

★ TEXTBOOKS STAY PAPER-FIRST ★ DENA SWEEP HANSHIN TO MEET SOFTBANK ★ CHAMPI VERY STRONG NEAR GUAM ★ PM SENDS YASUKUNI OFFERING ★ PARA GAMES OPEN TONIGHT ★

Textbooks Will Stay Paper-First When Digital Books Become Official, With Fully Digital Editions Barred for Younger Children

A draft of the education minister's guidelines treats digital material as a supplement from fiscal 2030; from the fifth grade, fully digital textbooks would be allowed only in English and practical subjects, the Yomiuri Shimbun reports

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor



Rice straw stacked to dry in harvested paddies. The farm ministry forecasts this year's crop of rice for eating at 7,406,000 tons, the second-largest in 30 years, pointing to a surplus of up to 480,000 tons over demand; report on the Economy pages. (File photo: WPM Productions)

Paper will remain at the heart of the textbooks Japanese children carry to school when digital textbooks gain full legal status in fiscal 2030, with screens playing a supporting role, under a draft of guidelines being prepared by the education minister, according to a report in the Yomiuri Shimbun on Sunday.

The draft describes digital material as supplementary and complementary to the printed page. Fully digital textbooks would not be permitted for children in the fourth grade of elementary school or below, and from the fifth grade they would be limited to English and practical subjects, the newspaper said.

The guidelines will decide what millions of pupils read from every day for years to come, and they settle, for now, a debate that has divided educators, doctors, publishers and politicians since the government began equipping every child with a computer.

A new kind of textbook

The Diet laid the legal ground in June. A revision of the School Education Act and related laws, approved by the Cabinet on April 7, passed the House of Representatives on April 28 and was enacted by the House of Councillors on June 10.

Until now the law has treated only printed books as textbooks. Digital versions of the printed books have been allowed in classrooms since 2019, but only as substitute teaching materials. Under the revised law, textbooks in electronic form become textbooks in their own right, screened by the ministry and chosen by local boards of education in the same way as printed ones.

Three forms will be possible: paper only, a hybrid of paper and digital, and fully digital. Videos and audio linked from a textbook through QR codes will also be screened. In compulsory education the books will be free, as printed ones are now; for digital textbooks the government will buy the rights to use them and pass them to schools. Pupils will be able to log in from home and keep access after changing schools or graduating.

Exceptions, not the rule

The law left the detail to a guideline from the education minister, and a ministry panel of experts began work on it in April. During the Diet debate the minister said fully digital textbooks would be the exception, with paper-only and hybrid books the main forms, and indicated that fully digital books should not be allowed in the fourth grade or below, or for now in Japanese, social studies and moral education.

The draft reported on Sunday follows that line and sets the boundary more tightly, confining fully digital textbooks for older pupils to English and to practical subjects.

In an interview published by the ministry this month, the head of its textbook division said that "the basis is paper textbooks," with paper and digital to be used according to children's stage of development and the nature of each subject. Subjects such as English, music and art lend themselves to digital material, the ministry said, while Japanese and classical texts, which call for close reading and deep thought, suit paper.

What screens can do

The ministry points to the strengths of digital books: a video can show the steps of a science experiment more clearly than text and photographs, recordings of native speakers can be replayed as often as a pupil likes, and lines can be underlined and erased with a finger.

It also cites its national assessment of academic ability, in which pupils who used digital textbooks more often tended to report a better understanding of lessons, more active learning and a greater liking for their subjects, all of which go with higher scores.

Digital editions with text-to-speech and highlighting are planned for pupils who find printed books hard to use, to be chosen according to each child's needs, and the ministry is considering a limit on how much of a textbook may be digital.

Eyes, posture and reading

The worries are just as concrete. In the Diet, members raised the effects of long hours in front of screens on eyesight, posture and sleep, as well as on concentration and reading. The minister said health precautions would be written into the guideline with the help of medical experts, and the ministry has discussed with doctors advice such as looking away from the screen every 30 minutes and keeping it at least 30 centimetres from the eyes.

In April a group of writers and education specialists headed by the novelist Jiro Asada published a booklet warning against making digital books official textbooks. Kuniyoshi Sakai, a University of Tokyo neuroscientist who studies language, wrote that children's linguistic skills and ability to think could decline, and their academic performance with them. The group's secretary general is Toshikazu Yamaguchi, president of The Yomiuri Shimbun Holdings, who called for a national debate before the guidelines were drawn up.

Top of the class

The guidelines arrive weeks after Japan's 15-year-olds recorded their best showing in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment. In the PISA 2025 results published on September 8, Japan ranked first among the 38 OECD member countries in reading, mathematics and science for the first time, and first among them in a

SPORTS

DeNA Rally With Two Out in the Ninth to Sweep Hanshin and Set Up a Japan Series Rematch With SoftBank

Masaki Mimori's two-run single completes an 8-5 comeback at Koshien; the third-placed BayStars are unbeaten in six postseason games and open the series at Yokohama Stadium on Saturday

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Yokohama DeNA BayStars scored four runs with two out in the ninth inning to beat the Hanshin Tigers 8-5 at Koshien Stadium on Saturday, completing a four-game sweep of the Central League champions and setting up a Japan Series rematch with the SoftBank Hawks.

Trailing 5-4 with runners on second and third, Masaki Mimori lined a two-run single to centre field to put DeNA ahead, and the BayStars added two more runs before the inning was over.

DeNA, who finished third in the regular season, won the final stage of the Climax Series 4-1, counting the one-win advantage Hanshin received as pennant winners. They are unbeaten in the postseason, with six straight wins since the first stage, and Shugo Maki was named the most valuable player of the final stage.

Morishita strikes twice

For most of the afternoon it looked as though the Tigers would live to fight on Sunday. Toshiro Miyazaki gave DeNA the lead with a sacrifice fly in the first inning, and Yusuke Oyama tied it with a two-out single in the bottom half.

Naruse put DeNA back in front in the fourth with a two-run homer to left, the first home run of his professional career. Shota Morishita answered with a solo shot in the fifth, and in the sixth Miyazaki fumbled a grounder at third base with two out and runners on second and third, letting in the tying run.

Morishita homered again in the seventh, his second in consecutive at-bats, and the Tigers added another run to lead 5-3.

The ninth

DeNA's starter, Katsuki Azuma, had given up two runs on nine hits in five innings, and the bullpen could not hold the game level. But the BayStars kept chipping away. They cut the lead to 5-4 against Kinoshita, and Kudo, who came in during the eighth, ran out of strength in the ninth.

With Hanshin one out from forcing a fifth game, Mimori found the gap in centre field. Inoue and the hitters behind him piled on to make it 8-5.

2024 again

The result revives one of the more improbable Japan Series of recent years. In 2024 DeNA also finished third, won both stages of the Climax Series and then beat SoftBank for their first Japan Series title since 1998.

This will be DeNA's fifth Japan Series, counting their years as the Taiyo Whales and the Yokohama BayStars, and they are chasing their fourth title. SoftBank won a third straight Pacific League pennant this year, swept the Nippon-Ham Fighters in the final stage on Friday and are aiming for a second consecutive championship after beating Hanshin last year.

The schedule

The series opens on Saturday, October 24, at Yokohama Stadium, which also hosts Game 2 on Sunday. Games 3 to 5 are scheduled for Tuesday to Thursday, October 27 to 29, at Mizuho PayPay Dome in Fukuoka, and Games 6 and 7, if needed, return to Yokohama on October 31 and November 1.

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WEATHER — TOKYO

24°C

Low 14°C · Sunny

Sapporo

18°

Osaka

28°

Fukuoka

30°

Naha

30°

Sunny and warm for most: 30°C in Fukuoka and Naha, 24°C in Tokyo, 4°C this morning in Kushiro. Typhoon No. 30, Champi, very strong near Guam. Full weather, Page 15.

TODAY IN BRIEF

- Schools: draft guidelines keep textbooks paper-first; fully digital books are barred up to the fourth grade.
- Baseball: DeNA rally with two out in the ninth to sweep Hanshin and meet SoftBank in the Japan Series.
- Typhoon: Champi, now very strong at 945 hPa, passes just south of Guam and heads for the seas south of Okinawa.
- Yasukuni: Takaichi sends a masakaki offering but stays away; Beijing condemns it, Seoul voices regret.
- Okinawa: Governor Koja tours the Henoko site and asks for the construction schedule to be kept.
- Para Games: a record 45 countries and regions gather for tonight's opening in Nagoya.

THE GUIDELINES

- Paper at the centre.
- Digital as a supplement.
- No fully digital books to grade 4.
- New books from April 2030.

TODAY

- Yokohama elects a mayor.
- Para Games open, 6 p.m.
- Shuka Sho, 3:40 p.m.
- Tokyo 24, sunny all day.

MARKETS	
Nikkei 225 (Fri)	65,324.29 ▲898.34
Topix (Fri)	4,066.00 ▲66.66
Dow (Fri)	52,002.41 ▼175.28
WTI crude (Fri)	\$101.41 ▲3.44
10-yr JGB	about 2.9%
Yen	about 158 per \$
BOJ policy rate	1.25%

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THE WEEK

- Mon. 19: Keen Sword begins.
- Tue. 20: tax cut bills.
- Thu. 22: baseball draft.
- Sat. 24: Japan Series.

THE TROPICS

- Champi: 945 hPa near Guam.
- South of Okinawa by Friday.

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new domain, learning in the digital world.

Its average reading score, however, fell 13 points to 503, fourth among all 91 participating countries and regions. An education ministry official credited the results to better teaching under the current curriculum guidelines and to the development of a digital learning environment.

A reversal abroad

Other countries have travelled the same road and turned back part of the way. Sweden, which went further than most in replacing books with screens, began in 2023 to put money back into printed textbooks after its pupils' reading results fell, a shift watched closely by educators in Japan.

FROM PAGE 1

DeNA Rally With Two Out in the Ninth to Sweep Hanshin and Set Up a Japan Series Rematch With SoftBank

Continued from Page 1

Silence in the Tigers' dugout

For Hanshin, who dominated the regular season under Kyuji Fujikawa to win the pennant for the second year running, the defeat ends a season that had promised far more. The Tigers scored only five runs in the four games and were shut out in the first three.

Teruaki Sato, who won the Central League triple crown this season, has told the club he wants to play in the major leagues. Asked about his future after the game, he said: "It has only just finished, so I can't say anything."

The professional baseball draft is on Thursday, two days before the first pitch of the Japan Series.

SOCIETY

Digital Textbooks: The Road to 2030

By the Society Desk

- APRIL 2019: Digital versions of printed textbooks may be used in class as substitute teaching materials.
- DECEMBER 2019: The government launches the GIGA School programme to give every elementary and junior high school pupil a computer.
- APRIL 7, 2026: The Cabinet approves a bill to make digital textbooks official.
- APRIL 10, 2026: An expert panel at the education ministry holds its first meeting on guidelines for using them.
- APRIL 28, 2026: The House of Representatives passes the bill.
- JUNE 10, 2026: The House of Councillors enacts it.
- SEPTEMBER 8, 2026: Japan tops the OECD in all three PISA domains for the first time.
- OCTOBER 18, 2026: A draft of the minister's guidelines keeping paper at the centre is reported.
- APRIL 1, 2027: The revised law takes effect, except for some provisions.

FISCAL 2027 TO 2029: Publishers edit the new elementary textbooks, the ministry screens them, and boards of education choose them.

APRIL 2030: The new textbooks, in paper, hybrid or fully digital form, reach classrooms.

SOCIETY

From Curriculum to Classroom: How a Japanese Textbook Is Written, Screened and Chosen

Private publishers write the books, the education ministry checks every page against the curriculum guidelines, and local boards decide which ones children will use; the state pays for them all in compulsory education

By the Society Desk

Japan's school textbooks are written not by the government but by private publishers. What makes a book a textbook is the approval of the education minister, granted after a screening process that is one of the most closely watched rituals of Japanese education.

The timetable

The new textbooks will arrive with the next curriculum guidelines. Publishers are to edit elementary school textbooks in fiscal 2027, the ministry is to screen them, including their digital parts, in fiscal 2028, and boards of education are to choose them in fiscal 2029, for use from April 2030.

The ministry has said it is considering setting out its basic principles on the making, screening, selection and use of the new textbooks within the current fiscal year, which ends in March. Concerns have also been raised about the extra burden on teachers, who will have to prepare lessons for three different forms of textbook.

The starting point is the curriculum guidelines, known as the Courses of Study, which set out what children must learn in each subject and grade. They are revised roughly once a decade, and each revision sets off a new generation of textbooks.

The screening

Publishers draft their books to fit the guidelines and submit them to the ministry. Specialists check them line by line and return comments asking for corrections, which publishers must address before the books are approved. The comments, and the changes they produce, are made public, and some, particularly on history, have caused diplomatic rows.

The choice

For public elementary and junior high schools, local boards of education choose which approved books will be used in their areas, usually for several years at a time. Private and national schools choose for themselves.

Free books

Since a law enacted in 1963, textbooks in compulsory education have been provided free of charge. The state buys the books and distributes them, and children keep them.

What changes now

Under the law revised in June, the same system will apply to textbooks in digital form. The ministry will screen the digital parts of a book, including videos and audio reached through QR codes, and boards of education will choose among paper, hybrid and fully digital versions.

For digital textbooks, the state will buy the right to use them rather than the books themselves, and pupils will be able to use them at home through their own accounts. The details, including which grades and subjects may use fully digital books, are to be set by the minister's guidelines.

The timetable

The next curriculum guidelines take effect in elementary schools in fiscal 2030, and the first generation of new textbooks will be edited, screened and chosen in the three years before that.

SOCIETY

Paper or Screen? What the Research Says About How Children Read

Studies tend to favour paper for close reading and long texts, and screens for sound, video and practice; the education ministry says the answer depends on the subject and the child's age

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Behind the education ministry's decision to keep paper at the centre lies a long-running argument among researchers about whether the medium changes how well people understand what they read.

The most widely cited answer comes from a 2018 analysis that pooled 54 studies involving more than 170,000 readers. Its authors, from universities in Spain and Israel, found that readers understood informational texts better on paper than on screens, and that the gap was larger when they were under time pressure.

Why paper may help

Researchers suggest several reasons. On paper, readers can see where they are in a text and flip back easily, which helps them build a mental map of it. On

screens, people tend to skim, and they are often overconfident about how much they have understood.

Where screens win

Digital materials have clear strengths of their own. A pupil learning English can replay a native speaker's pronunciation as many times as needed, a science class can watch an experiment unfold step by step, and a child with dyslexia can have a passage read aloud and highlighted.

The ministry's view

In the Diet debate on the new law, the ministry cited a study that found similar results for memory and comprehension on paper and on screens, while noting that paper was better for grasping the whole of a text and for close reading, and digital for video and audio.

It has said the choice should depend on the subject and the child's stage of development: Japanese and classical texts on paper, English, music and art suited to digital material.

Health

Doctors' concerns centre on eyesight, posture and sleep. The ministry has discussed with doctors advice such as looking away from the screen every 30 minutes and keeping at least 30 centimetres between eyes and screen, and says health precautions will be written into the guidelines.

