Ham Fighters 6-2 in Fukuoka on Friday, sweeping the Pacific League's Climax Series final stage to reach the Japan Series for the third straight year. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

Hawks Make It Three in a Row: Masaki's Go-Ahead Homer Completes a Sweep of Nippon-Ham and Sends SoftBank Back to the Japan Series

The Pacific League champions win all three games on the field after starting with a two-win advantage; Kokubo's team will meet Hanshin or DeNA from October 24

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

The SoftBank Hawks will play in the Japan Series for the third straight year after coming from behind to beat the Nippon-Ham Fighters 6-2 at Mizuho PayPay Dome in Fukuoka on Friday, completing a clean sweep of the Pacific League's Climax Series final stage.

The Hawks, Pacific League champions for the third year running, began the series with a two-win advantage under a new rule for pennant winners who finish more than 10 games clear. They then won all three games played, so the series ended 5-0.

The decisive swing

Nippon-Ham, who finished third in the regular season, led 2-1 going into the fifth inning. Tomoya Masaki then hit a two-run home run off the Fighters' starter, Takayuki Kato, to put SoftBank ahead for good.

The Hawks pulled away in the sixth, when Yamamoto tripled in a run and Tatsuru Yanagimachi drove in another with a hit.

Yugo Maeda, the young left-hander who started for SoftBank, gave up two runs in five innings and never allowed consecutive hits.

Nippon-Ham's best chances came and went. Franmil Reyes and Chusei Mannami, two of their most dangerous hitters, both failed to deliver with runners in scoring position, and the visitors could not answer once they had lost the lead.

Back on top

The Hawks, owned by SoftBank since 2005, have been the dominant force in Japanese baseball for

most of the past 15 years. They won the Japan Series in 2011, 2014 and 2015 and four years in a row from 2017 to 2020.

Under manager Hiroki Kokubo, who took charge in 2024, they won the pennant in his first season but lost the Japan Series to DeNA. Last year they won both the pennant and the Japan Series, beating Hanshin. This year they took the league by more than 10 games.

Who comes next

SoftBank will face either Hanshin, who won the Central League, or DeNA, who finished third in the regular season and now need one more win to advance. The Japan Series begins on October 24 at the home ground of the Central League's representative.

A meeting with DeNA would be a rematch of 2024, when the BayStars, third in their league that year as well, won both stages of the Climax Series and then beat SoftBank for their first Japan Series title since 1998. A meeting with Hanshin would repeat last year's series.

A week to wait

The Hawks now have a week off before the first game. They will learn their opponent as early as Saturday night, when DeNA can clinch the Central League series with one more win at Koshien.

chairman of the organising committee, said the Games as a whole drew more than 3 billion viewers worldwide, and that the final was watched widely in the United States, Britain and Canada.

SPRINTS: Sekito Matsushita, a second-year student at Shizuoka High School and the national high school champion, won the boys' A 100 metres at the National Sports Festival in Aomori in a meet record of 10.15 seconds. Kurato Shimizu of Seiryō High School in Ishikawa, who has a best of 10.00, was second in 10.34.

WOMEN'S ATHLETICS: At the same meeting, Abigail Fuka Ido of Toho Bank, who ran at the Asian Games, won the women's 100 metres in 11.50, and Waka Murai of Osaka Kunei Jogakuin won the girls' A 3,000 metres in 9:00.67.

HALF MARATHON: Akira Aizawa, the former Japanese 10,000-metre record holder, said he wants to beat his personal best of 1 hour 1 minute 20 seconds at the Tokyo Legacy Half Marathon on Sunday, which starts and finishes at the National Stadium. "This summer I did full-scale marathon training for the first time, and I have trained more consistently than ever before," he said.

BASEBALL: Hiroshima prosecutors decided not to indict two Carp players, Masaya Yano, 27, and Seita Maekawa, 23, who had been referred to them on suspicion of violating the law on pharmaceuticals over etomidate, a designated drug known as "zombie tobacco," citing insufficient evidence. The case was linked to that of the former Carp player Ryutaro

Hazuki, who has been convicted. The Carp told both players this month that they will not be retained.

CORPORATE BASEBALL: Defending champions Yamaha will play Nissan in the first round of the 51st Japan Championship, which opens on October 31 at Kyocera Dome Osaka with 32 teams. The final is on November 10.

JUNIOR ATHLETICS: Eight young athletes from Osaka will miss the JOC Junior Olympic Cup U16 championships in Mie later this month after the Osaka junior high school sports federation, whose error left them out, withdrew its request for emergency arbitration, citing the wishes of some parents. Governor Hirofumi Yoshimura said he still wanted the children to be given a chance to compete.

BASKETBALL: Yokohama BC beat Ryukyu 87-85 to improve to 5-3 in the B.League Premier, and Ibaraki beat Kawasaki 82-74 for their first win of the season after seven straight defeats.

FOOTBALL: FIFA President Gianni Infantino apologised again at a board meeting in Zurich over a since-withdrawn plan to set up a subsidiary to run the World Cup, saying "there were mistakes in the process of communication and consultation." Bernd Neuendorf, president of the German federation, said the answer was not satisfactory and that FIFA needed a new president who could restore its credibility. The board will also consider whether to continue the FIFA Peace Prize, which was awarded to U.S. President Donald Trump in 2025.

DRAFT: The professional baseball draft will be held on Thursday, October 22, two days before the Japan Series opens.

SPORTS

Former Yokozuna Hakuho Becomes President of the International Sumo Federation, Pledging to 'Unite the World Through Sumo'

The record holder with 45 top-division titles, who left the Japan Sumo Association last year, had been an adviser to the amateur governing body since September

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Hakuho, the former yokozuna who holds the record for the most top-division championships in sumo history, will become president of the International Sumo Federation, the global governing body for amateur sumo, the federation announced on Friday.

Hakuho, 41, who was born in Mongolia, won 45 top-division titles, far more than any other wrestler. He left the Japan Sumo Association in June last year and became an adviser to the federation in September.

His plans

He has launched a project to spread sumo around the world.

"While treasuring sumo's tradition, spirit and values, I want to bring its appeal to more countries and regions and pass it on to children and the younger generation," he said in a statement.

"Working together with everyone involved in sumo around the world, I believe it is my mission to unite the world through sumo, beyond differences of country, culture and language."

Amateur sumo

The International Sumo Federation organises world championships and other international competitions for amateur wrestlers, men and women, and has long sought to raise the sport's profile abroad. Unlike the professional game, amateur sumo is contested in weight classes, and women compete. Sumo is not an Olympic sport, and the federation has long campaigned for its inclusion.

A complicated legacy

Hakuho dominated professional sumo for well over a decade and set records that may never be matched. His career also drew repeated criticism of his conduct in the ring from sumo's establishment.

After retiring he ran his own stable as the elder Miyagino, but it was closed in 2024 after one of his wrestlers was found to have assaulted junior wrestlers, and Hakuho was demoted. He left the association the following year.

His new role gives him a platform outside the Japan Sumo Association to promote the sport he dominated. His fame, especially in Mongolia and among fans abroad, could bring the federation attention it has rarely enjoyed.

SPORTS

Asian Para Games Competition Begins With Big Wins for Japan's Wheelchair Basketball Teams; 78-Year-Old Kimie Bessho Loses Her Opener

The men beat China 76-38 and the women Iran 65-20; Paris champion Natsuki Wada wins in table tennis; the blind football team falls to China

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Competition at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games got under way on Friday, two days before the opening ceremony, and Japan's wheelchair basketball teams made emphatic starts.

The men's team beat China 76-38 in Group A, and the women's team beat Iran 65-20 in their first game.

The oldest athlete

Kimie Bessho, 78, the oldest member of Japan's team, lost her opening Group C match in women's singles in the wheelchair table tennis classes 4 and 5, beaten 3-0 by a Chinese player at Toyota City General Gymnasium.

Bessho, who competes for Alpha Group, has become one of the best-known figures in Japanese para sport, still competing at international level in her late 70s.

Natsuki Wada of Uchida Yoko, the Paris Paralympic champion in table tennis for athletes with intellectual impairments, beat a Thai player 3-0.

Other results

In badminton, Keita Nishimura of Kao won his first-round men's singles match in the wheelchair WH1 class in straight games against a player from Taiwan. Japan's blind football team lost its opening match 1-0 to China.

The Games

About 3,000 athletes from more than 40 countries and regions are taking part in 18 sports through October 24. The opening ceremony is on Sunday.

Aichi and Nagoya are hosting the event after staging the Asian Games, which ended on October 4.

The Games are also an important step toward the 2028 Paralympics in Los Angeles. In wheelchair tennis, the winners of the men's and women's singles earn places in Los Angeles.

SPORTS

Tsuyaka Uchino Wins Omnium Silver and Mina Sato Sprint Bronze at the Track Cycling World Championships

Japan's women add two medals on the third day in Shanghai after Shinji Nakano's keirin bronze and Yumi Kajihara's silver in the elimination race

By the Sports Desk

Tsuyaka Uchino won the silver medal in the women's omnium at the track cycling world championships in Shanghai on Friday, and Mina Sato took bronze in the women's sprint.

Sato lost her semi-final but won the race for third place.

The medals continued a strong week for Japan. On Thursday Shinji Nakano won bronze in the men's keirin and Yumi Kajihara silver in the women's elimination race.

Men's results

In men's events outside the Olympic programme, Naoki Kojima was 12th in the points race and Shoi Matsuda 17th in the 1,000-metre time trial, while Kanta Umezawa of the National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Kanoya was 22nd in the 4,000-metre individual pursuit.

The omnium

The omnium, an Olympic event, combines four races held on the same day: a scratch race, a tempo race, an elimination race and a points race. It rewards riders who combine endurance with speed and tactical judgment.

Kajihara won the omnium silver at the Tokyo Olympics, and Uchino's medal gives Japan a second rider at the top level in the event.