Sweden's example

Sweden, which embraced screens early, has been cited in Japan as a warning. After reading results fell, its government began in 2023 to fund a return to printed textbooks, with the aim of giving every pupil a book of their own in each subject.

A balance

Few researchers argue for one medium alone. The question for Japan's schools is less whether to use screens than when, for what and for how long, which is what the minister's guidelines are meant to answer.

SPORTS

The Japan Series: DeNA v SoftBank

By the Sports Desk

- GAME 1: Saturday, October 24, Yokohama Stadium.
- GAME 2: Sunday, October 25, Yokohama Stadium.
- GAME 3: Tuesday, October 27, Mizuho PayPay Dome, Fukuoka.
- GAME 4: Wednesday, October 28, Mizuho PayPay Dome.
- GAME 5: Thursday, October 29, Mizuho PayPay Dome, if needed.
- GAME 6: Saturday, October 31, Yokohama Stadium, if needed.
- GAME 7: Sunday, November 1, Yokohama Stadium, if needed.
- FORMAT: Best of seven; dates may change in bad weather.
- LAST TIME: DeNA beat SoftBank in 2024 for their first title in 26 years.
- SOFTBANK: Third straight pennant, third straight Japan Series, defending champions.
- DENA: Third in the Central League, unbeaten in the Climax Series.

SPORTS

Triple Crown Winner Teruaki Sato Says He 'Can't Say Anything' Yet About the Majors as Hanshin's Season Ends

The 27-year-old has signed with a major American sports agency and has long told the club he wants to go to the United States; Hanshin say they have no comment for now

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Teruaki Sato, the Hanshin Tigers slugger who won the Central League triple crown this season, declined to discuss his future after the Tigers were eliminated from the Climax Series on Saturday, amid expectations that he will try to move to the major leagues.

"It has only just finished, so I can't say anything," the 27-year-old said after DeNA's 8-5 win at Koshien.

A season to remember

Sato hit .306 with 39 home runs and 106 runs batted in this season, his sixth as a professional, to lead the league in all three categories. Last season he led the league in home runs and runs batted in and was named the Central League's most valuable player.

He has been at the centre of three pennant-winning

seasons, including the club's first back-to-back Central League titles.

The American dream

Sato has long wanted to play in the major leagues. In contract talks at the end of the 2024 season he asked the club to allow him to move to the United States in the future, and the subject came up again after last season. His contract for this season, reportedly worth about 500 million yen, was not settled until just before spring training.

He has since signed with a major American sports agency.

The club's position

Satoshi Shimamura, head of Hanshin's baseball operations, said the club had no comment "as of today" when asked whether it would let Sato move through the posting system, under which a Japanese club can release a player under contract to negotiate with major league teams in return for a fee.

The club values his contribution highly, and some people involved with it reportedly support letting him realise his dream.

The next step

If Hanshin agree, Sato would join a long line of Japanese hitters to test themselves in the majors. Under the current agreement, players can be posted from early November to mid-December.

SPORTS

Third in the Summer, Best in October: How DeNA Keep Turning the Climax Series Upside Down

The BayStars have now reached the Japan Series from third place twice in three years; their pitching held the league's best team scoreless for 27 innings this week

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Japanese baseball has a word for what the Yokohama DeNA BayStars have done again: gekokujo, the overthrow of the strong by the weak. The term comes from Japan's age of warring states, and sports writers reach for it whenever a lower-placed team topples a champion.

DeNA have made a habit of it. In 2024 they finished third in the Central League, won both stages of the Climax Series and then beat SoftBank in the Japan Series for their first title since 1998. This year they finished third again, and have not lost since.

Six straight

The run began with a two-game sweep of the Yomiuri Giants in the first stage. Then came Koshien, where the Tigers, champions for a second straight year, had home advantage in every game and a one-win head start.

It made no difference. DeNA won 2-0 on Wednesday, 1-0 on Thursday and 4-0 on Friday, holding Hanshin scoreless for 27 straight innings, before coming from behind on Saturday.

Pitching first

The shutouts came from a staff that kept Hanshin's lineup, led by the triple crown winner Teruaki Sato, off balance from the first pitch. In Thursday's 1-0 win, seven pitchers combined to allow two infield hits; on Friday, Katayama threw seven scoreless innings.

Timely power

The hitting came in short, decisive bursts. Shugo Maki's home runs in the eighth inning on Thursday and Friday, Keita Sano's three-run shot on Friday and Masaki Mimori's two-out single on Saturday accounted for most of the series' important runs. Maki, the captain, was named most valuable player.

The format

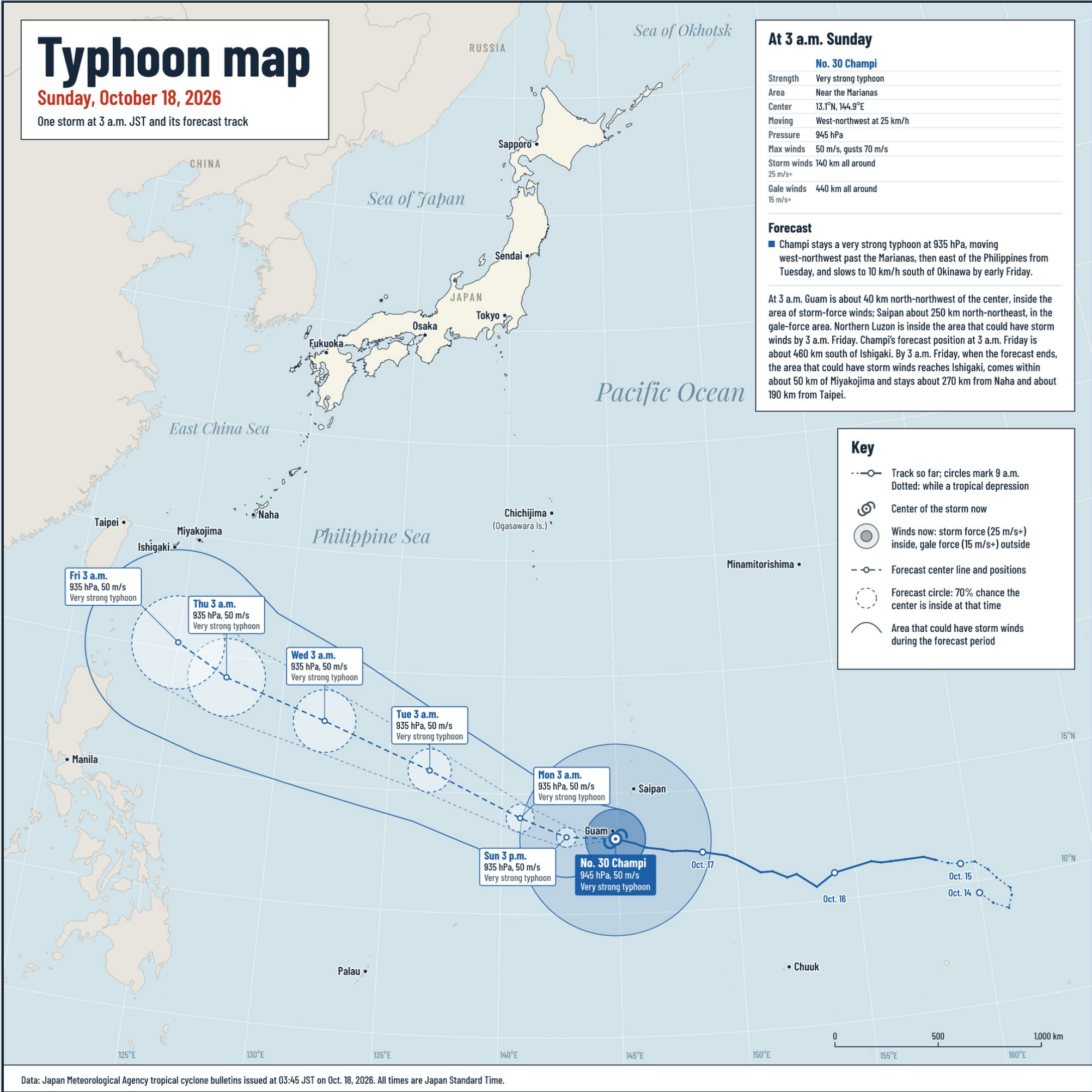
Supporters of the Climax Series say it keeps more teams in contention late in the season and gives October baseball a second life. Critics say it lets a team that finished well behind the champion represent the league.

Hanshin won the pennant by a clear margin and received the usual one-win advantage. Under a new rule this year, a champion that wins by a wide enough margin starts with two wins instead, as SoftBank did in the Pacific League.

Next

DeNA open the Japan Series at home on Saturday. In 2024 they lost the first two games to SoftBank in Yokohama before winning four in a row.

TYPHOONS



Typhoon No. 30, Champi, at 3 a.m. on Sunday and its forecast track, in the map supplied for this edition: a very strong typhoon of 945 hPa near the Mariana Islands at 13.1N, 144.9E, about 40 km south-south-east of Guam, moving west-north-west at 25 km/h with maximum winds of 50 m/s and gusts of 70 m/s. It is forecast to deepen to 935 hPa by 3 p.m. Sunday and hold that strength as it crosses the sea east of the Philippines from Tuesday, slowing to 10 km/h about 460 km south of Ishigaki by 3 a.m. Friday. 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 by Friday reaches Ishigaki and comes within about 50 km of Miyakojima. (Data: Japan Meteorological Agency bulletins issued at 3:45 a.m. on October 18)

TYPHOONS

Champi, Now a Very Strong Typhoon, Passes Just South of Guam With Winds of 50 Metres a Second and Heads for the Waters South of Okinawa

The storm deepened to 945 hectopascals overnight and is forecast to stay very strong all week; by early Friday the area that could have storm-force winds reaches Ishigaki and comes within 50 km of Miyakojima

By the Weather Desk

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, strengthened into a very strong typhoon overnight and was passing just south of Guam early on Sunday, with the island inside the zone of storm-force winds, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

At 3 a.m. on Sunday, Japan time, the centre was at 13.1 degrees north and 144.9 degrees east, about 40 kilometres south-south-east of Guam, moving west-north-west at 25 kilometres an hour. Its central pressure was 945 hectopascals, with maximum sustained winds of 50 metres a second near the centre and gusts of 70 metres a second.

Storm-force winds of 25 metres a second or more extended 140 kilometres in every direction from the centre, and gale-force winds of 15 metres a second or more reached 440 kilometres. Saipan, about 250 kilometres to the north-north-east, lay inside the gale-force area.

A rapid strengthening

Champi has intensified quickly over warm seas. On Friday morning it was a tropical storm of 998 hectopascals near the Marshall Islands. By 6 a.m. on Saturday it was a strong typhoon of 980 hectopascals, and by 6 p.m. it had reached very strong intensity at 955 hectopascals, with winds of 45 metres a second.

The agency's forecast, issued at 3:45 a.m. on Sunday, has the storm deepening further to 935 hectopascals by 3 p.m. on Sunday and holding that strength, with maximum winds of 50 metres a second, for the rest of the forecast period.

The week ahead

Champi is forecast to move west-north-west past the Mariana Islands and across the ocean east of the Philippines from Tuesday, slowing to about 10 kilometres an hour as it reaches the waters south of Okinawa by early Friday.

At 3 a.m. on Friday, when the official forecast ends, the centre is expected to be about 460 kilometres south of Ishigaki, still a very strong typhoon.

The southern islands

The agency's map shows the area that could have storm-force winds during the forecast period, which takes in the possible spread of the storm's path as well as the size of its wind field. By 3 a.m. on Friday that area reaches Ishigaki, comes within about 50 kilometres of Miyakojima, and stays about 270 kilometres from Naha and about 190 kilometres from Taipei. Northern Luzon in the Philippines also falls inside it.

That means the Sakishima Islands, Okinawa's south-western groups, could feel strong winds late in the week if the storm follows the northern edge of the forecast. Naha and the main island of Okinawa remain outside the area for now.

And beyond Friday

Where Champi goes after that is uncertain. Some computer simulations show it curving sharply in the East China Sea, and forecasters say the spread of possible tracks widens considerably after it passes east of the Philippines. There is no official forecast of

a direct hit on Honshu.

Weathernews has noted that forecasts produced by artificial intelligence have tended to show a more westward track than conventional physics-based models, which would keep the storm farther from Japan.

Guam

On Guam, where the closest approach was expected between 4 a.m. and 6 a.m. local time on Sunday, an hour ahead of Japan, the government had opened emergency shelters and warned that life-threatening coastal flooding was possible. Airlines including United Airlines, Japan Airlines and Korean Air cancelled flights on Saturday and Sunday, according to reports. The extent of any damage was not known when this edition went to press.

At home

Japan itself enjoys clear autumn weather on Sunday under high pressure, but rain is expected from Monday as fronts and low pressure cross the country, and the swell from Champi may raise waves along Pacific coasts as the week goes on. The agency advises residents of Okinawa, and travellers planning to visit later in the week, to keep checking the latest typhoon information.

TYPHOONS

Champi at a Glance

By the Weather Desk

STRENGTH: Very strong typhoon.

POSITION AT 3 A.M. SUNDAY: 13.1N, 144.9E, about 40 km south-south-east of Guam.

MOVEMENT: West-north-west at 25 km/h.

CENTRAL PRESSURE: 945 hPa.

WINDS: 50 m/s near the centre, gusts of 70 m/s.

STORM-FORCE WINDS: 140 km in every direction.

GALE-FORCE WINDS: 440 km in every direction.

FORECAST: 935 hPa and 50 m/s from Sunday afternoon to Friday.

3 A.M. FRIDAY: About 460 km south of Ishigaki, moving at about 10 km/h.

STORM-WIND AREA BY FRIDAY: Reaches Ishigaki and comes within about 50 km of Miyakojima; about 270 km from Naha.

SOURCE: Japan Meteorological Agency bulletins issued at 3:45 a.m. on October 18.

TYPHOONS

Guam Opens Shelters and Closes Its Port as Champi Arrives in the Small Hours of Sunday

A typhoon warning covered Guam and Rota from Saturday; flights to Tokyo, Osaka and Seoul were cancelled, and the island's tourist trade, heavily dependent on visitors from Japan and South Korea, braced for disruption

By the International Desk

Guam, the American territory in the western Pacific that is one of the closest beach destinations for Japanese tourists, spent Saturday preparing for the strongest storm to threaten it this year.

A typhoon warning was in effect for Guam, Rota and the adjacent waters. In a bulletin issued at 7:45 a.m. local time on Saturday, Guam's Joint Information Center said damaging winds of 39 miles an hour or more could begin as early as 8 p.m. that evening, and typhoon-force winds of 74 miles an hour or more as early as 5 a.m. on Sunday.

Shelters

Guam's Department of Education opened five emergency evacuation centres at 10 a.m. on Saturday, at Machananao, Astumbo, Maria A. Ulloa and Talofofo elementary schools and George Washington High School, with room for about 1,960 people in all. Residents of low-lying coastal areas in the south of the island were urged to move to safer shelter, and officials warned that life-threatening coastal flooding was possible.