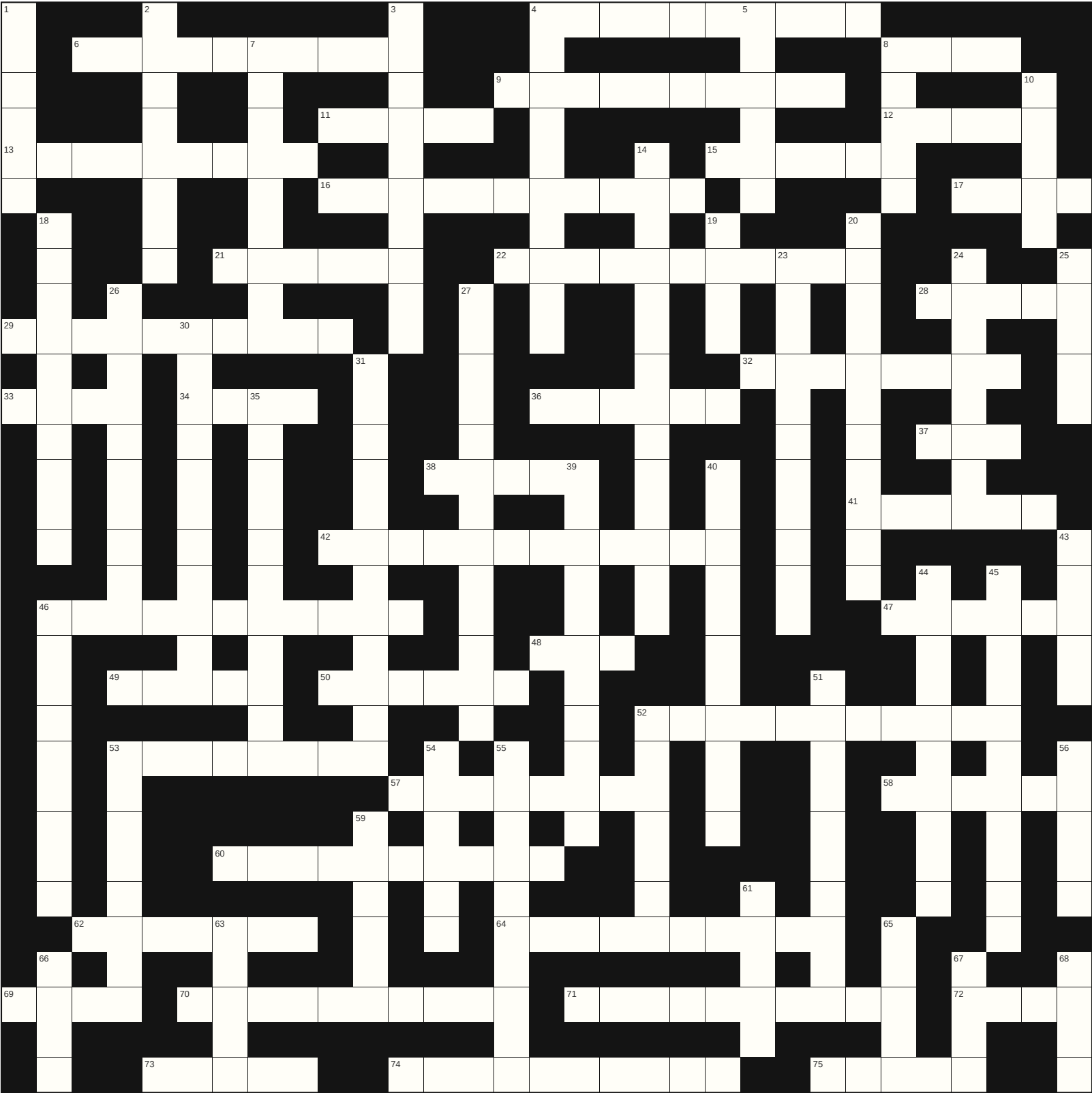
The sprinters

Japan's women sprinters, many of them professional keirin riders like Sato, have become regular contenders at world level in recent years.

The championships continue in Shanghai, and the results give Japan's riders an early marker on the road to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 80 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional.

ACROSS

4. Kyoto crossing where the first Ohsho opened in 1967 (10)
6. Lake of the boat accident in which a conviction was restored (10)
8. Leo XIV, who called Putin (4)
9. Three ____, the circuit size planned at TSMC's second Kumamoto plant (10)
11. City where Monaco won 2-1 (5)
12. Islamic State's self-declared capital, taken in 2017 (5)
13. Home city of the team that swept the Dodgers (9)
15. Provisional Japan Open leader (6)
16. One of three cities under a frost advisory (11)
17. Island the storm's centre is forecast to pass on Sunday (4)
21. The prosecution in the Ohsho case never set one out (6)
22. Volcano whose alert level was lowered (11)
28. Utility whose president calls nuclear 'extremely important' (5)
29. First city certified under the revised regional transport law (10)
32. Yamato's pay-later service hit by a leak (8)
33. Club of Keito Nakamura (4)
34. Index compiler proposing to move Indonesia out of emerging markets (4)
36. Kyoto restaurant whose head is a new Living National Treasure (6)
37. No white ____ was found where the Ohsho butts lay (3)
38. Fighters slugger Franmil (5)
41. Convicted of income tax evasion on October 17, 1931 (6)
42. The second message, at 12:48 (12)
46. Champi crosses the sea east of them on Tuesday and Wednesday (11)
47. Japan's public warning system for missiles (6)
48. First prefecture with penalties for customer harassment (3)
49. Nara city of a fatal lift accident (5)
50. Hanshin's nickname (6)
52. Disputed shoal in the South China Sea (11)
53. Ukrainian leader speaking in Brussels (8)
57. City choosing a mayor on Sunday (8)
58. Storms so far this season, the most since 2013 (6)
60. The editorial wants none (10)
62. Fast waves the warning system detects first (7)
64. British nuclear station opened in 1956 (10)
69. One win from the Japan Series (4)
70. How residents cut off by road damage will practise evacuating (10)
71. Tokaido ____, halted for a time around midday (10)
72. Warmest city on the map (4)
73. Islands that could be affected if Champi turns north (5)
74. Stolen vehicle on which gunshot residue was found in the Ohsho case (10)
75. Dumplings that made Ohsho famous (5)

DOWN

1. Mie governor Katsuyuki (6)
2. Islands near which Typhoon No. 30 became strong (8)
3. German club of Koki Machida (10)
4. Official device the PM keeps at full volume at night (10)
5. Philippine president who heard 'just like a threat' (6)
7. What Kepler observed (9)
8. Freed on October 17, 1945 (5)
10. 2023 typhoon that battered Guam (5)
14. Kind of evidence on which the case rested (14)
18. City where the Kudo-kai is based (10)
19. Princess, the daughter of the Emperor (4)
20. Unit of a storm's central pressure (11)
23. Reaches 65 after a low of 34 (11)
24. Final leg of the fillies' Triple Crown (8)
25. Minister: carriers are 'the infrastructure within infrastructure' (5)
26. Ise festival offering the new rice (10)
27. A second ____ budget is possible, the PM said (13)
30. ____ Services Agency, which counted 4.28 million foreign residents (11)
31. Sunny at 68 (12)
35. Tax to be cut on food (11)
39. Tokyo's will top 300,000 yen (11)
40. Hawk with a run-scoring hit in the sixth (11)
43. Leader the pope telephoned from hospital (5)
44. Won the boys' 100 metres in 10.15 (10)
45. Forecaster that counts 16 seasons with 30 storms (11)
46. Course of the first Open Championship (9)
51. Hottest on the U.S. map, at 94 (10)
52. Rain returns there (7)
53. White House press secretary who left a week after her appointment was announced (8)
54. Carmaker making every model software-defined by 2030 (6)
55. Method named by Nicholas Metropolis (10)
56. Prefecture with an assembly by-election on October 25 (5)
59. 78-year-old table tennis player (6)
61. Yamazaki ____, machine-tool maker developing an AI agent (5)
63. Tokyo AI developer working with Yamazaki Mazak (5)
65. Sake style championed by the master brewer Naohiko Noguchi (5)
66. German chancellor due in Tokyo for a summit (4)
67. Italian news agency that reported the Vatican's account of the pope's call (4)
68. City off which two boats capsized in March (4)

SPORTS

Hakuho by the Numbers

By the Sports Desk

- 45: Top-division championships, a record.
16: Championships won with a perfect 15-0 record, also a record.
1,187: Career wins, the most in sumo history.
63: Consecutive wins in 2010, second only to Futabayama's 69.
86: Wins in a calendar year, in both 2009 and 2010, a record.
2007: Promoted to yokozuna in May, aged 22.
14 YEARS: His time as a yokozuna, the longest of any wrestler.
2021: Retirement, finalised in September.
2024: Demoted to the lowest elder rank after one of his wrestlers was found to have assaulted junior wrestlers; his Miyagino stable closed after the March tournament.
2025: Left the Japan Sumo Association in June and became an adviser to the International Sumo Federation in September.
2026: Named the federation's president.

SPORTS

Yusaku Hosono Shoots 64 to Take the Japan Open Lead; Ayaka Furue and Minami Hiruta Share the Top Spot at the Fujitsu Ladies

First-round leader Ryuichi Oiwa slips one behind after a 68 as darkness halts play in Shiga; Shin Ji-yai misses the cut two weeks after her Japan Women's Open win

By the Sports Desk

Yusaku Hosono shot a six-under-par 64 in the second round of the Japan Open Golf Championship at Tarao Country Club in Shiga Prefecture on Friday to take the provisional lead at 11 under par.

Hosono, who began the day in fourth place, has a 36-hole total of 129 on the par-70 course, which measures 7,411 yards.

Ryuichi Oiwa, who led after an opening 62, added a 68 and is one shot behind at 10 under. Kazuma Kobori of New Zealand, who was born in Japan, and Song Young-han of South Korea are tied for third at nine under.

Play was suspended at sunset with nine players still on the course, so the positions are provisional.

The prize

The Japan Open, the last of the season's three domestic majors for men, has a field of 120, including 12 amateurs. 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 tournament ends on Sunday.

Friday was sunny, with a temperature of 21.0 degrees and a light north wind, and 2,066 spectators attended.

Fujitsu Ladies

At the Fujitsu Ladies at Tokyu Seven Hundred Club in Chiba Prefecture, Ayaka Furue and Minami Hiruta share the lead at 11 under par after 36 holes, on 133.

Furue, who started the day in fourth place, shot a 66. She has won twice on the American LPGA Tour and eight times in Japan. Hiruta, who led after the first round, added a 68 in pursuit of her second title on the Japanese tour.

Ai Suzuki is third, two shots back, after a 67, and Shizuku Takahashi and Reika Miyako are tied for fourth. Shiho Kuwaki is 15th at six under.

Shin Ji-yai of South Korea, who won the Japan Women's Open two weeks ago for her 30th victory in Japan and a lifetime exemption on the tour, missed the cut. The 59 players at one under par or better advanced to the final round. The weather was sunny and 24.3 degrees, and 2,097 spectators attended.

SPORTS

World Gymnastics Championships Open in Rotterdam With Places for Los Angeles 2028 at Stake; Aiko Sugihara Targets Team Gold

The top three teams in the team competition earn Olympic places; Sugihara says her back and hip pain is much better

By the Sports Desk

The world artistic gymnastics championships open in Rotterdam in the Netherlands on Saturday, with places at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics on offer to the strongest teams.

The top three teams in the team competition will earn places in Los Angeles.

Aiko Sugihara, 27, of Arrowvlabo TRyAS, the most experienced member of Japan's women's team, said she was aiming for the top. "I have a strong goal of winning the gold medal," she said after the team's official training session on Thursday, at which she showed light jumps on vault and floor.

Fitness

Before leaving Japan, Sugihara had pain in her lower back and hip, but she said it was "much better" and that she had been able to train with confidence.

Misa Nishiyama of Namba Club, a first-time member of the national team, said she had trained so that she could perform her routines cleanly. "Now I want to bring my mind and body together for the competition," she said.

Back to back

The championships come about three weeks after the Asian Games in Aichi and Nagoya, giving the gymnasts little time to recover.

The schedule is demanding, but the chance to secure a team place at the Olympics two years ahead of the Games is too valuable to pass up.

The men

On the men's side, Daiki Hashimoto, the Tokyo Olympic all-around champion and a member of the team that won gold in Paris, said before the championships that he had no intention of giving up first place as he seeks a fourth straight world all-around title. Japan's men are the reigning Olympic team champions.

SPORTS

Umpire Hit by a Flying Bat in April Has Regained Consciousness and Can Talk and Eat, Says NPB

Takuto Kawakami, 30, is working on his rehabilitation every day, his family says; the accident led to a penalty for 'dangerous swings' and helmets for plate umpires

By the Sports Desk

Takuto Kawakami, the umpire who suffered a serious head injury when he was struck by a bat during a game in April, has regained consciousness and is able to talk and eat, Nippon Professional Baseball said on Friday.

In an online update, NPB said a doctor had judged that Kawakami, 30, had recovered consciousness.

Through NPB, his family said: "It is not that there are no after-effects at all, but he is working on his rehabilitation every day so that he can recover."

The accident

On April 16 at Jingu Stadium, during a game between the Yakult Swallows and the Yokohama DeNA BayStars, a bat flew out of a batter's hands as he swung and struck Kawakami, who was working as the home plate umpire, on the side of the head.

He collapsed and underwent emergency surgery. The batter was Yakult's Jose Osuna.

Changes to the game

After the accident NPB introduced a penalty for "dangerous swings," in which a batter lets go of the bat in a way that endangers others, and began requiring home plate umpires to wear helmets.

Relief across the game

The news was greeted with relief across Japanese baseball. Plate umpires work just behind the catcher, within reach of a loose bat, and the accident was a stark reminder of the risks they face.

Six months after he was hurt, the report that Kawakami can talk and eat again is the most encouraging update so far.

SPORTS

Monroe Walk, Unbeaten in Four, Heads the Field for Sunday's Shuka Sho at Kyoto, the Final Leg of the Fillies' Triple Crown

Oka Sho runner-up Garavogue impresses in her final workout; Oaks winner Juruyoku Pierrot has been withdrawn; the winner takes 110 million yen

By the Sports Desk

Monroe Walk, winner of all four of her races including the Rose Stakes, heads the field for the 31st Shuka Sho, a Grade 1 race for three-year-old fillies over 2,000 metres of turf at Kyoto Racecourse on Sunday.

The Shuka Sho is the third and final leg of Japan's fillies' Triple Crown, after the Oka Sho in April and the Yushun Himba, the Japanese Oaks, in May.

Final workouts

The contenders had their final serious workouts on Thursday at the Miho and Ritto training centres.

Monroe Walk worked alone on Ritto's uphill course, covering 800 metres in 53.2 seconds and pulling up without any sign of strain. "It was a workout focused on rhythm," said her trainer, Hiroyuki Uemura. "She is a horse who can become a star. I am looking forward to the Shuka Sho, of course, and to what comes after it."

Garavogue, second in the Oka Sho, covered 800 metres in 51.5 seconds on Ritto's woodchip course with a light, smooth stride. "It was a good workout with accelerating splits," said her trainer, Haruki Sugiyama, who rates her near the top of her generation.

SPORTS

Master Soarer, winner of the Grade 2 Shion Stakes for the trainer Masayoshi Ebina, had her final workout at Miho.

Missing names

Two of the spring's classic winners will not run. Star Anise, who won the Oka Sho, was sent to the Sprinters Stakes instead, and Juryoku Pierrot, winner of the Oaks, has been withdrawn. Dream Core, second in the Oaks, is in the field.

The race

The Shuka Sho is the 11th race on Sunday's card at Kyoto, with a post time of 3:40 p.m. The fillies all carry 55 kilograms.

The total purse is nearly 250 million yen, with 110 million yen to the winner.

SPORTS

How the Fillies' Triple Crown Works, and Why No Filly Can Complete It This Year

The Shuka Sho replaced the Queen Elizabeth II Cup as the final leg in 1996; Almond Eye, Daring Tact and Liberty Island are among the seven to have won all three races

By the Sports Desk

For three-year-old fillies in Japan, the season is built around three Grade 1 races known together as the Triple Tiara: the Oka Sho in April, the Yushun Himba, or Japanese Oaks, in May, and the Shuka Sho in October.

The Oka Sho is run over 1,600 metres at Hanshin, the Oaks over 2,400 metres at Tokyo and the Shuka Sho over 2,000 metres at Kyoto, so a filly who wins all three must combine speed with stamina.

A change in 1996

The Shuka Sho has been the final leg only since 1996. Before that, the third race was the Queen Elizabeth II Cup, then restricted to three-year-old fillies; when it was opened to older fillies and mares, the Shuka Sho was created to take its place.

The seven

Seven fillies have won all three: Mejiro Ramonu in 1986, when the Queen Elizabeth II Cup was still the final leg; Still in Love in 2003; Apapane in 2010; Gentildonna in 2012; Almond Eye in 2018; Daring Tact in 2020, the first to do it unbeaten; and Liberty Island in 2023.

Several went on to greater things. Almond Eye won nine Grade 1 races, including the Japan Cup twice, and Gentildonna also won the Japan Cup twice.

No sweep this year

There will be no triple crown in 2026. Star Anise won the Oka Sho and Juryoku Pierrot the Oaks, and neither runs on Sunday: Star Anise went to the Sprinters Stakes instead, and Juryoku Pierrot has been withdrawn.

That leaves the race open. Monroe Walk puts her unbeaten record on the line, while Garavogue, second in the Oka Sho, and Master Soarer, winner of the Shion Stakes, are among those trying to stop her.

Last year's race went to Embroidery, who had won the Oka Sho in the spring. The Shuka Sho has been run at Kyoto since it began, except in 2021 and 2022, when it moved to Hanshin while Kyoto Racecourse was being rebuilt.

SPORTS

Keito Nakamura Sets Up Two Goals as Lyon Beat Daichi Kamada's Crystal Palace 3-2; Koki Machida Scores for Hoffenheim

Kamada scores in a second straight official match; Takefusa Kubo comes off the bench in Real Sociedad's draw; Takumi Minamino plays for the first time since tearing a knee ligament

By the Sports Desk

Keito Nakamura played the full match and set up two goals as Lyon beat Crystal Palace 3-2 at home in the Europa League on Thursday, in the second round of matches in the league stage.

Daichi Kamada came on for Palace in the 62nd minute and scored in the 81st, his goal in a second straight official match, but could not prevent defeat.

Machida's first

Koki Machida played the whole match for Hoffenheim and scored in the 88th minute of a 3-2 home defeat by Besiktas of Turkey, his first goal of his second season with the German club.

Takefusa Kubo came on in the 68th minute for Real Sociedad, who drew 1-1 away to Union

Saint-Gilloise of Belgium.

Minamino back

In the Conference League, Takumi Minamino started for Monaco in a 2-1 win away to CSKA Sofia in Bulgaria and played until the 58th minute.

It was his first match since he tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee in December last year.

Yuito Suzuki played the full 90 minutes as Freiburg beat Jablonec of the Czech Republic 3-2 at home, and Keisuke Goto came on in the 71st minute.

For the national team

The return of Minamino, one of the most experienced attackers available to Japan, is welcome news for the national team's coaches, who rely heavily on players based in Europe.

SPORTS

Scoreboard

By the Sports Desk

CLIMAX SERIES, PACIFIC: SoftBank 6, Nippon-Ham 2 (SoftBank win 5-0, advance to the Japan Series). CENTRAL: DeNA 4, Hanshin 0 (DeNA lead 3-1).

NLCS GAME 4: Milwaukee 6, Los Angeles Dodgers 4 (Milwaukee win 4-0). Ohtani 1 for 4, three-run homer, 3 RBI.

ALCS GAME 3: Cleveland 3, Tampa Bay 2 (Cleveland lead 2-1).

GOLF, JAPAN OPEN, ROUND 2 (PROVISIONAL): 1. Yusaku Hosono 129 (-11); 2. Ryuichi Oiwa (-10); 3= Kazuma Kobori, Song Young-han (-9).

GOLF, FUJITSU LADIES, ROUND 2: 1= Ayaka Furue, Minami Hiruta 133 (-11); 3. Ai Suzuki (-9).

TRACK CYCLING WORLDS, SHANGHAI: Women's omnium silver, Tsuyaka Uchino; women's sprint bronze, Mina Sato.

ASIAN PARA GAMES: Wheelchair basketball, men, Japan 76, China 38; women, Japan 65, Iran 20. Blind football, China 1, Japan 0.