The Captain of the Port set the highest heavy-weather condition, known as Condition Zulu, for the ports of Guam and of Saipan, Tinian and Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands from 7 a.m. on Saturday.

Flights

United Airlines, Japan Airlines, Korean Air and other carriers cancelled flights for Saturday and Sunday, with disruption possibly lasting into Monday, according to reports. Routes affected included those to Tokyo, Osaka, Seoul, Manila and Honolulu. The airport advised passengers to check with their airlines before going to the terminal.

A tourist island

Guam's economy depends heavily on visitors from Japan, South Korea and other Asian markets, and hotels along Tumon Bay prepared for high winds, flooding and power and water cuts. Beaches, boat trips and diving were among the activities most exposed to the dangerous seas.

Strength

On Saturday morning Guam's Joint Information Center said the forecast track would take Champi just south of the island as the equivalent of a Category 3 hurricane; later reports put it at Category 4, with sustained winds of about 130 miles an hour. American forecasters measure wind speeds over one minute rather than the ten minutes used by the Japan Meteorological Agency, which produces higher figures for the same storm.

A second blow this year

Guam has already had one damaging storm this year. In April, Typhoon Sinlaku, which struck the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam, led the territory to declare a state of emergency.

Japanese travellers holding tickets for the coming

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days are advised to check with their airlines and tour operators, and those on the island to follow the instructions of their hotels and the local authorities.

TYPHOONS

Strong, Very Strong, Violent: How Japan Grades a Typhoon and What the Circles on the Map Mean

The Japan Meteorological Agency classes storms by their maximum winds averaged over ten minutes; a forecast circle shows where the centre will be with a 70 per cent probability, not the size of the storm

By the Weather Desk

Japan describes the strength of a typhoon with a scale based on its maximum sustained winds, averaged over ten minutes, near the centre.

In Japan any tropical cyclone with winds of about 17 metres a second or more is called a typhoon. When the winds reach 33 metres a second the agency calls it strong; at 44 metres a second, very strong; and at 54 metres a second or more, violent. Champi, at 50 metres a second, is in the upper part of the very strong band.

Ten minutes or one

The Joint Typhoon Warning Center, which serves the American military, averages winds over one minute, which produces higher figures for the same storm. That is one reason the same typhoon can sound stronger in American reports than in Japanese ones.

Gusts

Gusts are higher still. Champi's are forecast at 70 metres a second, which is enough to overturn vehicles and destroy weak buildings.

Size

Size is described separately, by the radius of winds of 15 metres a second or more. A storm with gale-force winds reaching 500 to 800 kilometres from the centre is classed as large; Champi's reach 440 kilometres.

Reading the map

On a forecast map, the dashed circles show where the centre is expected to be at each time with a probability of 70 per cent. They grow larger as the forecast looks further ahead, reflecting uncertainty, not a growing storm.

The solid outline around them marks the storm warning area: the area that could have storm-force winds of 25 metres a second or more at some point during the forecast period, if the centre follows any path within the circles.

What to do

For islands inside or near that outline, the agency advises preparing early: securing objects that could be blown away, checking evacuation routes and stocking water and food, and paying close attention to the latest bulletins as the storm approaches.

TYPHOONS

Late-October Typhoons Are Rare but Can Be Deadly: Tokage Killed 95 in 2004 and Lan Hit on Election Day in 2017

Most storms this late in the season curve away into the Pacific, but westerly winds can also speed them towards Japan; Champi's path after Friday is still undecided

By the Weather Desk

By late October most typhoons that come near Japan are swept away to the north-east by the westerly winds, and landfalls are uncommon. But when they do happen, the results can be severe, as the two cases forecasters cite most often show.

Tokage, 2004

Typhoon Tokage, No. 23 of 2004, made landfall near Tosashimizu at the southern tip of Shikoku on October 20, 2004, still at typhoon strength, and swept across western and central Japan. It killed 95 people and left three missing, through high winds, flooding and landslides, and caused damage estimated at 771 billion yen.

It was the deadliest typhoon to strike Japan since 1982, and it was the tenth to strike the country that year, a record. The previous record of six landfalls had been set in 1990 and 1993.

Lan, 2017

Typhoon Lan, No. 21 of 2017, came ashore near Omaezaki in Shizuoka Prefecture at about 3 a.m. on October 23, 2017, a few hours after polls closed in a general election held as its rain bands spread over the country. Its gale-force winds extended across a diameter of about 1,700 kilometres at landfall.

Seventeen people died in Japan, mostly in flooding, and about 381,000 were evacuated. Shingu in Wakayama Prefecture recorded 894 millimetres of rain in 72 hours, and about 350 flights were cancelled.

Why late storms matter

Late-season typhoons tend to be large, and when they are caught by the westerly winds they can accelerate sharply, leaving little time between a forecast and the storm's arrival. Autumn fronts lying across Japan can also be energised by moisture drawn north by a typhoon, bringing heavy rain well before the storm itself arrives.

Champi

For now, Champi is forecast to be about 460 kilometres south of Ishigaki by early Friday, moving slowly. Forecasters say the spread of possible tracks after that is wide, with some models keeping it in the seas south of Okinawa or moving west and others curving it north. There is no official forecast of a direct hit on Honshu.

TYPHOONS

A Busy Season in Numbers

By the Data Desk

30: Typhoons so far this year, a total last reached in 2013.

16: Years since 1951 in which the count has reached 30.

4TH: Champi is the fourth-earliest No. 30 on record.

OCTOBER 5: Typhoon No. 29, Koguma, formed; it later passed near the Ogasawara Islands and out to sea east of Honshu.

OCTOBER 15: Champi formed near the Marshall Islands.

7: Typhoons ahead of the normal pace at the end of September, according to Weathernews.

3.4: The average number of typhoons that form in October.

3: Years since 1951 in which a typhoon formed in every month from January to October: 1965, 2015 and 2026.

LAOS: Proposed the name Champi, a kind of flower.

945 HPA: Champi's pressure at 3 a.m. on Sunday.

935 HPA: Its forecast pressure from Sunday afternoon to Friday.

SPORTS

How DeNA Swept the Champions

By the Sports Desk

FIRST STAGE: DeNA beat the Yomiuri Giants two games to none.

FINAL STAGE: Best of six at Koshien, with Hanshin given a one-win advantage as pennant winners.

GAME 1, WEDNESDAY: DeNA 2, Hanshin 0.

GAME 2, THURSDAY: DeNA 1, Hanshin 0. Shugo Maki homered with two out in the eighth.

GAME 3, FRIDAY: DeNA 4, Hanshin 0. Keita Sano hit a three-run homer and Maki a solo shot; Katayama pitched seven scoreless innings.

GAME 4, SATURDAY: DeNA 8, Hanshin 5. Masaki Mimori's two-out, two-run single in the ninth turned the game.

SERIES: DeNA won 4-1, counting Hanshin's advantage.

MVP: Shugo Maki.

HANSHIN'S RUNS: Five in four games, all of them on Saturday.

DENA'S RECORD THIS POSTSEASON: Six wins, no defeats.

NEXT: The Japan Series against SoftBank from Saturday.

POLITICS

The Week Ahead

By the Political Desk

SUNDAY 18: Yokohama mayoral election. Asian Para Games open in Nagoya. Shuka Sho at Kyoto. Tokyo Legacy Half Marathon.

MONDAY 19: Japanese and American forces begin the Keen Sword exercise, running to October 29. Upper house Budget Committee.

TUESDAY 20: The bills to cut the consumption tax on food go before a plenary session of the House of

Representatives.

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 at Yokohama Stadium. The Asian Para Games close.

SUNDAY 25: Fukushima governor election. Brazil's presidential runoff.

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

OCTOBER 29-30: Bank of Japan policy meeting.

NOVEMBER 3: U.S. midterm elections.

NOVEMBER 30 TO DECEMBER 5: UNESCO committee meets in Xiamen, China, to decide on Japan's shodo calligraphy nomination.

POLITICS

Government Puts Forward a New Benefit of About 30,000 Yen a Year for 20 Million Lower-Paid Workers, Linked to the Food Tax Cut

The 'support payment' would start in fiscal 2027 and be expanded once the tax on food returns to 8 per cent; the government calls its outline 'a reference' and says it will listen to the opposition

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

The government has presented the ruling and opposition parties with an outline of a new income-linked cash benefit for working people, paying an average of about 30,000 yen a year to some 20 million middle- and low-income earners, Kyodo News reported on Saturday.

The payment, provisionally called a support payment to reduce the burden on workers, is designed to accompany the government's plan to cut the consumption tax on food and drink. It would be introduced in fiscal 2027 and 2028, paid in principle once a year in cash.

Who would qualify

The benefit is aimed at people in work who carry a heavy burden of taxes and social insurance contributions. The upper limit could be an individual annual income in the range of 3 million yen. The number of recipients was set by applying to Japan the share of workers, about 30 per cent, covered by similar systems in other advanced countries.

Payments would be adjusted in four stages so that take-home pay rises gradually with earnings, avoiding a cliff at which earning more leaves a worker worse off.

Paying for it

The government would fund the payments with about 600 billion yen a year, the revenue that the 1 per cent rate on food would still raise during the two years of the tax cut. From fiscal 2029, when the rate is due to return to 8 per cent, the scheme would be enlarged.

'A reference'

The government described the outline as "one reference," and it and the ruling parties intend to take in opposition demands before fixing the details. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the House of Representatives Budget Committee on Wednesday that the figure of about 20 million people was "just a reference."

The bill

The benefit and the food tax cut are combined in a single bill, which goes before a plenary session of the lower house on Tuesday. Because the ruling bloc lacks a majority in the House of Councillors, it needs opposition votes to pass it.

Opposition parties have put forward their own ideas. Komeito has proposed paying every resident about 80,000 yen over two years instead of cutting the tax, and the Democratic Party for the People a payment of about 50,000 yen for people on low and middle incomes.

A long-debated idea

Benefits that rise and fall with income, sometimes combined with tax credits, have been discussed in Japan for years as a way to help working people on modest wages more precisely than across-the-board tax cuts. The outline offers a concrete picture of how such a system might look.

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POLITICS

Takaichi Pledges to 'Carry On Their Wishes' as 16 Self-Defense Force Members Who Died on Duty Are Honoured

Three of those remembered were killed in April when a shell burst during tank firing practice at the Hijudai range in Oita

By the Political Desk

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi attended a memorial service at the Defense Ministry in Tokyo on Saturday for members of the Self-Defense Forces who died in the line of duty, and pledged to carry on their work.

"Losing capable members is a great blow," she said in her address. "We will carry on their wishes and do everything we can to protect the lives and peaceful livelihoods of the people."

Sixteen names

This year 16 people were honoured: nine members of the Ground Self-Defense Force, five of the Maritime Self-Defense Force, one of the Air Self-Defense Force and one official of the ministry's internal bureau.

The Hijudai accident

Three of them died in April, when a shell burst during tank firing training at the Ground Self-Defense Force's Hijudai training area in Oita Prefecture.

The minister

Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said: "We must never forget that they gave their lives with their aspirations unfulfilled. We have lost irreplaceable people, and our grief is beyond words."

An annual rite

The service is held every year at the memorial zone in the ministry's grounds in Ichigaya, attended by bereaved families, the prime minister and senior officials. It honours those who died in accidents, training and disaster relief as well as other duties.

The Self-Defense Forces, which have never fought a war, have lost members in training accidents, aircraft crashes and disaster relief operations since their founding in 1954.

POLITICS

Air Self-Defense Force Recovers What Appears to Be the Fuselage of the Global Hawk Drone That Crashed Off Tottori

The large object was lifted from 200 to 300 metres down by a commercial salvage ship and is being taken to Misawa to find out why the reconnaissance aircraft went down on September 15

By the Political Desk

The Air Self-Defense Force said on Saturday that it had recovered from the sea an object that appeared to be part of the fuselage of a Global Hawk unmanned reconnaissance aircraft that crashed off Tottori Prefecture last month.

The aircraft, assigned to Misawa Air Base in Aomori Prefecture, disappeared from radar at about 1 p.m. on September 15, about 50 kilometres off the coast of Tottori.

The recovery

A commercial salvage ship began full-scale recovery work on October 13 and lifted the object, described by the force as "relatively large," with a crane from a depth of roughly 200 to 300 metres, about 50 kilometres off Aoya in Tottori City.

It is being taken to Misawa, where it will be analysed as part of the investigation into the cause of the crash.

Debris ashore

Pieces of the aircraft have already been found on the coasts of Tottori and Shimane prefectures, and the search of the shoreline continues.

The aircraft

The Global Hawk, built by Northrop Grumman, is a high-altitude, long-endurance drone used for wide-area surveillance. Japan introduced it to watch the waters and airspace around the country, including Chinese and Russian military activity and North Korean missile launches.

At Misawa

The analysis of the wreckage at Misawa, where Japan's Global Hawks are based, is expected to be central to establishing why the aircraft went down.

POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in the Diet. She sent a masakaki offering to Yasukuni Shrine for its autumn festival on Saturday but is not expected to visit in person while the festival runs, through Monday. (File photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

Takaichi Sends an Offering to Yasukuni for the Autumn Festival but Is Expected to Stay Away; Two Senior Figures Visit and Beijing 'Strongly Condemns' the Gesture

The prime minister, who visited the shrine as a minister, sent a masakaki tree in her own name; Minoru Kiuchi and the LDP's policy chief, Takayuki Kobayashi, paid their respects, and Seoul expressed 'deep disappointment and regret'

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi sent a ritual offering to Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo on Saturday for its autumn festival, but people close to her said she did not plan to visit in person while the festival runs, through Monday.

The offering, a masakaki, a small sacred tree placed before the altar, was sent in the name of "Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi." The decision to stay away is seen as an effort to avoid a diplomatic dispute with China and South Korea, which regard the shrine as a symbol of Japan's wartime militarism.

Past prime ministers have also sent offerings during the shrine's festivals rather than visiting, so the gesture follows established practice.

A change of habit

Ms Takaichi was a regular visitor before she became prime minister, going during the spring and autumn festivals and on August 15, the anniversary of the end of the war, including while serving as a cabinet minister. She skipped the autumn festival last year, just before she took office, and the spring festival in April.

Ministers at the shrine

Minoru Kiuchi, the minister for economic and fiscal policy, visited the shrine in Kudankita on Saturday morning, and Takayuki Kobayashi, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party's Policy Research Council, visited later in the day. How other members of the Cabinet handle the festival is now being watched closely.

Beijing and Seoul

The Chinese Embassy in Japan issued a statement by its spokesperson saying China "strongly condemns" the prime minister's offering and the visits by members of her Cabinet.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry expressed "deep disappointment and regret." A spokesperson criticised Japanese leaders for repeating offerings and visits to the shrine and said that facing history squarely, and showing remorse through actions, was essential to building future-oriented relations between the two countries.