B.LEAGUE PREMIER: Yokohama BC 87, Ryukyu 85; Ibaraki 82, Kawasaki 74; Hokkaido 109, Saga 90.

EUROPA LEAGUE: Lyon 3, Crystal Palace 2; Hoffenheim 2, Besiktas 3; Union Saint-Gilloise 1, Real Sociedad 1. CONFERENCE LEAGUE: CSKA Sofia 1, Monaco 2; Freiburg 3, Jablonec 2.

NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL, AOMORI: Boys' A 100m, Sekito Matsushita (Shizuoka) 10.15, meet record. Women's 100m, Abigail Fuka Ido (Fukushima) 11.50.

CULTURE

Hyotei's Eiichi Takahashi, Master Brewer Naohiko Noguchi and Ikenobo's Sen'ei Become the First Living National Treasures of Lifestyle Culture

Kyoto cuisine, ginjo sake brewing and the oldest style of ikebana are designated important intangible cultural properties for the first time

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Japan will recognise a chef, a sake brewer and a flower arranger as Living National Treasures for the first time in a new field of "lifestyle culture," after the Council for Cultural Affairs recommended them to the education minister on Friday.

The council recommended designating Kyoto cuisine, the brewing of ginjo sake and rikka, the oldest style of ikebana flower arrangement, as Important Intangible Cultural Properties, and certifying one holder of each, popularly known as a Living National Treasure.

It is the first time a master of food culture has been recognised in this way.

The three

Eiichi Takahashi, 87, of Kyoto, is the 14th-generation head of Hyotei, the renowned Kyoto restaurant. He has inherited and developed the traditions of kaiseki cuisine.

Naohiko Noguchi, 93, of Noto in Ishikawa Prefecture, has worked as a toji, or master brewer, for more than 60 years. Known as the "god of sake brewing," he led the boom in ginjo sake from the 1980s onwards.

Sen'ei Ikenobo, 93, of Kyoto, is the 45th-generation head of the Ikenobo school of ikebana. He has

mastered rikka, in which flowers and branches are arranged in a vase to represent natural scenery such as mountains and waterside landscapes, and has passed on its classical forms and techniques.

A new category

Until last year the system for Important Intangible Cultural Properties covered only the performing arts, such as kabuki and noh, and craft techniques, such as ceramics and dyeing. The Agency for Cultural Affairs then revised it to add lifestyle culture, with the aim of supporting the transmission of culture rooted in everyday life.

Why it matters

Two of the three traditions already enjoy international recognition. Washoku, Japanese traditional cuisine, was added to UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage in 2013, and the traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making with koji mould in 2024.

The new designations recognise the individuals who embody these traditions at the highest level. The three men have a combined age of 273, and the honour falls on lives spent at the stove, the vat and the vase.

CULTURE

What Makes a Living National Treasure: A 1950 Law, a Grant of 2 Million Yen a Year and Now a Place at the Table for Food

Holders are certified for mastering an important intangible cultural property; the new field of lifestyle culture opens the honour to cooks, brewers and flower masters

By the Culture Desk

"Living National Treasure," ningen kokuho, is the popular name, not the legal one. Under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, enacted in 1950, the state designates Important Intangible Cultural Properties, skills and arts of high historical or artistic value, and certifies the individuals who embody them at the highest level as their holders.

The first holders were certified in 1955; among them was the potter Shoji Hamada, whose folk-craft stoneware made the town of Mashiko in Tochigi famous. Since then the honour has gone to masters of noh and kabuki, bunraku puppet theatre and gagaku court music, and to potters, weavers, lacquerers, metalworkers, doll makers and papermakers.

What it brings

Each holder receives a special grant of 2 million yen a year, intended to support the refinement of their skills and the training of successors. The budget for the grants has for many years allowed for up to 116 holders at a time, so new certifications generally follow the deaths of existing holders.

Groups can also be recognised as a whole, as with the performers who keep kabuki, noh and bunraku alive. Holders are certified for life, and the council considers new candidates as places become available.

The term kokuho, national treasure, is also used for the most precious tangible objects, from temple buildings to swords and scrolls, which are designated separately.

A new field

Until last year, the system covered only the performing arts and craft techniques. The Agency for Cultural Affairs then added a third field, lifestyle culture, to protect knowledge rooted in daily life: cooking, brewing, flower arranging and similar traditions.

On Friday the Council for Cultural Affairs recommended the first three designations in that field, Kyoto cuisine, ginjo sake brewing and rikka ikebana, together with their holders: Eiichi Takahashi of the Kyoto restaurant Hyotei, the master brewer Naohiko Noguchi and Sen'ei Ikenobo, head of the Ikenobo school. The education minister makes the formal designations after receiving the council's recommendations.

Why now

Food and drink have long been central to how Japan presents itself to the world. Washoku was inscribed on UNESCO's list of intangible heritage in 2013 and sake-making with koji mould in 2024, and Japanese food ranks among the main attractions for visitors from abroad.

Yet the people who carry these traditions are ageing. The three new holders are 87, 93 and 93.

Recognition, and the grant that comes with it, is

meant to help such masters pass on what they know while they still can.

CULTURE

October 17 in History

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1777: British General John Burgoyne surrenders to American forces at Saratoga, a turning point in the American War of Independence.

1849: Death of the composer Frederic Chopin in Paris.

1860: The first Open Championship in golf is played at Prestwick in Scotland.

1931: Al Capone is convicted of income tax evasion in Chicago.

1933: Albert Einstein, having left Nazi Germany, arrives in the United States.

1945: Mass demonstrations in Buenos Aires secure the release of Juan Peron, a day still marked by his followers as Loyalty Day.

1961: Paris police attack a banned demonstration by Algerians, killing dozens of people; the exact toll is still disputed.

1968: Yasunari Kawabata is named winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, the first Japanese writer to receive it.

1970: The body of Pierre Laporte, the Quebec labour minister kidnapped by separatist militants a week earlier, is found, at the height of Canada's October Crisis.

1979: Mother Teresa is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

2017: Forces backed by the United States declare victory over the Islamic State group in Raqqa, its self-declared capital in Syria.

IN JAPAN: The autumn grand festival of Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo begins on October 17 each year, and the Kannamesai, at which the year's new rice is offered at Ise Jingu, is held in mid-October.

CULTURE

Festivals and Events This Week

By the Culture Desk

KAWAGOE FESTIVAL, SAITAMA (SATURDAY AND SUNDAY): Ornate floats topped with dolls parade through the old merchant town, and when floats meet, their musicians try to outplay each other. The festival is one of the float festivals on UNESCO's intangible heritage list.

NIIHAMA TAIKO FESTIVAL, EHIME (TO SUNDAY): Huge drum floats carried by teams of bearers are lifted and swung in one of Shikoku's most spectacular autumn festivals.

YASUKUNI SHRINE AUTUMN FESTIVAL, TOKYO (FROM SATURDAY): The shrine's main autumn rites, held over several days.

SHUKA SHO, KYOTO RACECOURSE (SUNDAY): The final leg of the fillies' Triple Crown, post time 3:40 p.m.

TOKYO LEGACY HALF MARATHON (SUNDAY): Runners start and finish at the National Stadium.

JAPAN OPEN GOLF (TO SUNDAY): The final round is at Tarao Country Club in Shiga Prefecture.

WORLD GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS (FROM SATURDAY): Rotterdam, with team places for the 2028 Olympics at stake.

ASIAN PARA GAMES OPENING CEREMONY, AICHI (SUNDAY): Competition continues until October 24.

JIDAI MATSURI, KYOTO (THURSDAY): A procession in costumes from more than a thousand years of Kyoto's history walks from the Kyoto Imperial Palace to Heian Shrine.

KURAMA FIRE FESTIVAL, KYOTO (THURSDAY NIGHT): Young men carry huge burning torches through the village of Kurama in the hills north of the city.

AUTUMN LEAVES: The colours are at their best in places from the north to the mountains of Kanto and Koshinetsu, tenki.jp says.

JAPAN SERIES (FROM SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24): SoftBank against Hanshin or DeNA.

Organisers may change or cancel events because of weather or other circumstances; check before going.

EDITORIAL & OPINION



Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki for The Japan Morning Post.

EDITORIAL

The End of the World. Then Never Mind. Japan's Earthquake Warning Got It Badly Wrong on Friday. The Cure Is to Fix It in the Open, Not to Stop Believing It

A quake near Kamchatka was read as a magnitude 9.9 monster, and phones from Hokkaido to Tokai told people to brace for the worst. The Meteorological Agency owes the country a full account and a tested repair; the rest of us owe the system our continued trust
By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki's cartoon on this page will need no explaining to anyone who had a phone within reach at 12:40 p.m. on Friday. A great red siren, stamped M9.9 and wrapped in a banner reading INTENSITY 7, roars out over a city skyline with Mount Fuji behind it. In front of the skyline, a row of smartphones flashes RED ALERT. An arrow marked EIGHT MINUTES LATER leads to the same siren lying on its side, a paper note reading NEVER MIND pinned across the number. Beside it, a sweating official in a dark suit stares at a clipboard that says SOFTWARE ERROR, a Japanese flag at his shoulder, while a commuter train, STOPPED, moves off again, RESTARTED. The caption reads: THE END OF THE WORLD. THEN NEVER MIND.

It is a funny drawing about something that was not funny at all. For eight minutes on Friday afternoon, the state told people across a broad stretch of the country, from Hokkaido to the Tokai region, that shaking of up to intensity 7, the top of Japan's scale and the level reserved for the most violent earthquakes, was about to arrive. Then it told them to forget it.

We do not mock the people who were frightened, still less those who did exactly what the message told them to do. They were right. Nor do we join those who will now say that the whole system is a nuisance that cries wolf. It is one of the finest pieces of public engineering this country has built, and when the great earthquake that Japan knows is coming finally arrives, it will give millions of people a few precious seconds. That is precisely why Friday's failure deserves to be taken so seriously.

What happened

The facts, as far as they are known, are these. At 12:40 p.m. the Japan Meteorological Agency issued an earthquake early warning. Mobile phones sounded the alarm that every resident of Japan knows, with a message saying that strong shaking was expected soon and that people should stay calm and seek

shelter nearby, and that an earthquake had occurred in the Kuril Islands. Television and radio carried the warning too. The system's estimate was a quake of magnitude 9.9.