The shrine

Yasukuni honours about 2.46 million people who died in Japan's wars, mostly soldiers, and since 1978 has also enshrined 14 wartime leaders convicted as Class-A war criminals by the Allied tribunal in Tokyo. Visits by prime ministers have strained relations with China and South Korea for decades, and the last sitting prime minister to visit was Shinzo Abe, in December 2013.

Balancing act

The offering allows Ms Takaichi, a longtime visitor to the shrine, to honour the war dead and keep faith with conservative supporters while avoiding a diplomatic confrontation.

The festival continues until Monday.

estimate based on the equipment and forces the ministry considers necessary could swell the five-year total to "70 trillion to 80 trillion yen."

Where the money comes from

A review of spending cuts is under way, but it is doubtful whether it can raise enough. In 2022 the government decided to pay for part of its defence build-up by raising corporate, tobacco and income taxes, a decision that took years of argument to implement.

Business resistance

Business leaders are worried about the effect of a further corporate tax increase on wage rises and international competitiveness, and are likely to oppose it. The debate is expected to be difficult, particularly as the government is also cutting the consumption tax on food and preparing new benefits.

The threat picture

The government has argued that a deteriorating security environment, including China's military build-up, North Korea's missile programme and Russia's war in Ukraine, requires a stronger defence. This month China's aircraft carrier Liaoning sailed into the Pacific.

Next steps

The debate over how to pay for defence is expected to intensify as the government compiles its budget for fiscal 2027 towards the end of the year.

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POLITICS

LDP Will Look for Its Own Ways to Fund the Food Tax Cut, Says Policy Chief Kobayashi, Promising 'Maximum Effort'

A party team is expected to comb through subsidies and government funds; the bills reach the lower house floor on Tuesday, and the ruling bloc needs opposition support in the upper house

By the Political Desk

The Liberal Democratic Party will step up its search for money to pay for the government's cut in the consumption tax on food from Monday, Takayuki Kobayashi, chairman of the party's Policy Research Council, said on Saturday.

Speaking to reporters in Saitama, Mr Kobayashi said the party was expected to set up a team to review subsidies and government funds.

"We want to approach it from a different angle from the government," he said. "I don't know how much we can find, but we want to make the maximum effort."

The bills

The government has submitted bills to cut the tax on food and drink, which go before the House of Representatives on Tuesday. Mr Kobayashi said he hoped the debate would give the public a concrete picture of the policy.

The upper house

The ruling bloc is in the minority in the House of Councillors. "We will keep working carefully so that as many opposition parties as possible understand," he said.

The prime minister's ideas

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the upper house Budget Committee on Friday that unneeded money held in government funds could be returned to the treasury to help pay for the cut, and raised the possibility of premium vouchers to encourage eating out, since the tax cut does not cover restaurant meals.

The cost

The reduced rate on food is currently 8 per cent. The government plans to cut it to 1 per cent for two years from fiscal 2027, a measure that would cost several trillion yen a year in lost revenue.

The opposition

Opposition parties are competing with proposals of their own, including cash payments, and the funding question is likely to be one of the main lines of attack when debate begins.

POLITICS

More Than 50,000 Japanese and American Troops Begin Keen Sword on Monday, With Japan's New Long-Range Missile Deployed for the First Time

The 11-day exercise simulates an attack on Japan; seven other countries take part, five of them, including France and Germany, for the first time, and a Type 25 missile with a range of about 1,000 km moves to a training area in Kyushu

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Japan's Self-Defense Forces and the United States military will begin their largest joint field exercise, Keen Sword, on Monday, with more than 50,000 personnel taking part through October 29.

About 45,000 members of the Self-Defense Forces and about 12,000 American troops will train at bases across Japan for a scenario in which the country comes under attack, covering land, sea and air forces together.

A first for the new missile

For the first time since it entered service, the Ground Self-Defense Force's new long-range missile, the Type 25 surface-to-ship guided missile, will be deployed in an exercise. The system, placed at Camp Kengun in Kumamoto City in March, has been moved to the Onohara training area, which straddles Nagasaki and Saga prefectures, to train in attacking enemy ships.

Its range of about 1,000 kilometres would reach part of China's coast. A Defense Ministry official called the missile "a symbolic presence" in the government's drive to acquire the capability to strike enemy bases.

The southwest

American forces are deploying their latest equipment to the Nansei Islands, the chain that runs from Kyushu to Taiwan, where Japan has been

strengthening its defences.

Partners

Seven countries besides Japan and the United States are taking part, five of them, including France and Germany, for the first time.

Every other year

Keen Sword is held roughly every two years, alternating with Keen Edge, a command-post exercise conducted on computers. Its stated aims are to deepen cooperation between the allies and improve their readiness for a contingency.

The backdrop

The exercise comes as Chinese military activity around Japan increases. This month the Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning sailed into the Pacific.

Tokyo and Washington have been working to integrate their command structures and expand joint operations, and Japan has been building up its own long-range strike capability under the security documents adopted in 2022.

POLITICS

Okinawa's New Governor, Who Backs the Henoko Relocation, Tours the Construction Site and Says It Pains Him to Add to the Area's Burden

Genta Koja, elected last month as the first governor in 12 years to accept the plan, asks for the schedule to be kept and promises to press Tokyo for help for the communities next to the base

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Okinawa Governor Genta Koja, who accepts the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to Henoko in Nago, inspected the construction site on Saturday and said he felt deeply for the residents who will live next to the new base.

"I am very sorry that the relocation will place a further burden of bases on you," Mr Koja told the heads of the three nearby districts of Henoko, Toyohara and Kushi before the inspection.

On the bay

Accompanied by Masaru Murai, director-general of the Okinawa Defense Bureau, and Lieutenant General Watson, the Okinawa area coordinator for American forces, the governor received a briefing on the work and visited the Oura Bay side of the site, where work to strengthen the soft seabed is under way.

The construction has been criticised for delays, and the visit was apparently intended to see its progress for himself. Speaking to reporters at the prefectural office afterwards, he said: "I want the construction period to be kept."

Local voices

Mr Koja said he would ask the national government for measures to reduce the burden on the area. Shinichi Tokuda, head of the Henoko district, asked him to "listen to local voices and turn them into regional policies."

A change at the top

Mr Koja, 42, a former deputy mayor of Naha, won the governorship on September 13, defeating the incumbent, Denny Tamaki, by a wide margin with the backing of the Liberal Democratic Party and other parties. He is the first governor born after Okinawa's return to Japan in 1972, and his victory reversed the prefecture's 12 years of opposition to the relocation.

He argued during the campaign that moving the base to Henoko was the quickest way to return the Futenma site in crowded Ginowan, and promised to double per capita income in Okinawa, the lowest of any prefecture.

The project

Japan and the United States agreed on the relocation in 2006 after years of negotiation. Opposition in Okinawa, where most American military facilities in Japan are concentrated, has kept the project at the centre of the prefecture's politics for decades, and the discovery of soft ground in Oura Bay added years and billions of yen to the work.

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POLITICS

POLITICS

Parents of a Student Who Died When Boats Capsized Off Henoko Ask Okinawa's Governor for School-Trip Safety Rules

Chika Takeishi, 17, of Doshisha International High School died in March; the two boats were not registered as businesses under the Maritime Transport Act, and her parents want guidelines shared by schools, hosts and travel agents

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The parents of a 17-year-old Kyoto high school student who died when two boats carrying students capsized off Henoko in Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, in March met Okinawa Governor Genta Koja at the prefectural office on Saturday and asked him to make school trips safer.

Their daughter, Chika Takeishi, a student at Doshisha International High School, died in the accident during a study trip. It was the parents' first meeting with the governor, and it was held behind closed doors.

Their requests

Speaking to reporters afterwards, her father said they had asked the governor to establish how safety on school trips is managed in practice, and to draw up guidelines for safety in activities at sea and in nature that could be shared among host organisations, schools and travel companies.

They also asked for measures to prevent a recurrence, pointing out that the two boats had not been registered as businesses under the Maritime Transport Act.

'Home safely'

"Children from all over the country come to Okinawa to learn and make lots of memories, and go home safely," her father said. "I want that obvious thing to be guaranteed."

Her mother said: "I think that better study trips will be a memorial for Chika."

The governor's reply

Before the meeting Mr Koja laid flowers at Henoko fishing port. He expressed his condolences and said the prefecture would "apply the lessons and work to ensure thorough safety management on school trips and an environment where students can learn without worry."

Okinawa and school trips

Okinawa is one of the most popular destinations for high school study trips, and programmes on the sea, from snorkelling to boat tours, are a regular part of many itineraries.

POLITICS

Futenma to Henoko: Thirty Years of Argument Over One Marine Air Base

The plan to close the airfield in crowded Ginowan dates from 1996; a referendum, lawsuits and the discovery of soft seabed slowed it, and the state took over the governor's approval in 2023

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The relocation that Okinawa's new governor now supports has been at the centre of the prefecture's politics for three decades.

U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma sits in the middle of Ginowan, a city of homes, schools and shops, and has long been described as one of the most dangerous military airfields in the world because of its location.

The promise of 1996

After the rape of a schoolgirl by three American servicemen in 1995 provoked mass protests, Japan and the United States agreed in 1996 to return the Futenma site. The plan depended on building a replacement facility elsewhere in Okinawa.

Henoko

After years of negotiation, the two governments agreed in 2006 on a plan for a V-shaped pair of runways on reclaimed land at Camp Schwab, by the Henoko district of Nago, on the prefecture's less crowded east coast.

Approval and opposition

In 2013 Governor Hirokazu Nakaima approved the land reclamation. His successors, Takeshi Onaga and Denny Tamaki, opposed the project, and the prefecture and the national government fought a long series of court battles.

In a prefectural referendum in February 2019, about 72 per cent of those who voted opposed the reclamation. The vote was not binding, and the work

continued.

Soft ground

The discovery of very soft seabed on the Oura Bay side of the site forced a change of design, requiring the ground to be reinforced with large numbers of piles and adding years and large sums to the project.

The governor refused to approve the new design. In December 2023, after the Supreme Court ruled against the prefecture, the land minister approved it on the governor's behalf, the first time the national government had used such a power against a prefecture, and work in Oura Bay began in early 2024.

A new chapter

Genta Koja's election in September brought the first governor in 12 years who accepts the relocation. He argues that completing Henoko is the quickest way to return Futenma, and has asked the national government to keep to the construction schedule and to reduce the burden on the nearby districts.

Still to come

The Futenma site will be returned only after the new facility is complete, and the government's own estimates put that date well into the 2030s.

POLITICS

Yokohama Votes Today for a Mayor, With Continuity Under Yamanaka the Main Question After Seven Candidates' Final Appeals

More than 3.1 million people are eligible to vote; Atsumi Harasawa says she will not leave debts to the next generation, and the former mayor says he has given everything

By the Political Desk

Voters in Yokohama elect a mayor on Sunday after Takeharu Yamanaka, 54, resigned over power harassment allegations, and the main question in the campaign has been whether to continue his administration.

Seven candidates made their final appeals on Saturday. The city had 3,145,383 eligible voters as of October 3.

The main candidates

Atsumi Harasawa, 59, a lawyer backed by the local organisations of four ruling and opposition parties, has put strengthening the city's finances first. "We will not leave debts to our children's generation," she said.

Mr Yamanaka, running to regain the office he gave up, pointed to his five years as mayor. "I have worked myself to the bone," he said. "I will continue to support everyone's lives."

Kazuma Nakatani, 43, a former House of Representatives member supported by the Kanagawa chapter of the Constitutional Democratic Party, said city politics had stalled and called for "clean, fair and open politics."

The others

Atsushi Fukuyama, 37, a company president recommended by Sanseito; Fujikawa, 51, representative of a citizens' group; Riken Yamamoto, 81, the architect; and Yuka Asaga, 46, vice-chair of the Japanese Communist Party's Kanagawa prefectural committee, are also standing. All except Ms Asaga are running as independents.

When results come

Votes will be counted on Sunday night. The result was not known when this edition went to press.

The stakes

Yokohama, with about 3.7 million people, is Japan's largest city after Tokyo's 23 wards, and the result will be read as a test for the national parties ahead of next April's unified local elections.

POLITICS

No Record Kept of Yana's Questions to the Transport Ministry About Road Money for Towns Whose Mayors Opposed Him

The former farm minister had boasted of 'greatly cutting' road budgets for two Tochigi towns; the ministry says his inquiry to a senior official was minor, and an expert says it was anything but

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Whether former Agriculture Minister Kazuo Yana pressured the transport ministry over road budgets for two towns in his district has become difficult to verify, after the ministry said it kept no record of his inquiries.

Mr Yana resigned as farm minister on October 14 under pressure over his remarks.

The remarks

At a meeting of a Liberal Democratic Party branch in May, Mr Yana said he had "greatly cut" road budgets for the town of Nakagawa and the city of Nasukarasuyama in Tochigi Prefecture, whose mayors had not supported him in a House of Representatives election.

In fiscal 2026 the road-improvement part of a central government grant for infrastructure was sharply reduced for both municipalities.

The inquiry

According to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Mr Yana called Masayoshi Kuroda, then head of the ministry's secretariat, to his office in the Diet members' building in February and asked about the amounts allocated to the two municipalities' road projects.

The ministry says it made no record of the inquiry. In an internal review, Mr Kuroda said he had no "detailed notes."

The rule

Guidelines under the Public Records Management Act require ministries to create documents "except where a matter is minor." The ministry says the exception applied.

'Not minor'

Masahiro Usaki, professor emeritus at Dokkyo University and an expert on constitutional and information law, disagrees. When the head of the secretariat personally goes to a lawmaker's office to respond, he said, the matter cannot be called minor.

The political fallout

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi apologised in the upper house on Friday for the resignation and said she took her responsibility for the appointment seriously. Opposition parties want Mr Yana to answer questions in the Diet.

POLITICS

Fukuoka Assembly Sets Up a Special Inquiry Into Alleged Payments for the Speaker's Post After an All-Night Session

A motion for a committee with the power to compel testimony passed in the small hours of Saturday after a last-minute extension of the session and a rejected bid to defer it

By the Political Desk

The Fukuoka Prefectural Assembly voted in the early hours of Saturday to set up a special investigative committee into allegations that money changed hands over the posts of speaker and deputy speaker.

The committee, set up under Article 100 of the Local Autonomy Act, can summon witnesses and demand records, and those who refuse or give false testimony can face criminal penalties.

A long night

Friday was the last scheduled day of the regular session. A dispute over whether to vote on the motion that day repeatedly interrupted the plenary session, which began in the evening, and late at night the assembly extended the session by one day.

The assembly's steering committee then split evenly on a proposal to defer the motion for further deliberation, and its chairman cast the deciding vote in favour. But when the proposal reached the floor, it was rejected, and the motion to create the committee was then passed by a majority.

The accuser

Among the members who submitted the motion was Motoaki Yoshimatsu, who has made the allegations. Members who opposed an immediate vote said they wanted to examine the scope and period of the investigation more carefully.

What is alleged

Details of the alleged payments, including the amounts, the people involved and when they were made, have not been made public.

Next

The committee will decide its members and schedule. Such committees are known in Japan as hyakujo iinkai, after the article of the law that creates them, and are used for the most serious inquiries by local assemblies.

POLITICS

Saitama Assembly Closes at Dawn After a Day of Deadlock Over an LDP Leader's Heckle: 'That's Absurd, You Idiot'

Motions to discipline Takumi Tamura and to demand an apology from the member he heckled were both passed before 6 a.m.

By the Political Desk

The Saitama Prefectural Assembly finished the last day of its regular session shortly before 6 a.m. on Saturday, an unusual overnight finish caused by a dispute over a heckle by the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party's group.

During a special committee session on Wednesday, Takumi Tamura, 55, shouted "That's absurd, you idiot" at another member who was questioning a witness, according to prefectural officials.

The dispute

Arguments over how to discipline Mr Tamura, and the member he heckled, brought the assembly's business to a halt. Mr Tamura apologised at a meeting of the steering committee on Friday, but the other side wanted him to apologise on the floor of the assembly, and talks to settle the matter stalled.

A long day

The plenary session scheduled for 10 a.m. on Friday began around noon and was then suspended. It resumed at night, voted on the governor's bills and stalled again, reconvening in the early hours of Saturday.

Two motions

In the end two motions were passed by majority: one, from the LDP group itself, calling for disciplinary action against Mr Tamura, and another calling on the heckled member to apologise, on the grounds that the member's conduct had also been a problem. The assembly then closed its session.

Unusual

Prefectural officials said it was unusual for a session to end the following morning.

A pattern

Heckling has repeatedly caused controversy in Japanese assemblies, most notably in 2014, when sexist jeers at a woman member of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly drew international criticism.

POLITICS

A Month On, Ogawa's 18-Member Democratic Reform Group Struggles to Find Its Footing as Hopes of Reuniting the Old Democrats Fade

The group, formed by lawmakers from the Constitutional Democratic Party, sits with Komeito in the lower house; the DPFP's Tamaki says he is 'not considering at all' a reunion

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

The Democratic Reform Group, formed a month ago by 18 members of the House of Representatives who left the Constitutional Democratic Party, marked its first month on Saturday still searching for a role.

"We have become smaller, but we must get the party's activities on track," its leader, Junya Ogawa, told a news conference at the Diet on Friday.

A joint bloc

In the lower house the group forms a joint parliamentary group with Komeito, called Chudo, which together makes up the largest opposition bloc. On its own, however, the group is only the fifth-largest opposition party in the chamber, and it must take Komeito's views into account.

Reunion talk

Mr Ogawa has spoken of regathering the forces of the former Democratic Party of Japan, which governed from 2009 to 2012. On October 9 he said he wanted to "reawaken the original spirit of the time when we gathered in the Democratic Party rather than the LDP."

That would mean drawing in the Democratic Party for the People and the Constitutional Democratic Party, which both trace their roots to the old party. But DPFP leader Yuichiro Tamaki, whose party has 53 members in the two houses, said he was "not considering it at all."

Second thoughts

Within the group, Secretary-General Takeshi Shina said views should be exchanged inside the party before such statements were made. By Friday the

POLITICS

tone had softened, with the group saying it would "strengthen cooperation" with other parties rather than seek a merger.

The bigger picture

The opposition has been fragmented since the 2017 split of the Democratic Party, and repeated attempts to bring its pieces back together have foundered on differences over security policy, nuclear power and relations with the Communist Party.

POLITICS

Family and Friends Mark a Year Since the Death of Former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, 'a Man Who Accepted Everyone'

About 40 people gathered at a temple in Oita City for the first-anniversary rites for the Socialist leader, who died last October at 101

By the Political Desk

Relatives and political associates of Tomiichi Murayama gathered at Itokuji temple in Oita City on Saturday for a memorial service marking the first anniversary of the former prime minister's death.

About 40 people attended. Mr Murayama died last October at the age of 101.

'Like yesterday'

His second daughter, Yuri Nakahara, 70, said at the service that her father "accepted everything and everyone." Afterwards she said: "It feels like yesterday. I half expect him to come home saying 'I'm back' with his usual smile."

A mentor

Tadatomo Yoshida, 70, a member of the House of Councillors and former leader of the Social Democratic Party, called Mr Murayama "my political teacher" and "a man who loved peace and looked on people with warmth."

A career

Born in Oita City, Mr Murayama was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1972 for the former Oita 1st district. As chairman of the Japan Socialist Party, he became prime minister in 1994 at the head of a coalition with the Liberal Democratic Party and New Party Sakigake.

The statement

He is best remembered for the statement he issued in 1995 on the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, expressing "deep remorse" and a "heartfelt apology" for the suffering caused by Japan's colonial rule and aggression. Successive governments have said they uphold it, and Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the Diet on Friday that her Cabinet carried on the positions of previous cabinets.

The anniversary

The service fell in a week when the statement had again been raised in the Diet, a measure of how its words continue to shape Japan's approach to its wartime past.

POLITICS

Princess Aiko Hears Women's Views on Disaster Preparedness in Tottori and Finds Time for Detective Conan

On the first day of a three-day visit for Bosai Kokutai 2026, she listens for an hour and a half, taking notes, to firefighters and students who volunteered after the Noto earthquake

By the Society Desk

Princess Aiko, the daughter of the Emperor and Empress, began a three-day visit to Tottori Prefecture on Saturday to attend Bosai Kokutai 2026, a national event on disaster preparedness.

At Tottori airport she looked at an exhibition on Detective Conan, the manga by Gosho Aoyama, who comes from the prefecture, and told staff with a smile that she had seen this year's film.

A women's perspective

In Kurayoshi she attended a lecture and discussion on disaster preparedness from women's point of view, listening for about an hour and a half and taking notes. The speakers included a woman firefighter and university students who had volunteered in the area devastated by the Noto Peninsula earthquake.

They discussed how evacuation shelters can be run so that women feel safe. "It was very educational," the princess told one of the presenters.

Work and welfare

She also visited a welfare facility in Kurayoshi that supports people with disabilities in finding work.

A second year

It is the second year running that she has attended the event, which brings together national and local governments, companies and community groups to share knowledge about preparing for disasters.

Her public role

The princess, who works for the Japanese Red Cross Society, has taken on a growing number of official duties, and her interest in disaster relief has been a recurring theme of her visits.

POLITICS

Women Governors and Mayors Say Japan's Workplaces Still Need an 'Update' at a Tokyo Meeting on Women's Advancement

Hiroshima Governor Mika Yokota says women's advancement is no longer denied but systems lag behind; Yamagata's Mieko Yoshimura calls gender equality indispensable

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Women who lead local governments across Japan met in Tokyo on Saturday to discuss how to advance women's roles in society, at a gathering organised by a network of women mayors and governors.

Hiroshima Governor Mika Yokota said in a video message that women's advancement was "no longer denied, but workplaces and social systems still need a great deal of updating."

Equality

Yamagata Governor Mieko Yoshimura said in a message that "gender equality is indispensable to building a society in which people can use their individuality and abilities regardless of age or gender."

Networks

Makiko Saito, who became mayor of Hanyu in Saitama Prefecture this year, said that in her area men held most posts such as company executives and neighbourhood association heads, making it hard for women to build networks. Women who want to advance in their careers, she said, need to make connections actively.

The agenda

The meeting covered five themes, including women's working styles and their health.

The numbers

Women remain a small minority among Japan's heads of local government, though their numbers have been growing, and Sanae Takaichi became the country's first woman prime minister last year.

POLITICS

Japan Marks 160 Years Since the Shogunate Opened the Door to Foreign Travel, With Old Uniforms and a Passport Mascot at Haneda

The Foreign Ministry and Japan Airlines want more people to go abroad; the first travel document went to an acrobat bound for the 1867 Paris Exposition

By the Society Desk

The Foreign Ministry and Japan Airlines held an event at Haneda Airport on Saturday to mark 160 years since the Edo shogunate lifted its ban on overseas travel and began issuing documents that led to today's passport.

Cabin attendants in uniforms from about 70 years ago and the ministry's passport mascot, Pasupo-kun, handed out souvenirs to passengers on domestic flights.

Encouraging travel

The organisers hope to encourage more Japanese to travel abroad. A JAL representative recommended Taiwan and Seoul for a first trip overseas, "where you can easily enjoy the food."

The first passport

The first overseas travel document, the forerunner of the passport, is said to have been issued in 1867 to Namigoro Sumidagawa, an acrobat travelling to the Paris Exposition.

A strong passport, little used

Japan's passport is regularly ranked among the most powerful in the world for the number of countries it opens without a visa, but a relatively small share of Japanese hold one, and outbound travel has been slow to recover since the pandemic.

The weak yen

The weak yen, which has made trips abroad more expensive, has also kept many travellers at home, while record numbers of foreign tourists have come to Japan.

POLITICS

Politics in Brief

By the Political Desk

YOKOHAMA: Votes in the mayoral election are counted on Sunday night; the result was not known when this edition went to press.

FUKUSHIMA: Campaigning continues for the governor's election next Sunday, October 25.

TAX CUT: The bills to cut the consumption tax on food go before the House of Representatives on Tuesday.

KEEN SWORD: The Japan-U.S. exercise begins on Monday and runs through October 29.

YASUKUNI: The shrine's autumn festival ends on Monday.

OKINAWA: Governor Genta Koja said he wanted the Henoko construction schedule to be kept.

DPFP: Leader Yuichiro Tamaki ruled out a reunion with the former Democrats, saying he was "not considering it at all."

SAITAMA: The prefectural assembly passed a motion calling for disciplinary action against LDP group leader Takumi Tamura over a heckle.

FUKUOKA: The prefectural assembly's special inquiry into alleged payments for the speaker's post will decide its members and schedule.

DEFENCE: The Air Self-Defense Force is analysing what appears to be the fuselage of the Global Hawk that crashed off Tottori.

IMPERIAL FAMILY: Princess Aiko continues her visit to Tottori on Sunday and returns to Tokyo on Monday.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump Uses a Waiver to Shelve a Law Imposing Tariffs of Up to 100 Per Cent on Buyers of Russian Energy, and Zelensky Says It Only Helps Putin

The law championed by the late Senator Lindsey Graham was signed on September 18 and required action within 30 days; the president says suspending it is 'in the national interest for now' as fuel prices weigh on the midterms

By Laura Bennett | North America Correspondent

President Donald Trump has decided not to implement a sanctions law designed to choke off Russia's oil revenue by imposing tariffs on countries that buy its energy, using a waiver the law gives the president.

In an executive order issued on Friday, Mr Trump said that not implementing the law was "in the national interest for now."

The law

The law allows tariffs of up to 100 per cent on countries that buy Russian energy, with the aim of cutting off the money that finances Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It was championed by Senator Lindsey Graham, the Republican foreign policy hawk who died in July at 71, and Mr Trump signed it on September 18. It required implementation within 30 days but also gave the president the power to grant exemptions.

Zelensky's dismay

President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine said on Saturday that he expected the easing of sanctions to continue. "Unfortunately, the lifting of sanctions will go on," he told reporters.

Writing on X, he said the administration had "completely ignored" the sanctions law, and that easing it "only gives President Putin economic gains and lets him continue his attacks." Without naming Mr Trump, he said it was important that "everyone in the United States recognises what is happening now."

Fuel prices

Mr Trump has also eased sanctions on Russian diesel. He is believed to be trying to bring down fuel prices before the midterm elections on November 3, in which his Republican Party is on the defensive. Oil prices have climbed this autumn as attacks around the Strait of Hormuz and on Saudi Arabia have disrupted supplies.

On the ground

On Friday, Russia carried out what Ukraine described as one of its heaviest strikes on the country's power system, hitting more than 15 generating and transmission facilities. Mr Zelensky condemned the attack.

The same day, President Vladimir Putin said his forces had captured Dobropillia, a town in the Donetsk region that has been the scene of some of the fiercest fighting, and that the capture "opened the way" to taking the whole region. Ukraine's General Staff said only that Russian forces had "attempted to advance" on the town.

Starlink

Mr Trump also denied on Friday that his administration had restricted Ukraine's military use of Starlink, the satellite network run by Elon Musk's SpaceX, after Reuters reported that the government had ordered a restriction. "We did not do that," he said. "I checked this morning, and I don't think it's restricted. It's working." Ukraine says the network's speed has not fully recovered.

INTERNATIONAL

550,000 March Across France Over Schools and Prices as Rioters Burn Limoges City Hall, Six Months Before a Vote in Which Le Pen Leads

About 400 people were detained; a poll puts the far-right leader at 35 per cent, far ahead of a divided field, raising the prospect of the first far-right president

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

About 550,000 people took part in protests across France on Saturday calling for better conditions in schools and action on rising prices, Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said, and in several places the demonstrations turned violent.

Shops were attacked and looted and vehicles set on fire. In Limoges, in central France, rioters set fire to the city hall, which was almost completely destroyed.

Paris

At the Place de la Republique in Paris, masked rioters threw stones at police, who responded with tear gas and water cannon. Cars were set alight in the streets, and the square was covered for a long time in black smoke. Local media reported attacks on shops across the capital.

Many people were injured in clashes between demonstrators and riot police. Mr Nunez said about 400 people had been detained nationwide.

Students

High school students have held a series of protests demanding better conditions in schools, and anger over the cost of living has added to the discontent.

The election

The unrest comes six months before France's presidential election next April, in which the far right has a realistic chance of winning the presidency for the first time.

In a poll published on Thursday by the business newspaper Les Echos, Marine Le Pen of the National Rally had 35 per cent support, far ahead of Jean-Luc Melenchon of France Unbowed on 14 per cent, Raphael Glucksmann, a centre-left member of the European Parliament, on 13 per cent, and Edouard Philippe, the centre-right former prime minister, on 12 per cent. Gabriel Attal, another former prime minister, has also declared his candidacy.

Her programme

Ms Le Pen advocates tighter immigration controls, spending cuts and a sharp reduction in France's contributions to the EU budget, and proposes halting financial aid to Ukraine six months after taking office.

Europe watches

A victory for Ms Le Pen would mark a sharp break with the pro-European course of President Emmanuel Macron and could affect the unity of the EU and its support for Ukraine. The opposition to the far right is split among several candidates.

INTERNATIONAL



The European Parliament in session. Its members are due to vote on November 23 on the European Commission's proposal to revise the rules that would end sales of new combustion-engine cars from 2035, after France and Germany agreed a joint position that would favour cars made in Europe. (File photo: WPM Productions)

INTERNATIONAL

France and Germany Agree a 'Made in Europe' Rule for Cars That Would Leave Japanese-Built Models Out of EU Preferences

The deal would soften the 2035 ban on new combustion-engine cars in return for requiring 70 per cent of components to be made in Europe; Britain, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland could qualify, but vehicles made in Japan would not

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

France and Germany have agreed on a joint position for Europe's car industry that would ease the European Union's planned ban on new combustion-engine cars from 2035 while tying public support to a strict "Made in Europe" standard, under which cars built in Japan and other countries outside Europe would not qualify.