At 12:48 p.m. a second message cancelled the first. The real earthquake was near Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula, with a preliminary magnitude of 6.9, and its shaking reached Japan only faintly. Hakodate in Hokkaido recorded intensity 1, and nowhere in the country recorded intensity 2 or higher. It was the first time a warning, the higher of the system's two tiers, had ever been withdrawn.

The agency has said that it used different data on the location of the quake's source for two purposes: calculating its magnitude and predicting the intensity of shaking. According to the Asahi Shimbun and the Yomiuri Shimbun, the magnitude was computed using a source about 680 kilometres from the real epicentre, which inflated it enormously, while the shaking was predicted using a source about 400 kilometres away, much closer to Japan than the real one. Late on Friday the agency went further and said the quake was so distant that it should never have triggered a warning at all. Some reports suggest that a setting meant for quakes in and around Japan was applied to one in Russia. The investigation continues.

Two further points deserve emphasis. First, the agency says there was no unauthorised access to its systems, and it has ruled out a cyberattack. At a time when companies and public bodies are reporting break-ins almost daily, that is a relief, and the agency was right to say so quickly. Second, it apologised on Friday afternoon, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said the error had caused great worry and burden to everyone affected and that the government takes it very seriously. Good. Now the work begins.

A national asset

It is worth remembering what the early warning system is and what it does. An earthquake sends out fast primary waves, which do little damage, and slower secondary waves, which do most of the shaking. Seismometers near the source catch the first waves, and the agency's computers estimate within seconds where the quake began and how big it is, then predict how hard each area will shake. A warning can reach people seconds, sometimes tens of seconds, before the violent shaking does.

Seconds sound like nothing. They are enough to get under a table, to move away from a window, to turn off a gas flame, to stop a lift at the nearest floor, to open the doors of a fire station before they jam, to slow a train. Japan began sending such warnings to the general public on October 1, 2007, and has kept improving the system ever since, laying seismometers on the seabed and refining its methods after each failure. Other countries that live with earthquakes have studied it closely.

The system is also woven into the economy in ways most people never notice. Factories use its forecasts to halt production lines and protect delicate equipment, railways to slow their trains, building managers to bring lifts to a stop, and broadcasters to interrupt programmes within seconds. A false warning ripples through all of them, and each of them has to decide afterwards how much to trust the next one.

None of this is abstract. Japan sits where four tectonic plates meet. In August 2024 the agency issued its first-ever advisory that the risk of a megaquake along the Nankai Trough had risen, after a magnitude 7.1 quake off Miyazaki Prefecture. In March 2025 a government panel estimated that such a quake could kill as many as 298,000 people in the worst case. In July 2025 a magnitude 8.8 quake off Kamchatka, the same region that produced Friday's tremor, set off tsunami warnings along Japan's Pacific coast.

A magnitude 9 in the far north is not a fantasy either. In 1952 a great earthquake off Kamchatka, of about magnitude 9, sent a tsunami across the Pacific. That history is part of what made Friday's alert so believable, and so frightening.

How the system has failed before

The early warning system has never been perfect, and its designers have never pretended otherwise. Its whole purpose is to act before the full picture is known, which means accepting a margin of error. The question each time is whether a mistake reflects an honest limit of the science or an avoidable fault in the machinery. Past failures have included both.

In March 2011 the first estimate of the Great East Japan Earthquake badly understated its size, because the rupture went on for minutes and the first seconds of data could not reveal how large it would become. That was a limit of the science. In August 2016 a forecast, the lower tier sent mainly to railways and specialist apps, announced a magnitude 9.1 quake under Tokyo Bay because of faulty data from a single seismometer; it was withdrawn within seconds. In January 2018 two small quakes, one off Ibaraki and one in Toyama, were treated as a single event, and a warning went out across the Kanto region, followed by mild shaking. Two months later the agency introduced a method that predicts shaking from the shaking actually observed nearby, rather than relying only on estimates of the source.

Each time, the agency learned, and the system improved. That record is the best reason to believe it can recover from Friday. But Friday was different in two respects. It was the first time a full public warning has had to be withdrawn. And the error appears to lie not in the earth, nor in a single broken instrument, but in the logic of the software itself: two calculations fed with two different answers to one question, namely where the earthquake was.

The figure that should have stopped the machine

We are not seismologists, and it is for the agency's investigation to establish the facts. But some questions are obvious, and the public is entitled to answers.

The first concerns plausibility. The largest earthquake ever recorded by instruments, in Chile in 1960, measured about magnitude 9.5. Friday's estimate was 9.9, larger than anything in the instrumental record, and it was produced from data on a quake hundreds of kilometres outside Japan, where the agency itself says its estimates are less reliable. A figure like that is not impossible, but it is extraordinary, and extraordinary outputs deserve automatic scrutiny. A computer can check in a fraction of a second whether

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its own estimate hangs together: whether the location used to calculate the magnitude is the same one used to predict the shaking, whether the shaking it predicts matches what instruments are actually recording, and whether an estimate that would rewrite the record books is supported by more than one route through the data.

Such checks need not slow the warning for a genuine nearby quake, where every second counts. The difficulty is to design them so that they catch the absurd without stifling the real. That is a problem engineers in aviation, nuclear power and railways have spent decades learning to solve, and the agency should draw on their experience, inside and outside government.

The second question concerns change. If, as reports suggest, a setting meant for nearby quakes was applied to a distant one, when was that setting introduced or altered, and was the change tested against the kind of event that occurred on Friday? Distant quakes in the Kurils and off Kamchatka are not rare. The region is among the most active in the world, and strong aftershocks have followed last year's great quake. A system that cannot handle such events correctly has not been tested against the conditions it will meet.

The third question concerns people. Did anyone in the agency see the estimate before it went out, and could anyone have stopped it? In a system designed to act in seconds, the honest answer may be no, and that is not a scandal; it is the design. But then the burden falls all the more heavily on the software, and on the testing that is supposed to guarantee it.

Faster is not the problem

Some will draw the wrong conclusion and argue that the agency should wait for more data before it sounds the alarm. That would be a mistake. For people close to the source of a great quake, the warning already arrives with little time to spare, and sometimes after the shaking has begun. A delay of a few seconds, imposed everywhere to guard against rare errors, would cost the most where the danger is greatest.

The answer is not a slower system but a smarter one: checks that are fast, specific to the kind of error that occurred, and tested as rigorously as the main calculation. A distant quake beyond the edge of the network is a different problem from a quake beneath Tokyo, and the software should treat it as one.

The cost of crying wolf

Why does all this matter so much, when no one was hurt and the episode lasted eight minutes? Because a warning system is only as good as the public's willingness to act on it. It works only if people move when it sounds, without stopping to wonder whether it is real. Every false alarm teaches a little of the opposite lesson. Mr Suzuki's caption is a joke today. It would be a tragedy if it became a habit of mind: the end of the world, then never mind, so why bother?

Other countries have learned this the hard way. In January 2018 the state of Hawaii sent an alert to phones warning of an incoming ballistic missile and adding that it was not a drill. It took 38 minutes to correct, and the panic and anger that followed led to investigations and new rules on how alerts are issued and withdrawn. Japan corrected its error in eight minutes, which is far better. But the content of Friday's warning, intensity 7, was about as extreme as a public message can be.

Japan has its own experience of a different kind. In April 2023 the J-Alert system told people in Hokkaido to take shelter immediately from a North Korean ballistic missile, and the government later said there had been no possibility that it would fall on Japanese territory. A different system and a different agency, but the same problem: every alert that turns out to be wrong spends a little of the trust on which every alert depends.

That trust is not divided neatly by agency. A citizen who has learned to doubt an earthquake alarm will not find it easier to believe a missile warning. Japan lives with both threats. North Korea's missiles fly over and around the country, and the security environment in the region is, in the government's own words, the most severe and complex since the end of the Second World War. The government has spent heavily on defence and on the systems that warn the public. Their value rests on the same foundation: that when the state says take cover, people take cover.

The infrastructure within infrastructure

Friday's alarm reached phones through the networks of the mobile carriers, which means that the alert system is only as strong as the networks that carry it. On the same day the Internal Affairs Ministry announced a study group to consider requiring carriers to strengthen their defences against cyberattacks, which grow more dangerous with every advance in artificial intelligence. The minister, Hisayuki Fujii, called the carriers "the infrastructure within infrastructure." He is right.

A state that wants its warnings to be believed must make sure that no one else can send them, and that they arrive when they are needed. The agency's confirmation that Friday's error was not the work of an intruder was welcome. The government's task is to make sure that the question never has to be asked with real anxiety.

What the agency owes the public

What should happen now? First, a full account, quickly. The agency should publish a technical report setting out, step by step, what its system did on Friday, which data it used, where the two locations came from, when the relevant settings were introduced or last changed, and how they were tested. It should name a date for that report and keep to it. Engineers in universities and in industry, and seismologists abroad who wrestle with the same problems, should be able to read it and judge for themselves.

Second, an outside review. The agency is a technical body with deep expertise, but no organisation is the best judge of its own failure. A panel of independent seismologists and specialists in the safety of critical software should examine the report and the fixes, and its conclusions should be public. The Diet, which approves the agency's budget, should hear directly from its leadership.

Third, a testing regime worthy of the system's importance. Every change to the warning software should be run against a library of past quakes, near and far, large and small, including the awkward cases: two quakes at once, quakes beyond the edge of the network, the great Kamchatka quake of 1952 recreated in simulation. Friday's event belongs on that list from now on, so that it can never recur unnoticed.

Fourth, the all-clear. The cancellation went out at 12:48. The agency should find out how far and how fast it travelled, on phones, on television, on station platforms and in classrooms, and how many people were still sheltering, or still frightened, long after it had been sent. An all-clear needs to be as clear as the alarm.

Fifth, no scapegoats. It would be easy to find a junior official to blame. The people who keep this system running day and night, through holidays and typhoons, are public servants doing difficult work. If something went wrong in the design or testing of the software, the responsibility lies with those who manage it, and they should say so plainly.

Accountability at the top and support for those below are not in conflict.