The two governments reached the deal on Friday on the sidelines of a meeting of EU leaders in Brussels. Under it, carmakers would have to cut the average carbon dioxide emissions of their new cars by 90 per cent by 2035, rather than the 100 per cent in the current rules, and would not have to offset the remaining 10 per cent.

The European preference

In return, at least 70 per cent of a car's components, excluding the battery, would have to be produced in Europe, and 10 per cent of the battery's content would have to come from European sources, for a vehicle to benefit from preferences in public contracts and public financial schemes.

The preference is linked to the Industrial Accelerator Act proposed by the European Commission in March. Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Britain would be able to take part if they sign agreements guaranteeing European firms fair access to their own public contracts and funding.

Japan outside

Vehicles produced in Japan would not be covered, Kyodo News reported. Japanese manufacturers sell large numbers of Japan-built cars in Europe, and Japanese newspapers reported on Sunday that their sales there could fall significantly if public buyers and subsidy schemes are steered towards locally made models.

Several Japanese makers also build cars in Europe, including in Britain, and how those plants are treated will depend on the final rules and on where their parts are made.

Paris and Berlin

The two countries started from different places. France has championed a strict preference limited to the EU's 27 members; Germany has pressed for a broader approach including trusted partners and for more flexibility to keep selling combustion engines and hybrids after 2035.

"This creates a European preference to ensure that our factories do not become mere assembly plants," an official at the Elysee Palace said. A joint statement said: "Our shared ambition is clear: to successfully transform our automotive industry."

Next steps

The deal is a joint national position, not law. Members of the European Parliament are due to vote on the Commission's proposal to revise the 2035 rules in a plenary session in Strasbourg on November 23, after which the Parliament and member states must agree on the final text.

The wider fight

The plan reflects Europe's anxiety about its car industry, squeezed by high costs, the expense of the shift to electric vehicles and competition from Chinese manufacturers. Its outcome will be watched closely by Japan's automakers, for which Europe is a major market.

Tariffs

Net customs revenue fell 11.1 per cent, largely because refunds increased after a court ruled against the administration's "reciprocal" tariffs. The tariffs had been one of the administration's main new sources of revenue.

Why it matters to Japan

Japan is the largest foreign holder of American government bonds, and the size of the deficit affects the supply of Treasury securities, long-term interest rates and the dollar, and through them the yen.

Pressure on rates

Large deficits require the government to sell more bonds, which can push up long-term yields. The Federal Reserve, which raised rates in September, meets again on October 27 and 28.

Politics

The figures arrive weeks before the midterm elections on November 3, in which the government's handling of prices and spending is a central issue.

The long view

The deficit has exceeded \$1 trillion every year since the pandemic, and independent forecasters have warned that rising interest costs will make it harder to bring down without changes to taxes or spending.

INTERNATIONAL

'No Kings' Rallies Across America Turn From Protest to Turnout, Urging Voters to Cast Ballots Early Before the Midterms

Hundreds of events, billed as nonpartisan, were held from the Lincoln Memorial to Atlanta and Manhattan; the administration has sued California over mail ballots it says may come from noncitizens

By Laura Bennett | North America Correspondent

Supporters of the "No Kings" movement held rallies across the United States on Saturday, this time urging people to vote early in the midterm elections on November 3 rather than simply protesting against President Donald Trump.

Hundreds of events were planned in cities and towns, billed as nonpartisan, building on nearly two years of No Kings marches against Mr Trump's presidency.

The power to vote

At the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, a band played for what appeared to be a few hundred people, carrying signs reading "VOTE EARLY" and "HANDS OFF MY VOTE!" In Atlanta, City Councilman Michael Julian Bond told the crowd: "The Constitution gives you one power, right? That is the power to vote."

The movement

The No Kings protests began on June 14, 2025, the day of the U.S. Army's 250th anniversary parade and Mr Trump's 79th birthday, when organisers said more than 5 million people took part. A second day of protests in October 2025 drew millions more, and organisers said a third, in March this year, was the largest single day of protest in American history.

Mr Trump has dismissed the protests, saying he is not a king.

Ballots

The rallies came amid a fight over voting. On Thursday the administration sued election officials in California, asking a judge to stop the state from counting mail-in ballots from people the federal government has flagged as likely noncitizens until their status is confirmed. On Friday the Justice Department warned local officials who process such ballots that they could face criminal investigation.

Three Democratic senators wrote to Attorney General Todd Blanche asking the department to commit not to seize ballots or election materials before the results are certified.

A royal contrast

King Charles III made a state visit to the United States in April, receiving a warm welcome in Washington and addressing Congress. Today's editorial cartoon takes up the contrast.

INTERNATIONAL

North Korea Says It Tested a New 'Ultra-High-Speed' Torpedo That Uses Artificial Intelligence to Find and Home In on Targets

The test on Thursday followed the launch of a submarine-launched strategic cruise missile into the Sea of Japan a day earlier; the level of the North's AI technology is largely unknown

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

North Korea said on Saturday that it had tested a new "ultra-high-speed" torpedo that uses artificial intelligence to search for and guide itself to targets, the latest step in a push to strengthen its navy.

The Korean Central News Agency said the test was carried out on Thursday by the National Defence Science Academy and the Missile General Bureau, and that it confirmed the results of technical improvements.

AI claims

The agency said AI technology had been built into the torpedo's target search and guidance functions. The claim could not be verified independently.

North Korea is reported to be introducing AI into its missiles and drones, but the level of its technology is largely unknown. The report gave no figure for the torpedo's speed, and did not say where the test took place or whether Kim Jong Un attended.

A naval push

On Wednesday, the North test-fired a submarine-launched strategic cruise missile in the Sea of Japan.

It had also planned to complete a third 5,000-ton destroyer in time for the anniversary of the founding

of the Workers' Party of Korea on October 10. Completion has not been confirmed.

Japan's concern

Japan regards North Korea's missile and naval programmes as a direct threat, and its advances in submarine-launched weapons, which are harder to detect before launch, are a particular worry for the Self-Defense Forces.

The context

The tests come as Japan and the United States prepare for their Keen Sword exercise from Monday, and as the North deepens military cooperation with Russia.

INTERNATIONAL

Pope Leo XIV Leaves Hospital After Surgery for Early Lung Cancer and Is Expected to Lead the Sunday Prayer

A routine examination found a nodule in his right lung, and surgeons removed the lower part of it; the Vatican says his recovery is going well

By the International Desk

Pope Leo XIV left a hospital in Rome on Saturday after surgery for lung cancer, and the Vatican said his recovery was going well.

The pope, 71, was admitted on Tuesday. A routine examination had found an early-stage nodule in his lung, which was confirmed as adenocarcinoma, a common form of lung cancer, in the lower part of the right lung.

The operation

Surgeons removed the lower part of the right lung in a thoracoscopic operation, a minimally invasive procedure performed through small incisions. The Vatican had said he was likely to remain in hospital for about a week after the operation.

Back to work

He plans to lead the traditional Sunday prayer on Sunday.

A call to Moscow

While in hospital, the pope telephoned President Vladimir Putin of Russia and asked for a ceasefire so that humanitarian aid could reach Oleshky, an occupied town in Ukraine's Kherson region.

The first American pope

Leo XIV, born Robert Francis Prevost in Chicago, was elected in May 2025 as the first pope from the United States, succeeding Francis. He has made peace in Ukraine and the Middle East a recurring theme of his pontificate.

Outlook

Lung adenocarcinoma found at an early stage, as the pope's was, can often be treated successfully with surgery.

INTERNATIONAL

Gryns span Leads the Race to Succeed Guterres for a Fourth Straight Poll, but Two Permanent Members of the Security Council Stand in Her Way

In the sixth straw poll, the UNCTAD chief had nine votes of encouragement and five of discouragement; Grossi of the IAEA and Guyana's Rodrigues-Birkett tied for second

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The race to choose the next secretary-general of the United Nations has narrowed to three front-runners, but each faces opposition from permanent members of the Security Council, according to the results of an informal poll held on Friday.

In the sixth straw poll among the council's 15 members, Rebeca Gryns span of Costa Rica, secretary-general of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, came first for the fourth time in a row, with nine votes encouraging her candidacy and five discouraging it, including two from permanent members.

Joint second

Rafael Grossi of Argentina, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Guyana's ambassador to the UN, tied for second with eight votes of encouragement and six of discouragement each.

Permanent members cast two votes of discouragement against each of the top three candidates. Which countries cast them is not disclosed.

INTERNATIONAL

Coloured ballots

It was the first poll in this race in which permanent and non-permanent members used ballots of different colours, allowing candidates to see whether their opposition came from countries with a veto.

The rules

To be recommended to the General Assembly, a candidate needs at least nine votes on the council and no veto from any of the five permanent members: the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia.

"It is not easy to get those two votes withdrawn," a diplomatic source said.

Seven candidates

Seven candidates were in the poll to succeed Antonio Guterres, whose second term ends at the end of this year. Many members have called for the first woman to lead the organisation in its history.

Next

Further polls are expected as the council tries to agree on a single name before the end of the year.

INTERNATIONAL

Masked Settlers With Clubs Attack a Delegation of European Diplomats in the West Bank, and Netanyahu Calls Violence Against Them 'Unacceptable'

Officials from Poland, Belgium and France were visiting the Christian village of Taibeh during the olive harvest; the Israeli leader also criticised them for entering the area without coordinating with the army

By the International Desk

Jewish settlers attacked a delegation of European officials visiting a village in the occupied West Bank on Friday, breaking the windows of their vehicles and knocking one member to the ground, according to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz.

The delegation, from Poland, Belgium and France, was visiting the Christian village of Taibeh when several masked men carrying clubs attacked them. Some people were injured.

Netanyahu's response

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wrote on X that violence against diplomats was "unacceptable," but that "supporting evidence is needed."

He also criticised the diplomats for entering an area where clashes had taken place without coordinating in advance with the Israeli military.

The olive harvest

The attack came during the olive harvest, a season in which settler violence against Palestinians picking olives has intensified. Activists supporting Palestinian residents and journalists have also been attacked.

Reaction

Condemnation of Israel from the delegation's governments and others is expected to follow.

Background

More than 500,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank, in settlements most of the world considers illegal under international law, and violence between settlers and Palestinians has risen sharply in recent years.

Japan's position

Japan has repeatedly called on Israel to stop settlement activity and to prevent settler violence.

INTERNATIONAL

Houthi Attacks on Saudi Arabia Force the Postponement of a Gulf-EU Summit and the Cancellation of a Cycling World Championships

Riyadh's international airport has been hit, and the Future Investment Initiative may go partly online

By the International Desk

Attacks on Saudi Arabia by the Houthis, the Iran-backed armed group in Yemen, have forced the postponement or cancellation of a series of international events in the kingdom.

The Gulf Cooperation Council, made up of six Gulf states, said on Thursday that it had postponed a summit with the European Union that was to be held in Riyadh on October 24. Its secretary-general, Jasem Albudaiwi, said the GCC was giving priority to the safety of the delegations and pointed to disruption to air travel.

The airport

Riyadh's international airport has been attacked, and people have been killed. The Houthis claimed responsibility for an attack on the airport earlier this month.

Events affected

The Future Investment Initiative, the investment conference held in Riyadh later this month, may be held partly online, with some participants reconsidering their travel plans, according to Reuters. An esports competition organised with an international football body, due to begin on Friday, was also postponed.

Cycling

The International Cycling Union cancelled its Urban Cycling World Championships, scheduled for November 3 to 7 in Riyadh, citing the situation in the country. The BMX freestyle park event was also a qualifier for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics; the union said it would announce its plans later.

Oil

The attacks on Saudi Arabia, together with Iran's attacks around the Strait of Hormuz, have pushed up oil prices. New York crude closed above \$101 a barrel on Friday, its highest in about a month.

Japan

Saudi Arabia is one of Japan's largest suppliers of crude oil, and the government has been seeking routes that avoid the Strait of Hormuz.

INTERNATIONAL

Pentagon Inquiry Into a Strike on an Iranian Elementary School Points to Outdated Data and Over-Reliance on AI, but May Be Held Until After the Midterms

Bloomberg reports that the findings on the school in Minab are almost complete; advisers to Defense Secretary Hegseth are said to have told others the release will wait until after November

By Laura Bennett | North America Correspondent

The Pentagon plans to hold back the findings of an investigation into a suspected mistaken American strike on an elementary school in southern Iran until after the midterm elections in November, Bloomberg News has reported.

The investigation into the destruction of the school in Minab found that the mistake was partly caused by the use of outdated data and by excessive reliance on artificial intelligence, which was used to support tasks such as selecting targets, according to the report.

Almost finished

The report is said to be almost complete. Advisers to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth told others about the decision to withhold it, Bloomberg said.

The politics

The delay may be intended to limit any effect on the elections. Public frustration has been growing over the prolonged military operation against Iran and over rising prices, and the Republican Party is reported to be trailing.

AI in war

The case has fed a wider debate about the use of artificial intelligence in military targeting, in which software sifts large amounts of data to suggest targets that humans then approve.

The war

The United States and Israel attacked Iran this year, and the conflict has disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and pushed up oil prices around the world.

INTERNATIONAL

Spending on AI-Made Campaign Ads Tops \$137 Million in America's Midterms, With Fake Videos Used to Attack Opponents

Researchers at Wesleyan University found that more than 80 per cent of the ads came from Republican campaigns and allied groups, and only about 30 per cent disclosed that AI had been used

By Laura Bennett | North America Correspondent

Candidates and political groups in the United States have spent more than \$137 million, or about 21.6 billion yen, on campaign advertisements made with artificial intelligence so far this year, according to research by Wesleyan University reported by The New York Times.

Experts say the midterm elections on November 3 are

the first in which the use of AI has become prominent.

Fakes

Many of the advertisements used fabricated video to attack opponents. More than 80 per cent of the total came from the governing Republican Party's campaigns and affiliated groups.

Little disclosure

Only about 30 per cent of the advertisements indicated that AI had been used, for example through captions on the screen, and the ads identified so far are likely to be only the tip of the iceberg, the researchers said.

The worry

Experts are concerned about how to stop the spread of disinformation that is becoming ever more sophisticated and harder to detect.

The rules

There is no comprehensive federal law in the United States governing the use of AI in political advertising, though a number of states have passed rules requiring disclosure.

Japan

Japan has also seen AI-generated fake videos of politicians circulate online.

INTERNATIONAL

Indonesia Moves Towards Its First Nuclear Power Plant, a Pair of Small Floating Reactors From Russia's Rosatom

The 200,000-kilowatt plant would supply Halmahera Island and could start as early as five years after a supply contract takes effect; Rosatom sees it as a first step towards a large plant on land

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Russia's state nuclear corporation, Rosatom, said on Friday that it had agreed with an Indonesian power company on a project for two small floating nuclear reactors, which would be Indonesia's first nuclear power plant.

The reactors, mounted on a vessel on the water, would have a combined capacity of 200,000 kilowatts and would supply electricity to Halmahera Island in North Maluku province.

Timing

Rosatom said operations could begin "as early as five years after the supply contract takes effect." The Indonesian company was not named.

A first step

Rosatom regards the small reactors as a first step towards building a large nuclear plant on land in Indonesia.

Away from coal

Indonesia, which relies heavily on coal for electricity, is looking to nuclear power to diversify its energy supply, and it has been deepening energy cooperation with Russia.

Halmahera

Halmahera has become a centre of Indonesia's nickel industry, whose smelters, which supply the battery industry, consume large amounts of electricity.

Floating reactors

Russia operates the world's only floating nuclear power plant, the Akademik Lomonosov, which has supplied electricity to a remote port in the Russian Arctic since 2019.

Japan's interest

Japanese companies are major investors in Indonesia's energy sector, and Japan has been promoting its own cooperation on clean energy in Southeast Asia.

INTERNATIONAL

Flavio Bolsonaro Edges Ahead of Lula Before Brazil's Runoff, Buoyed by His Party's Gains in Congress

A poll gives the pro-American senator 47 per cent to the 80-year-old president's 45; Lula promises debt relief for small businesses, and his rival visits his father, under house arrest for a coup plot

By the International Desk

Flavio Bolsonaro, the pro-American right-wing senator, holds a narrow lead over President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva before the runoff in Brazil's presidential election on October 25.

A poll published on Thursday put Mr Bolsonaro, 45, at 47 per cent and Lula, 80, at 45 per cent. Mr

Bolsonaro finished first in the first round.

Gains in Congress

In congressional elections held on October 4, Mr Bolsonaro's Liberal Party made major gains, rising from 15 to 28 of the Senate's 81 seats and from 98 to 121 of the 513 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Lula's Workers' Party holds nine Senate seats and made only a slight gain in the lower house.

The campaigns

Lula, trying to come back, has sharpened his attacks on his opponent. On Tuesday he announced support for small business owners, including debt relief and payments of up to 5,000 reais, about 150,000 yen.

Mr Bolsonaro has courted the candidates who were eliminated in the first round. He also visited his father, former President Jair Bolsonaro, who is under house arrest after being convicted of crimes including plotting a coup, with permission from a court.

Meta

The Superior Electoral Court has ordered Meta to treat the two candidates equally after Lula accused the company of favouring his opponent.

Stakes

Brazil is Latin America's largest economy and home to the largest community of people of Japanese descent outside Japan, about 2 million people.

INTERNATIONAL

In a Bomb Shelter in Kyiv, Ukrainian Students Speak Japanese in Public Again for the First Time in Seven Years

Eleven university students from Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv and Odesa took part; the winner, who fled Kherson at 16, says she believes she will one day be able to say 'I'm home'

By the International Desk

A Japanese speech contest for Ukrainian university students was held in Kyiv on Friday for the first time in seven years, in an underground shelter at Kyiv National University chosen for safety.

The last contest was held in 2019. It was suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic and then Russia's invasion.

The contestants

Eleven students took part, from Kyiv, Kharkiv in the east, Lviv in the west and Odesa in the south.

The winner

First place went to Anastasia Krivonos, 20, a fourth-year student at Kyiv National Linguistic University.

At 16 she fled abroad from her family home in the Kherson region in southern Ukraine. In her speech she said she had never felt settled anywhere since, and that she could not agree with the Japanese proverb sumeba miyako, which holds that wherever you live becomes home.

'I'm home'

She said she believed that after the war "the day will come when I can say tadaima," the word Japanese use on returning home.

Ties

Japan has been one of Ukraine's largest providers of non-military aid, and interest in the Japanese language has persisted in Ukraine's universities despite the war.

INTERNATIONAL

World in Brief

By the International Desk

UNITED STATES: In Bend, Oregon, where a gunman killed three children and a teacher at an elementary school on Thursday, police said the suspect, a 16-year-old former pupil, was shot dead by a parent who chased him into the building. President Trump called the father "a great hero."

IMF: The chair's statement after the International Monetary and Financial Committee met in Bangkok on Saturday avoided the term "artificial intelligence," using "advanced intelligence" instead, after the Trump administration pushed to rename AI "superintelligence."

UKRAINE: Russia says it has captured Dobropillia in the Donetsk region, a key stronghold on supply routes to Sloviansk and Kramatorsk; Ukraine has not confirmed its loss.

UNITED STATES: The Pentagon plans to withhold until after the midterms its report on a strike on an

INTERNATIONAL

elementary school in Minab, Iran, Bloomberg reported.

SOUTH KOREA: A film about the 1974 shooting death of the wife of President Park Chung-hee has caused controversy, with conservatives accusing it of distorting history.

VATICAN: Pope Leo XIV is due to lead Sunday's prayer after leaving hospital on Saturday.

FRANCE: Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said about 400 people were detained after Saturday's protests.

INDONESIA: Rosatom said it had agreed a project for two small floating nuclear reactors to supply Halmahera Island.

BRAZIL: The presidential runoff between Lula and Flavio Bolsonaro is next Sunday.

WEST BANK: Masked settlers attacked a delegation of Polish, Belgian and French officials in the village of Taibeh.

ECONOMY

Markets at a Glance

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

NIKKEI 225 (FRIDAY CLOSE): 65,324.29, up 898.34, its first gain in seven sessions.

TOPIX: 4,066.00, up 66.66.

YOMIURI 333: 52,620.17, up 1.51 per cent, a larger rise than the Nikkei's.

VOLUME: About 2.38 billion shares, worth about 7.66 trillion yen.

DOW JONES (FRIDAY): 52,002.41, down 175.28, on worries about AI-related technology stocks.

NEW YORK CRUDE (FRIDAY): \$101.41 a barrel, up \$3.44, a seventh straight gain and the highest close in about a month.

BRENT: Briefly in the \$110s, its highest in about five months.

YEN: About 158 to the dollar in New York.

GASOLINE: A national average of 170.10 yen a litre for regular in this week's survey, held near 170 yen by a subsidy of 43 yen a litre.

NEXT WEEK: The Federal Reserve meets on October 27 and 28, and the Bank of Japan on October 29 and 30.

BOJ: Governor Kazuo Ueda said on Friday that the bank would keep raising rates because financial conditions remain accommodative.

ECONOMY

Nikkei Ends the Week Back Above 65,000 After Friday's Rebound, but Oil Above \$100 and a Weak Yen Cloud the Outlook

Buyers returned to AI and chip shares on Friday after a six-day slide; New York crude closed at a one-month high as attacks in the Gulf and on Russian refineries stoked fears for supply

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

Tokyo stocks ended a turbulent week on a firmer note, with the Nikkei Stock Average jumping 898.34 points, or about 1.4 per cent, on Friday to close at 65,324.29, its first gain in seven trading sessions.

At one point the index was up nearly 1,300 points. Buyers returned to shares related to artificial intelligence and semiconductors, which had led the market lower earlier in the week, and the broader Topix rose 66.66 points to 4,066.00.

Yomiuri 333

The Yomiuri Stock Index, known as the Yomiuri 333, which weights its 333 constituents equally, rose 1.51 per cent to 52,620.17, a larger gain than the Nikkei's, suggesting the recovery spread beyond the handful of heavyweights that dominate the price-weighted Nikkei.

Trading volume was about 2.38 billion shares, worth about 7.66 trillion yen.

Wall Street

In New York, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 175.28 points on Friday to 52,002.41, as worries about AI spending weighed on technology shares.

Oil above \$100

The bigger concern for Japan is oil. New York crude for November delivery rose \$3.44 to close at \$101.41 a barrel on Friday, its seventh straight gain and its highest close since mid-September. Brent, the international benchmark, briefly traded in the \$110s, its highest in about five months, according to Bloomberg.

Iran has been stepping up attacks around the Strait of Hormuz, the Houthis in Yemen have attacked Saudi Arabia, and a large Ukrainian attack on Russian refineries added to fears that supplies will tighten. Traders bought ahead of the weekend in expectation of prolonged disruption.

The yen

The yen traded around 158 to the dollar in New York. A weak yen raises the cost of imported energy for Japan, adding to pressure on households already facing higher prices.

The week ahead

The Federal Reserve meets on October 27 and 28 and the Bank of Japan on October 29 and 30. Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda said on Friday that the bank would continue to raise its policy rate, now 1.25 per cent, because financial conditions remain accommodative.

Earnings

Japanese companies begin reporting results for the six months to September later this month, and investors will be watching for the effect of oil prices, the weak yen and American tariffs on profits.

ECONOMY

This Year's Rice Crop Forecast at 7.41 Million Tons, the Second-Largest in 30 Years, Pointing to a Surplus of Up to 480,000 Tons

The farm ministry's forecast exceeds demand despite September's long rains; private stocks could reach 2.7 million tons next summer, and the government is under pressure to buy back more of the rice it released from its stockpile

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Japan's rice harvest this year is on course to exceed demand by a wide margin, raising the prospect of a surplus after two years of shortages and soaring prices, according to the agriculture ministry's latest forecast.

The ministry said on Tuesday that the harvest of rice for eating was expected to reach 7,406,000 tons, based on conditions as of September 25. That is 62,000 tons less than last year's crop but the second-largest in 30 years, after last year's.

More than enough

The ministry's estimate of demand is between 6.93 million and 7.11 million tons, so supply would exceed it by 300,000 to 480,000 tons.

The crop index, which compares yields with the average of recent years, stands at 102. Long hours of sunshine after planting produced a large number of grains, which outweighed the effects of long rains in September.

Not yet counted

Because of the rains, sample cutting had been completed in only about 60 per cent of the 8,000 fields surveyed. The forecast also does not yet reflect damage from this year's earthquake in Kumamoto or from heavy rain in August in areas including Chiba Prefecture. The ministry will issue an updated forecast, as of October 25, in mid-November.

The stockpile

The government released large amounts of rice from its emergency stockpile during the shortage. In September it decided to buy back 210,000 tons, and how much more it will buy back is now a central question.

Private inventories at the end of June next year are projected at 2.52 million to 2.7 million tons, well above the 1.8 million to 2 million tons considered appropriate. The JA agricultural cooperatives have urged the government to rebuild the stockpile quickly towards 1 million tons. The ministry says it will "carefully assess supply and demand" before deciding on further purchases.

Prices

Wholesale prices of this year's rice have already fallen sharply. The average price in September was 42 per cent lower than a year earlier, and supermarket prices have dropped back into the 2,000-yen range for a five-kilogram bag.

A policy in flux

The planted area this year was 1.36 million hectares, down 7,000 hectares from last year. The government, which ended its long-running production adjustment policy in 2018, has been debating how to steer output so that farmers are protected from a collapse in prices

without returning consumers to the shortages of 2024 and 2025.

The harvest is under way across the country, with straw stacked to dry in the fields, as in the photograph on the front page.

ECONOMY

Japan's Cruise Market Enters a Growth Phase as New Ships Arrive and the Government Aims for a Million Japanese Passengers by 2030

Only 226,000 Japanese took a cruise in 2024, against 356,000 before the pandemic; the government is supporting port development and wants more foreign passengers on Japan-based voyages

By the Business Desk

Japan's cruise industry, long a niche, is entering a growth phase, with new ships joining the fleet and the government setting targets to bring cruising into the mainstream, the Asahi Shimbun reported on Sunday.

The transport ministry aims to raise the number of Japanese who take cruises to 1 million a year by 2030. In 2024 the figure was 226,000, below the 356,000 of 2019, before the pandemic.

The targets

The ministry set the goal in 2025 after a panel of experts examined the market. Of the 1 million, about 70 per cent are expected to sail on Japanese ships and 30 per cent on foreign ones, and foreign passengers should make up at least 10 per cent of those on cruises starting and ending in Japan.

A small share

Cruising accounts for about 0.03 per cent of travel by Japanese, compared with 0.59 per cent in the United States, according to the ministry's panel, which sees room for growth.

New ships

Japanese shipping companies have invested in new vessels. Nippon Yusen's Asuka III entered service in 2025, and Mitsui O.S.K. Lines began operating the Mitsui Ocean Fuji in late 2024.

Ports

The government is supporting the development of ports to receive cruise ships, many of which also bring foreign tourists to regional cities that see few other international visitors.

Challenges

Cruising in Japan has long been associated with older and wealthier travellers, and widening its appeal is central to reaching the government's target.

Overtourism

Large ships calling at small ports can also strain local infrastructure, a concern as the number of visitors to Japan reaches records.

ECONOMY

Ministers Line Up to Say the Era of Reflation Is Over, but Markets Doubt It as the Yen Hovers Near 158

Takaichi, Katayama and Kiuchi have each distanced the government from Abenomics-style stimulus, apparently to answer American concerns about the weak yen; investors are waiting for the next budget

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Senior members of the government have been taking turns to say that Japan has moved on from reflation, the mix of monetary easing and fiscal expansion that defined the economic policies of the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, in an apparent effort to ease American concerns that such policies are behind the weak yen.

Markets are not convinced, and are watching the budget for fiscal 2027, which will be compiled towards the end of the year.

Who said what

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the Diet this month that "this is not a phase that requires reflation policy," and that the government would "respect the Bank of Japan's autonomy to the utmost."

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama stressed on September 29 that the prime minister "is not a reflationist." Minoru Kiuchi, the minister for economic and fiscal policy, said on September 25 that with prices and interest rates rising, the phase of reflation "in the Abenomics sense" had ended.

The market's view

Many in the market believe that reflation in a broader sense continues. They point out that the Bank of Japan has raised rates more slowly than the Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank, and that the government's fiscal management remains expansionary.

That view is one reason for the weakness of the yen and the rise in long-term interest rates. The yield on the 10-year government bond has risen to around 2.9 per cent.

The tax cut

The cut in the consumption tax on food and the prospect of higher defence spending are among the reasons investors question the government's fiscal discipline.

Abenomics

The policies of the second Abe administration from 2012 aimed to end deflation through bold monetary easing, flexible fiscal policy and structural reform. Prices have since risen above the Bank of Japan's 2 per cent target for several years, which ministers say has changed the task.

Next

The Bank of Japan's policy meeting on October 29 and 30 will be the next test of whether words and actions match.

ECONOMY

Government Moves to Unify Subsidies for Games and Anime Under a New Command Centre for Overseas Expansion

The plan, modelled on South Korea's content agency, aims to lift overseas sales of Japanese content from 6.1 trillion yen to 20 trillion yen by 2033

By the Business Desk

The government plans to bring together subsidies for games, anime and other content industries that are now spread across ministries, and to set up a corporation to act as a command centre for their overseas expansion, according to press reports on Sunday.

The idea of a central support organisation was first reported by the Yomiuri Shimbun in June, which said it would be modelled on South Korea's Korea Creative Content Agency, known as KOCCA.

The goal

Overseas sales of Japanese content were 6.1 trillion yen in fiscal 2024. The government aims to raise them to 20 trillion yen by 2033, and has positioned the content industry as one of the core sectors of its growth strategy.

Fragmented support

Support for the industry is currently divided among the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Agency for Cultural Affairs and other bodies, which critics say has made it inefficient. A single organisation would handle international market strategy, build overseas distribution networks, invest in people and support large productions.