Sixth, one voice. On Friday the explanations came in instalments: an apology and the ruling-out of a cyberattack at an afternoon news conference, an account of the two sets of location data in the evening, and late at night the admission that the quake should never have produced a warning at all. Each step was honest, and the agency deserves credit for saying more as it learned more. But a drip of partial explanations leaves room for rumour, and rumour online travels faster than any correction. When the full report is ready, it should come with a plain-language summary that anyone can follow: what went wrong, what has been changed, and how the public can be sure.

What the rest of us owe the system

The public has obligations too. The right response to an earthquake warning has not changed: protect your head, get under something sturdy, keep away from windows and things that can fall, and do not rush outside. Doing that on Friday cost people a few minutes and a fright. Doing nothing when the real warning comes could cost a life.

Schools, offices, factories and hospitals should treat Friday as an unplanned drill. What did people in your building actually do in those eight minutes? Did they know where to go? Did the lifts stop? Did anyone panic, or freeze, or ignore the alarm altogether? The honest answers are worth more than any exercise held on a sunny morning with advance notice.

Japan already sets aside a day for this. Every September 1, the anniversary of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, the country holds disaster drills, and many schools and workplaces run their own throughout the year. Those exercises should now include what to do when an alert is cancelled, and what to do in the uncertain minutes in between: where to find official information, how to account for everyone in a building, when to resume work. The minutes after an alarm deserve as much planning as the alarm itself.

There was reassurance in one part of the story. The Tokaido Shinkansen stopped for a time around midday, but Central Japan Railway says the agency's warning was not the direct cause: its own disaster prevention system had detected shaking and estimated that a quake of around intensity 4 could occur. Whatever the details, the principle is sound. Critical systems should not depend on a single source of warning. Layers of protection, each able to act on its own, are what keep a bad day from becoming a disaster.

A country that refuses to be caught unprepared

Japan has built, over generations and at great cost, defences against earthquakes that few nations can match: building codes tightened after every great disaster, a dense network of seismometers on land and at sea, tsunami walls and evacuation towers, and a public that practises from childhood. These are among the country's real strengths, and they reflect a national character that refuses to be caught unprepared. The early warning system belongs to that inheritance, and it deserves to be repaired with the same seriousness with which it was built.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the Diet on Friday, answering a challenge to her crisis management, that she keeps an official smartphone beside her 24 hours a day and lies down at night with the volume turned up to maximum. Most citizens keep their phones close too. On Friday afternoon those phones spoke with the voice of the state. That voice must remain one that people believe.

The end of the world did not come on Friday. One day a great earthquake will. When it does, the phones must sound and people must move. The agency's task is to make sure that the next alarm is right; the public's task is to keep heeding it in the meantime. Mr Suzuki's official stares at a clipboard that reads SOFTWARE ERROR. The country deserves more than those two words. It deserves the whole story, the repair, and proof that the repair works.

ANALYSIS

The Ohsho Acquittal Is Painful. The Principle Behind It Protects Every Citizen, and the Search for the Gunman Must Go On

Prosecutors should decide on an appeal by the evidence alone; the police must ask why nine years of work produced a case that could not survive reasonable doubt

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The anger of Takayuki Ohigashi's family is easy to understand. A 72-year-old businessman was shot dead at dawn outside his own head office. Investigators found DNA at the scene and traced it to a senior member of a gang affiliated with Japan's most violent crime syndicate. Nearly 13 years later, a court has acquitted him. The family calls the verdict "extremely unjust."

Yet the Kyoto District Court did what courts exist to do. It asked whether the evidence proved, beyond reasonable doubt, that Yukio Tanaka fired the shots, and it concluded that it did not.

The standard

The court applied a test the Supreme Court set in 2010 for cases built on circumstantial evidence: the facts established must include something that could not reasonably be explained if the defendant were not the culprit. Two cigarette butts carrying his DNA would meet that test if they could only have been dropped by the killer. The court found it could not rule out that they had been carried to the scene from elsewhere, perhaps to throw investigators off course. A figure on a security camera whose build and walk resembled the defendant's was not, the court said, an identification.

Those findings may be argued over on appeal. The principle behind them should not be. A justice system that convicted because a defendant was a gangster, or because the crime was notorious and the public wanted an answer, would put at risk anyone whose

discarded cigarette, cup or tissue could be picked up by someone else.

Toughness and rigour

Being tough on organised crime and rigorous in court are not in conflict; each depends on the other. The state has rightly given the police exceptional powers against the Kudo-kai, the only group designated "specially dangerous" under the law, and its leaders have been prosecuted for attacks on ordinary citizens. Those powers command public support because the courts that judge their use are trusted to convict only on proof.

The appeal

Prosecutors have until October 30 to decide whether to appeal to the Osaka High Court. They should do so if they believe the trial court's reasoning is wrong in law or contrary to logic and experience, the standard the Supreme Court has set for overturning findings of fact. They should not do so merely to answer public anger.

Questions for the police

Whatever happens in court, the police have questions to answer. Why did it take nearly nine years to make an arrest? Why, after all that time, could the prosecution offer no relationship between the defendant and the victim and no motive? Was the scene examined in 2013 with the care that would have settled the question of the ash that the defence raised?

The acquittal does not mean that the killing cannot be solved. It means that it has not yet been. Justice for Mr Ohigashi requires finding the person who shot him, and proving it.

ANALYSIS

An Apology Is a Start. Ms Takaichi Must Now Show the Country How Her Ministers Are Chosen and Checked

Kazuo Yana lasted 28 days; a government with an ambitious agenda and no upper house majority cannot afford another appointment that collapses under questions it should have asked first

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi did the right thing on Friday. In her first appearance before the upper house Budget Committee since Kazuo Yana's departure, she apologised that her agriculture minister had resigned while the Diet was in session and said she took her responsibility for appointing him seriously.

Words, though, are the easy part. Mr Yana left under pressure after 28 days, the shortest tenure of any minister in a Liberal Democratic government since 2012. He faced questions over suspected violations of the election law, centred on free bus transport for supporters, and over remarks at a party meeting in May that he had "sharply cut" road budgets for two municipalities whose leaders had not backed him. At least part of that record concerned conduct before his appointment, the kind of thing a vetting process exists to uncover.

Why it matters for her agenda

Ms Takaichi has an ambitious programme: a cut in the consumption tax on food, stronger defence, economic security and a growth strategy built on investment in strategic industries. All of it requires political capital, and her governing bloc lacks a majority in the House of Councillors. Every day spent defending a minister is a day not spent winning arguments that matter, and every scandal hands the opposition leverage in the chamber where it is strongest.

A proper check

The remedy is not complicated. Candidates for the Cabinet should complete a written declaration covering their finances, their election campaigns, any pending complaints and any public statements that could embarrass the government, and the prime minister's office should verify the answers before appointments are announced. Other democracies run such checks as a matter of routine. Japan has relied too heavily on personal recommendation and party standing.

Explanation still owed

The prime minister is correct that it is for the authorities, not for her, to decide whether Mr Yana broke the law. But legal responsibility and political responsibility are different things. She says she urged him to explain himself to the Diet. She should keep urging. A former minister who leaves without

ANALYSIS

answering questions leaves the doubt behind for the government to carry.

A firmer start

There is encouragement in the appointment of Arata Takebe, who told the committee on Friday that American fresh potatoes would not be admitted without an agreement satisfying both sides, and that Japan would respond with a resolute stance. That is the tone the farm ministry needs: friendly towards an ally, firm on the protection of Japanese agriculture from pests.

Ms Takaichi took office promising decisive leadership. Choosing the right people is the first decision of all, and the one on which every other depends.

ANALYSIS

The Revised Imperial House Law Is a Careful Step That Respects Tradition. Making It Work Is the Harder Task

From October 24 princesses may keep their status after marriage and men from the former branch families may be adopted; the government must explain the provision on succession that went beyond the Diet's consensus

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

On October 24 the revised Imperial House Law takes effect, and with it two changes that would have been unthinkable a generation ago. Princesses who marry will be able to remain members of the Imperial Family. And men from the 11 former branch families that left the family in 1947, during the American occupation, may be adopted into it, provided they are at least 15 years old, unmarried and childless. An adopted member would not himself be in line to the throne, but his male descendants would be.

Why change was needed

The case for action is plain. The Imperial Family has 16 members. Six are in their 40s or younger, and only one of them, Prince Hisahito, is male and in line to the throne. Under the old rules, each princess who married left the family, shrinking still further the circle of people able to attend ceremonies, visit disaster areas and receive foreign guests. Doing nothing would have meant watching the institution thin out year by year.

Respecting the line

The law is right to work within the tradition rather than against it. The throne has passed through the male line throughout recorded history. Japan has had reigning empresses, but every one of them belonged to that line. Adoption from families who share it offers a way to widen the pool of members without breaking a principle that many Japanese regard as the core of the institution.

Critics point out that the men of the former branch families are related to the Emperor only distantly, in the 36th to 38th degree of kinship. That is true. But the tradition has never measured legitimacy by closeness to the reigning emperor; it has measured it by descent in the male line.

A point to explain

One provision needs more explanation than it has received. Kyodo News has reported that eligibility for succession for the male descendants of adopted members was not part of the consensus reached by the two houses of the Diet that formed the basis for the amendment. Matters touching the throne should rest on the broadest possible agreement, above party lines. The government should set out its reasoning in the Diet and seek to restore that consensus.

Measured by results

The law's success will be measured not by the text in the statute book but by whether, a decade from now, the Imperial Family still has enough members to carry out its duties with dignity, and whether the public continues to hold it in the affection and respect it has long enjoyed. That is a practical test, and the government should report to the Diet on how the new routes are being used.

Much still depends on people

The law creates possibilities, not obligations. Whether any man will choose to be adopted, and whether princesses who marry will choose to stay, depends on the people concerned, and they deserve privacy and respect as they decide. Discussion of the wider question of a stable succession has been postponed. The new law buys time. It must not become a reason to stop thinking.

ANALYSIS

Delete What You Do Not Need: The Times Car Leak Shows the Cheapest Defence Against Data Theft

1.6 million licence images were sitting on a server long after they had served their purpose; retention limits, not just firewalls, should be the rule

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Friday brought another long list of leaks. E-Store, which runs systems for online shops, said the names, addresses and telephone numbers of about 23.36 million people had leaked. Yamato Transport confirmed about 5.31 million records from its pay-later service. Nikkei said a cloud account exposed about 1.83 million records. Fanc!, Iwai Cosmo Securities and Japan Post added their own. The National Police Agency says it cannot yet see whether the attacks are connected.

One case stands out because the remedy was so simple. Park24 said about 1.6 million images of driver's licences had leaked from its Times Car sharing service. Its response was to change the rules so that licence images are deleted as soon as a member's registration is complete.

Data that cannot be stolen

That is the right response, and it should have been the rule from the start. A licence image carries a name, address, date of birth and photograph: everything a criminal needs to try to open a bank account or sign up for a phone in someone else's name. Once a company has checked a customer's identity, keeping the image adds almost nothing to its business and a great deal to its risk. Data that has been deleted cannot be stolen.

Resona Holdings drew a similar conclusion, saying its banks would stop using licence photographs to verify customers opening accounts online. The government has long encouraged the use of the IC chip in the My Number card, which a smartphone can read, as a safer way to confirm identity. Friday's leaks make that case better than any campaign.

From advice to rules

Privacy specialists have urged companies for years to collect only what they need and to delete it when it has served its purpose. Advice has not been enough. The government should set clear retention limits for identity documents and similar sensitive data, and the regulators should check that they are observed.

The chain of contractors matters too. Akita City has warned hometown tax donors that their details may have leaked through an intrusion at a delivery company. The Internal Affairs Ministry's new study group on telecoms will examine how carriers manage the security of the firms they rely on; the same question applies to every business and local government that hands personal data to others.

Security is national

The laws on active cyber defence, which took effect on October 1, give the state new powers to act against attackers before they do damage. They are welcome. But the most sophisticated national defences cannot protect data that companies keep for no good reason. Basic discipline at thousands of firms is part of national security too.

ANALYSIS

Cheaper Rice Is Welcome. A Rice Policy That Does Not Lurch From Shortage to Glut Would Be Better

Wholesale prices for the new crop are down 42 per cent; food security demands stable production and farmers who can plan, not another cycle of boom and bust

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

A year ago the price of rice was a political crisis. The average price of 5 kilograms in supermarkets topped 4,000 yen, and the government released rice from its stockpile to bring it down. Now the pendulum has swung. The agriculture ministry said on Friday that the average wholesale price of new-crop rice in September was 21,293 yen per 60 kilograms, down 42 per cent from a year earlier, and supermarket prices have fallen for nine weeks in a row, to 2,837 yen for 5 kilograms.

Good news, with a catch

Households will welcome the relief. But the reason for the fall should worry anyone who cares about Japan's food supply. Last year's production exceeded demand and stocks have piled up. Farmers who planted more in response to high prices are now

being paid much less, while their costs for fuel, fertiliser and machinery remain high. A market that swings this violently from one year to the next makes it very hard for anyone to plan, invest or take over a farm.

Food is security

Japan produces only around 38 per cent of the calories its people eat. Rice is the one staple in which it is self-sufficient, and the capacity to grow it, the land, the water systems and above all the farmers, is a national asset that takes decades to build and can be lost in a few years. In a dangerous region, a country that cannot feed itself is a country that can be pressured.

What the government should do

The new agriculture minister, Arata Takebe, says he will continue producing rice in line with demand while working to expand demand at home and abroad. That is sensible as far as it goes. The government should also explain clearly how it will use the national stockpile in both directions, buying when the market is oversupplied as well as releasing when it is short, so that farmers and consumers alike know where the floor and ceiling lie. Exports, rice for processing and feed, and support for the consolidation of farms into larger, more efficient units can all absorb surplus without paying farmers to do nothing.

Land and realism

The Fiscal System Council proposed on Friday a new category of "difficult to cultivate" land for farmland that has long been abandoned, arguing that maintaining all of it is not realistic. There is a case for realism about plots that will never be farmed again. But each hectare given up should be a deliberate choice, weighed against the country's food security, not a quiet retreat driven by a single year's prices.

Consumers, too, have a stake in stability. Families who paid more than 4,000 yen for 5 kilograms last year gain little from a policy that lets prices collapse one year and soar the next, and restaurants and food makers need predictable costs to plan their menus and contracts.

ANALYSIS

4.28 Million Foreign Residents: Japan Needs Workers and Rules That Are Enforced. The Business Visa Shows Both Are Possible

Tightening a status that was being abused cut new arrivals by 81 per cent without closing the door to genuine investors; that is the model for managed immigration

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

The number of foreign nationals living in Japan reached a record 4,281,026 at the end of June, 3.4 per cent of the population, the Immigration Services Agency said on Friday. The same figures showed something else: when the rules are fixed, behaviour changes.

A loophole closed

New entries under the "business manager" status fell 80.9 per cent in the first half of the year, to just 635. The status had been criticised as an easy route to residence, used in some cases by people who set up companies that did little real business. Last October the government raised the minimum capital from 5 million yen to 30 million yen, required applicants to employ at least one full-time worker who is Japanese or a permanent resident, demanded a high level of Japanese from the applicant or an employee, and required business plans to be checked by an accountant or licensed consultant.

Those are reasonable conditions for a status meant for people who build businesses in Japan. Genuine investors can meet them. Those who were exploiting the system cannot.

The country needs workers

The lesson is not that Japan should close its doors. The working-age population shrinks every year, and industries from construction and farming to nursing care and restaurants depend increasingly on foreign staff. The number of skilled workers in the top tier of the specified skills system, who may bring their families and renew their status without limit, more than doubled in six months to 18,295. These are people Japan has chosen because it needs their skills.

Management, not drift

What the public rightly asks is that immigration be managed: that the numbers and the categories reflect decisions made openly by the government and the

Diet, that the rules mean what they say, and that those who break them face consequences. Public concern about the pace of change is not prejudice; it is a demand for control.

Next April a new system for employing and training foreign workers replaces the technical intern programme, which was long criticised for abuses. It should be judged by the same standard as the business visa reform: clear rules, honest enforcement, decent treatment for those who come to work, and fair expectations of them in return, including learning the language and respecting the law.

Clear numbers, honest debate

The agency's figures, published regularly and in detail, are a good foundation for that debate. The government should build on them with clear targets for each category of worker, so that the country can see what is planned and judge whether it is working.

ANALYSIS

Sixth Place Is a Warning, Not a Destiny: Japan Can Climb Back Only by Growing, Not by Waiting for the Yen

The IMF expects India and Britain to overtake Japan next year in dollar terms; rankings exaggerate, but the weaknesses behind them are real

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

The International Monetary Fund's latest forecasts make uncomfortable reading. Measured in dollars, Japan's nominal output is projected at about \$4.47 trillion next year, just behind India's \$4.52 trillion and Britain's \$4.49 trillion. That would drop Japan from fourth to sixth in the world. In April the IMF had expected Britain to overtake Japan only in 2029.

What the ranking does and does not say

Rankings in dollars exaggerate. The forecasts were converted at around 158 yen to the dollar, and a stronger yen would reorder the table quickly. Output per person in Japan remains far higher than in India, and living standards are not measured by a league table. It would be wrong to treat sixth place as a national humiliation.

It would be equally wrong to dismiss it. The IMF projects real growth of 0.7 per cent this year and next. India is expected to grow by 7 per cent. The weakness of the yen itself reflects years of low returns on investment in Japan, a shrinking and ageing workforce and productivity in services that lags behind other rich countries.

Why it matters beyond economics

Economic weight is also strategic weight. A larger economy pays for stronger defence without crushing other priorities, makes Japan a more valuable partner to the United States and to democracies across the region, and gives it a bigger voice in setting the rules of trade and technology. Japan has said it will spend more on defence. That commitment is far easier to sustain in a growing economy.

The right levers

The answers are well known, and the hard part is carrying them out. Investment in strategic industries is one. The Industry Ministry's approval on Friday of support of up to 645.1 billion yen for TSMC to make advanced 3-nanometre chips at its second plant in Kumamoto is the kind of project that builds capability. Higher productivity in services, a labour market that moves people to where they are most valuable, and companies that invest their cash rather than hoard it are others.

The Bank of Japan has a part to play too. Governor Kazuo Ueda said on Friday that the bank would keep raising its policy rate and adjusting the degree of monetary accommodation. A gradual return to normal interest rates, if the economy can bear it, would support the yen and reward savers. A weaker yen may flatter exporters' profits, but it cannot substitute for growth.

The government's growth strategy rightly centres on semiconductors, artificial intelligence and other strategic industries. What matters now is speed: permits granted quickly, power supplied reliably, and skilled people trained at home and welcomed from abroad on clear terms.

None of this calls for pessimism. Japan remains a creditor nation with deep pools of savings, world-class manufacturers and a stable democracy. Those strengths are the foundation for a recovery, if policy makes use of them.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS

Beijing's Envoy Said the Quiet Part Aloud. Manila's Answer, and Tokyo's, Should Be Stronger Partnership

China's ambassador told the Philippines it would 'easily win' a fight, then insisted China loves peace; Japan's security is tied to the answer the region gives

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

China's ambassador to the Philippines, Jing Quan, told reporters in Manila on Thursday that the Philippines should consider itself lucky to have a neighbour like China, that China would "easily win" if the two countries fought, and that China "won't use force" because it "loves peace." President Ferdinand Marcos Jr replied on Friday that the remark sounded "just like a threat."

Mr Marcos was right. A diplomat who mentions how easily his country would win a war, and then reassures his hosts that it will not start one, is not offering friendship. He is reminding a smaller neighbour of the balance of power.

A pattern, not a slip

The remark fits a pattern. China claims most of the South China Sea, including waters inside the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. Its coast guard and maritime militia have used water cannon and dangerous manoeuvres against Philippine vessels around Second Thomas Shoal and Scarborough Shoal. An international tribunal ruled in 2016 that China's sweeping claims had no basis in international law; Beijing rejects the ruling.

Why Japan should care

Japan has every reason to watch closely. Much of its trade passes through the South China Sea, and the pressure on the Philippines mirrors the pressure on Japan around the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. A region in which a large power can intimidate its neighbours into silence would be a more dangerous region for Japan.

Partnership is the answer

The right response is calm and practical. The Philippines is a treaty ally of the United States and has deepened defence ties with Japan, including a reciprocal access agreement that allows each country's forces to train in the other. Those ties should keep growing: more joint exercises, more help for the Philippine coast guard, more information shared.

Strength among partners is not provocation. It is what makes threats, however politely phrased, ineffective. The more firmly Japan, the Philippines and the United States stand together, the less any ambassador will feel able to talk about winning wars.

Japan's own diplomacy should be equally plain. When Chinese officials speak the language of intimidation, whether to Manila or to Tokyo, the reply should be calm, public and consistent: disputes are to be settled by law and negotiation, not by reminders of military power.

ANALYSIS

Russia Must Let Japan See the Detained Hokkaido Shimbun Reporter Without Delay, and Then Let Him Go

Russia has not arranged the consular visit that a treaty requires within four days of a detention; Tokyo should press, publicly and persistently, for access and release

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

A Japanese reporter has now spent four days in the hands of Russia's Federal Security Service, and Japan's diplomats have still not been allowed to see him. The Hokkaido Shimbun correspondent, based in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, was detained on October 13 on suspicion of espionage and is being held in Moscow.

The embassy asked for a consular meeting on Friday. A consular convention between Japan and the former Soviet Union, which Russia inherited, requires such a meeting within four days of a detention. Officials now expect it next week or later, beyond that limit.

No such fact

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has rejected Russia's suggestion that the reporter was acting on the instructions of Japanese intelligence. "There is no such fact," she said on Thursday. The Hokkaido Shimbun has said it is a news organisation independent of the government and does not gather news on the government's instructions. The reporter held a Russian journalist visa.

What Japan should do

The government's first duty is to its citizen. It should press for consular access every day until it is granted, say publicly when it is refused, and make clear that the treaty obligations Russia inherited are not optional. It should also co-ordinate with partners whose own citizens and journalists have been held in Russia, and who understand how such cases are used.

The newspaper industry has spoken with one voice. Shiro Nakamura, president of the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, said the freedom to gather and report news must not be obstructed, and the Japan PEN Club demanded the reporter's immediate release. The Committee to Protect Journalists in New York has called on Russia to free him.

A test of resolve

Espionage cases in Russia are handled by the security service and can take months or years to reach trial. The longer Japan waits quietly, the more the case becomes a bargaining chip. Firmness now, in public and in private, is the best protection the reporter has.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara has said the government will do everything it can to achieve a consular visit as soon as possible and to confirm the reporter's health and his account of the facts. Those words need to be matched by daily, visible effort until he is home.

EDITORIAL

Today's Numbers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

9.9: The magnitude the earthquake early warning system estimated on Friday. The real quake, near Kamchatka, was 6.9.

8: Minutes between the warning and its cancellation.

1: The strongest intensity recorded anywhere in Japan, at Hakodate.

14: Days prosecutors have to decide whether to appeal the Ohsho acquittal.

28: Days Kazuo Yana served as agriculture minister.

4,281,026: Foreign residents of Japan at the end of June, a record.

42: Percentage fall in the wholesale price of new-crop rice.

1.6 million: Driver's licence images leaked from the Times Car service.

6: Japan's forecast place in the world by GDP next year, according to the IMF.

273: The combined age of the first three Living National Treasures of lifestyle culture.

3: Straight Japan Series appearances for SoftBank.

980: The central pressure, in hectopascals, of Typhoon Champi at 6 a.m. on Saturday.

CULTURE

Quotes of the Day

By the Copy Desk

"We are deeply disappointed by this unexpected verdict." The family of Takayuki Ohigashi, after the acquittal in Kyoto.

"Even if physical features match, that does not mean he can be called the defendant." The Kyoto District Court, on camera footage.

"I take my responsibility for the appointment seriously." Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, on Kazuo Yana.

"At night I lie down with the volume turned up to maximum." Ms Takaichi, on her official smartphone.

"The government takes this very seriously." Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara, on the cancelled earthquake warning.

"We will raise the policy rate and adjust the degree of monetary accommodation." Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda.

"Toyota is not a guest in Europe." Yoshihiro Nakata, president of Toyota Motor Europe.

"You cannot judge someone's character unless you have worked with them." Shoji Nishida, Liberal Democratic Party lawmaker.

"She is a horse who can become a star." Hiroyuki Uemura, trainer of Monroe Walk.

"I believe it is my mission to unite the world through sumo." Hakuho, the new president of the International Sumo Federation.

CULTURE

Words of the Week

By the Copy Desk

MUZAI HANKETSU: A verdict of not guilty, as delivered in the Ohsho case on Friday.

JOKYO SHOKO: Circumstantial evidence, on which the prosecution's case in Kyoto rested.

KINKYU JISHIN SOKUHO: Earthquake early warning, the alert that sounded on phones on Friday.

TORIKESHI: Cancellation, as in the second message, eight minutes later.

SHINDO: Seismic intensity on Japan's scale, which runs from 0 to 7; Friday's false warning predicted the top of it.

NINMEI SEKININ: Responsibility for an appointment.

YOSHI: Adoption, which the revised Imperial House Law permits from October 24.

NINGEN KOKUHO: Living National Treasure.

SHINMAI: New-crop rice, whose wholesale price has fallen 42 per cent.

NIHON SHIRIZU: The Japan Series.

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EDITORIAL & OPINION

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Japan Morning Post corrects errors of fact as soon as they are identified: corrections@japanmorningpost.com. Friday's edition listed the possible discovery of the world's oldest shipwreck off Turkey among items that could not be confirmed; Kyodo News has since reported the find, and a report appears on the Science page today.

The notes supplied for today's edition call Typhoon No. 30 Champa; it is Champi, a name proposed by Laos, rendered Chanpa in Japanese reports. In one place they refer to the prime minister as 'he'; Sanae Takaichi is a woman. They describe Kazuo Yana's 'dismissal'; he formally resigned, under pressure, on Wednesday. They say DeNA moved closer to 'advancing to the Climax Series'; DeNA are already in the Climax Series and are one win from the Japan Series. They say the telecoms cyber defence study group's first meeting 'was held on the 22nd'; it is scheduled for Thursday, October 22. They spell the restaurant chain Osho and the motor maker Nidek; the names are Ohsho and Nidec. They say Nidec will seek compensation from Shigenobu Nagamori; the company says it is considering claims for damages after an outside committee found him and eight others liable. They put the rise in Green Car charges at 3,700 yen from December 15; JR Central's announcement, as reported by Kyodo News, gives 3,000 yen between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka from December 2027, and this edition uses that figure.

Not repeated today because they were reported in earlier editions: the Oregon school shooting, the counting of financial income towards medical costs for people aged 75 and over, the outline of a law against match-fixing, the SourceNext and Arcadia data leaks, the abolition of the leap second, the lawsuits against OpenAI by eight American states, Anthropic's warning about self-replicating AI, the Onagawa reactor leak and the nuclear waste survey in Hitachiomiya. The 'lineage' items in the technology notes are not October 17 anniversaries; the Technology History page instead marks events that fell on this date.

THE WEEK AHEAD

SAT. 17: Climax Series Game 4, Koshien; gymnastics worlds open; Kawagoe Festival; Yasukuni autumn festival. SUN. 18: Yokohama mayoral election; Asian Para Games opening; Shuka Sho; Tokyo Legacy Half Marathon; Champi near Guam. MON. 19: Budget Committee; Keen Sword begins; Alberta vote. TUE. 20: Tax cut bills in the lower house. THU. 22: Baseball draft; telecoms cyber defence panel; Jidai Matsuri. SAT. 24: Japan Series opens; Imperial House Law changes. SUN. 25: Fukushima governor election; Brazil runoff. OCT. 29-30: Bank of Japan. OCT. 30: Ohsho appeal deadline. NOV. 3: U.S. midterms.

TYPHOON AND MARINE ADVISORIES

6 a.m. Saturday. No. 30, Champi: strong typhoon near the Mariana Islands, 12.2N, 149.6E, about 540 km east-south-east of Guam; 980 hPa; winds 35 m/s, gusts 50; west-north-west at 25 km/h. Storm-force winds 75 km all around; gale-force 440 km to the north-west and 330 km to the south-east. Near Guam early Sunday, 955 hPa; very strong by early Monday, 940 hPa; east of the Philippines Tuesday and Wednesday, 935 hPa; about 650 km south of Naha by 3 a.m. Thursday. Emergencies at sea: 118.

MARKET REFERENCE

Friday: Nikkei 225 65,324.29, up 898.34, the first gain in seven sessions; Topix 4,066.00, up 66.66; prime market volume about 2.38 billion shares, value about 7.66 trillion yen. 10-year JGB 2.930 per cent. New York, Friday: Dow 52,002.41, down 175.28; Nasdaq 26,140.03, down 573.00. WTI crude briefly above \$100. Dollar about 158 yen. Bank of Japan rate 1.25 per cent. Rice 2,837 yen for 5 kg.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

Front: the Kyoto District Court, file photo, WPM Productions. Typhoon map, Japan and United States weather maps: supplied for this edition. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, the earthquake alert screens, Pope Leo XIV, Tokyo Skytree and the SoftBank Hawks: file photos, 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

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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 or charged 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. Natural disaster insurance contract inquiries 0120-501-331. Customers of companies reporting leaks should change their passwords wherever they reused them and treat messages that quote their personal details with suspicion.

OPINION AND SOURCES

The editorial is the view of the editorial page and takes its subject from the day's cartoon; Analysis articles are the judgment of their writers. Reports draw on the Saturday morning papers, Kyodo News, the Hokkaido Shimbun, Reuters, the Associated Press, CP24 and gCaptain; on the Japan Racing Association and official statements in Japan and abroad; on the Japan Meteorological Agency, Weathernews and tenki.jp for weather; and on the U.S. National Weather Service for the American map.

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TOMORROW'S EDITION

Sunday: Climax Series Game 4 at Koshien, the final round of the Fujitsu Ladies and the third round of the Japan Open, the opening of the world gymnastics championships, Champi's approach to Guam, the eve of the Yokohama mayoral election and the latest on the Hokkaido Shimbun correspondent held in Russia.

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