How much

Japan's direct financial support for the content industry roughly doubled from the previous year to about 58.9 billion yen, according to the June report, compared with about 76.2 billion yen spent by South Korea in 2023 and 128.3 billion yen by China in 2024.

Hands off

The government has promised not to interfere in the content of creative works, a concern among artists wary of state involvement.

The stakes

Japanese games, anime and manga have become among the country's best-known exports, and the government sees them as a source of growth and soft power that has been underfunded compared with its neighbours.

ECONOMY



The crude oil tanker Idemitsu Maru at sea. Bills approved by the Cabinet on Tuesday would compensate companies for the extra cost of bringing crude and naphtha to Japan by routes that avoid the Strait of Hormuz, funded by a levy on the industry. (File photo: WPM Productions)

ECONOMY

Bills to Help Japan Buy Oil That Avoids the Strait of Hormuz Go to the Diet, With Subsidies for Longer Voyages and Support for New Pipelines

The Cabinet approved three energy security bills this week; companies importing crude and naphtha by longer routes would be compensated from a levy on the industry, and JOGMEC could invest in alternative pipelines

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

The government has submitted to the Diet a package of bills to help Japan secure crude oil without passing through the Strait of Hormuz, setting up a legal framework to diversify where and how the country buys its oil.

The Cabinet approved three bills on Tuesday, Industry Minister Ryosei Akazawa said, and the government aims to have them enacted during the current extraordinary session of the Diet.

Longer routes, higher costs

At the heart of the package is a law on diversifying the procurement of crude oil and related products. It creates a system to compensate oil wholesalers and other companies for the extra costs of importing crude without passing through the strait.

Shipping crude from the United States and similar sources takes more than twice as long as from the Middle East, raising transport costs. The compensation would be paid from levies collected from businesses, including oil refiners, petrochemical makers and trading houses.

Insurance and pipelines

The package also provides support for part of the cost of insurance payouts for tankers when reinsurance is hard to obtain because of geopolitical tensions, and would amend the law governing Japan Organization for Metals and Energy Security, known as JOGMEC, to let it invest in projects for alternative pipelines. Naphtha, the feedstock for Japan's chemical industry, is covered by the transport support as well as crude.

Why now

Japan imports almost all its crude oil, and more than 90 per cent of it comes from the Middle East, most of it through the Strait of Hormuz. Shipping through the strait has been disrupted since the American and Israeli attacks on Iran this year, and Iran has recently stepped up attacks around it. New York crude closed above \$101 a barrel on Friday.

Not a price cut

The bills are designed to protect supply, not to lower prices, and they do not directly reduce what drivers pay at the pump. Whether the industry passes the levies on to consumers will depend on the market.

Help for Asia

In April the government also launched Power Asia, a financial framework of about \$10 billion to help Asian countries secure oil, for example by building reserve facilities and buying alternative crude such as American oil. A research institute has argued that the programme does not match the needs of countries trying to reduce their dependence on imported fuel, and that support for renewable energy would serve them better.

The session

The government wants the bills enacted in the current session of the Diet, which is also taking up the cut in the consumption tax on food.

The cost

Fuel subsidies have cost the government trillions of yen since they were introduced in 2022.

Next

The next weekly survey will be published on Wednesday.

BUSINESS

SoftBank Group Is Said to Consider Buying Allied Universal, America's Largest Security Company, as a Showcase for AI Robots

Bloomberg reports an equity value of up to \$18 billion, with a total cost of nearly \$30 billion including debt; talks are at an early stage

By the Business Desk

SoftBank Group is considering buying Allied Universal, the largest security services company in the United States, Bloomberg News reported on Friday, citing people familiar with the matter.

The equity value could be up to \$18 billion, or about 2.8 trillion yen, and the total cost including the company's traded debt could approach \$30 billion. Allied Universal is privately held. The talks are at an early stage.

Robots on patrol

Masayoshi Son, SoftBank's chairman and chief executive, sees the security industry as a promising place to deploy robots equipped with artificial intelligence, according to the report.

All in on AI

SoftBank has been concentrating its investments on artificial intelligence, including about \$65 billion in OpenAI, the developer of ChatGPT.

The target

Allied Universal provides security guards and related services to companies, public institutions and venues across the United States and in other countries, and is one of the largest private employers in North America.

The strategy

Mr Son has spoken of a future in which robots and AI take over physical work, and SoftBank has made a series of acquisitions in robotics and chips to build that vision.

BUSINESS

Sixty Japanese Firms Bring Matcha, Scallops and Sea Urchin to Europe's Largest Food Fair in Paris

Exports of Japanese food to the EU have risen every year since 2020, reaching 99.7 billion yen last year; the weak yen helps, but fuel costs eat into the gains

By the Business Desk

About 60 Japanese companies are exhibiting at SIAL Paris 2026, one of Europe's largest food trade fairs, which opened in the suburbs of the French capital on Saturday and runs until Wednesday.

Makers of green tea are promoting matcha, which has become popular in Europe, while processors of scallops and sea urchin are seeking buyers among food wholesalers. The Japan External Trade Organization is supporting the exhibitors.

Growing exports

Japan's exports of agricultural, forestry and fishery products and food to the European Union have grown every year since 2020, reaching 99.7 billion yen in 2025, according to JETRO.

Yen and fuel

The weak yen makes Japanese products more competitive abroad, but higher fuel costs limit the benefit.

Matcha boom

Demand for matcha has surged in Europe and the United States, driven by cafes and social media, and has strained supplies from Japan's tea-growing regions.

Seafood

Scallops, Japan's leading seafood export, have been seeking new markets since China halted imports of Japanese seafood in 2023 over the release of treated water from the Fukushima nuclear plant.

The national goal

The government has set a goal of raising food exports to 5 trillion yen a year by 2030, and fairs such as SIAL are part of the push.

BUSINESS

Kagoshima University Finds a Shortcut to Fruitier Shochu: Grow the Koji for Less Than Half the Usual Time

Cutting koji-making from about 43 hours to 19 to 27 hours raised banana- and grape-like aroma compounds two to five times in sweet potato shochu

By the Business Desk

Researchers at Kagoshima University have found a way to make sweet potato shochu with stronger fruity aromas by cutting short the time taken to grow the koji mould, a finding that could help distillers meet growing demand for aromatic styles of the spirit.

The team, led by Professor Kazunori Takamine of the university's education and research centre for shochu and fermentation, published its results in an international journal in May.

The method

In ordinary production, koji mould is sprinkled on steamed rice, which is kept warm for about 43 hours while the mould grows. The researchers cut that period to between 19 and 27 hours.

The aromas

Shochu made with the young koji contained two to five times as much isoamyl acetate, which smells of banana, and ethyl caprate, which has a grape-like note, as conventional shochu.

A growing style

So-called aromatic shochu, with fruity and floral notes, has become popular in recent years, helping the industry attract younger drinkers and overseas buyers.

Kagoshima

Kagoshima Prefecture is Japan's centre of sweet potato shochu production, and its distillers have been searching for ways to stand out in a domestic market that has been shrinking for years.

Time saved

A shorter koji process could also save time and energy in production. No plans for commercial use were reported.

BUSINESS

Business in Brief

By the Business Desk

NIDEC: An investigative panel found founder Shigenobu Nagamori and four other former presidents responsible for the company's accounting irregularities; Nidec is considering claims for damages.

TOYOTA: The company plans to turn all its roughly 50 models into software-defined vehicles by 2030.

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC: The company agreed to sell 50 per cent of its automotive equipment business to Foxconn.

TSMC: The Industry Ministry approved TSMC's plan to make 3-nanometre chips at its second plant in Kumamoto.

SHINKANSEN: JR Central said its trains were briefly halted on Friday after its own system detected shaking, and that the false earthquake warning was not the direct cause.

TOHOKU ELECTRIC: Its subsidiary Tohoku Electric Power Frontier said personal data of 182 people who applied for matchmaking events may have leaked.

SOFTBANK: The group is considering buying Allied Universal, according to Bloomberg.

SIAL: About 60 Japanese companies are exhibiting at the Paris food fair until Wednesday.

CRUDE: The Cabinet approved three bills to help importers buy oil that avoids the Strait of Hormuz.

EU: France and Germany agreed on a "Made in Europe" rule for cars that would exclude vehicles built in Japan.

TECHNOLOGY

Data on 182 People Who Applied for Matchmaking Events May Have Leaked From a Tohoku Electric Power Subsidiary

A Tokyo company that helps run the events' website was hacked between September 30 and October 1; the information could be seen from outside until October 14

By the Technology Desk

Tohoku Electric Power Frontier, a subsidiary of Tohoku Electric Power based in Sendai, said on Saturday that personal information on 182 people who applied for matchmaking events it organises may have leaked.

The information, entered in an inquiry form, includes names and telephone numbers. The events have been held since 2024 in areas including Miyagi and Yamagata prefectures.

How it happened

A Tokyo company that helps run the events' website suffered unauthorised access between September 30 and October 1. The data could be obtained from outside until October 14, according to the company.

No harm reported

The company said the information "may have" leaked and that it had received no reports of damage from users.

Why a power company

Regional utilities have been diversifying into new businesses beyond electricity, and Tohoku Electric's subsidiary organises the events in the region it serves.

A string of cases

The leak is the latest in a series affecting Japanese organisations this autumn, and like several of them it occurred at an outside company that handled data on the organiser's behalf.

Advice

Security experts advise people who may be affected to be wary of unexpected calls or messages that use their personal details.

TECHNOLOGY



An N700A train on the Tokaido Shinkansen. Central Japan Railway says its own earthquake detection system briefly stopped trains on Friday and that the weather agency's false warning, issued when a safeguard against distant readings failed, was not the direct cause. (Photo: Akihiko Maeda)

TECHNOLOGY

The Safeguard Meant to Stop a False Quake Alarm Did Not Work, the Weather Agency Says; JR Central Says Its Own System Briefly Halted the Shinkansen

A filter that ignores readings from more than 700 km away failed, so a quake near Kamchatka was placed far from where it was and read as magnitude 9.9; the railway says Friday's stop was not caused directly by the agency's warning

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

A function designed to stop the Japan Meteorological Agency from overestimating the size of distant earthquakes was not working properly when the agency issued a false earthquake early warning on Friday, the agency has said.

The function excludes data from observation points more than 700 kilometres from an earthquake's epicentre, because estimates of magnitude become less reliable at such distances. The agency acknowledged in response to inquiries from Kyodo News on Saturday that it "had not been operating normally."

How it went wrong

When an earthquake struck near Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula around midday on Friday, the system initially placed the epicentre about 1,900 kilometres from an observation point in Nemuro, Hokkaido. The actual epicentre was about 1,200 kilometres from Nemuro.

The agency calculated the magnitude from that wrong location and fed the result into its forecast of shaking, producing an estimate of magnitude 9.9 and a warning of strong shaking from Hokkaido to the Tokai region. The real quake was magnitude 6.9, and the shaking in Hakodate was only intensity 1. The warning was cancelled eight minutes later, the first time the agency has ever withdrawn one.

A known weakness

"At greater distances the accuracy of calculating magnitude declines," the agency said. It has stumbled over far-off quakes before: in July 2020 an earthquake near Torishima, an island in the Izu chain far south of Tokyo and far from observation points, led it to overestimate the magnitude and issue a warning for the Kanto region with a forecast intensity of 5-upper.

TECHNOLOGY

AI Has Helped Push Discoveries of Software Vulnerabilities to Record Levels, 2.4 Times the 2021 Figure, as Japan Reels From Data Leaks

More than 48,000 were registered last year and more than 35,000 in the first half of this year, according to MITRE; experts say systems must be patched quickly

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The number of security weaknesses found in computer systems and software around the world has surged since generative AI became widespread, as the technology makes it possible to find large numbers of flaws in a short time.

More than 48,000 vulnerabilities were registered in 2025, 2.4 times the number in 2021, according to a tally by MITRE, the American nonprofit that maintains the shared catalogue of such flaws. In the first six months of this year more than 35,000 were registered, the fastest pace on record.

The catalogue

MITRE assigns identification numbers, known as CVEs, to vulnerabilities as they are reported. System vendors and researchers use the shared information to

The Shinkansen

The Tokaido Shinkansen also stopped briefly around midday on Friday. Central Japan Railway, which runs the line, said on Friday evening that its own disaster prevention system had detected shaking and estimated that a quake of about intensity 4 was occurring or about to occur, which triggered the stop. The agency's early warning was not the direct cause, the company said.

The railway operates its own network of seismometers along the line and in its surroundings, designed to cut power to trains within seconds of detecting an earthquake, independently of the agency's public warnings.

Faster brakes

JR Central said on Friday that its next generation of Shinkansen train, the S0 series, due to enter service in July 2029, will cut the time from the detection of an earthquake to the start of braking to about one-tenth of the current figure.

Trust

The episode has raised questions about trust in a system on which millions rely for a few seconds of warning, and about whether people will take the next alert as seriously.

What to do

The agency's advice has not changed: when an early warning sounds, protect your head, keep away from things that could fall, and do not rush outside.

understand the flaws and respond to them.

Patch quickly

The fix is usually a correction program, or patch, issued by the vendor. When fixes are delayed, the affected systems can become targets for unauthorised access.

"The risk of cyberattacks is increasing, and swift repairs are needed," an expert said.

A double-edged tool

The same AI tools that help defenders find weaknesses can also help attackers. Security researchers have warned that the window between the disclosure of a flaw and its exploitation is shrinking.

At home

Japan has suffered a run of serious leaks this autumn, including at the car-sharing service Times Car, which exposed images of about 1.6 million driver's licences, and at the restaurant chain Yakiniiku King. On October 9 the government asked companies to thoroughly implement measures against vulnerabilities.

More to come

A study group at the Internal Affairs Ministry on strengthening the cyber defences of telecommunications carriers, including against AI-assisted attacks, holds its first meeting on Thursday.

TECHNOLOGY

'Advanced Intelligence': The IMF Drops the Words 'Artificial Intelligence' After Trump Orders Agencies to Say 'Superintelligence'

The chair's statement from the International Monetary and Financial Committee in Bangkok avoided the term; the president signed an order in September and has said those who keep saying 'AI' will be treated as enemies

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The International Monetary Fund's policy-setting committee avoided the term "artificial intelligence" in its statement after a meeting in Bangkok on Saturday, using "advanced intelligence" instead, in deference to the Trump administration's campaign to rename the technology.

The chair's statement of the International Monetary and Financial Committee, which meets each spring and autumn to set the fund's direction, used the phrase in place of AI, Kyodo News reported.

Superintelligence

President Donald Trump signed an executive order in September directing federal agencies to call the technology "superintelligence," or SI. In early October he wrote on his social media platform that anyone who kept using the term AI would be treated as an enemy of the administration.

A compromise

"Advanced intelligence" appears to have been chosen as a phrase acceptable to all members, avoiding both the old name and the administration's new one.

Why words matter

International organisations depend on consensus, and the episode shows how far Washington's preferences can shape even technical language. The committee's statements guide the IMF's work on issues from debt to the economic effects of new technology.

The technology

AI, under whatever name, has become one of the main drivers of investment and stock markets around the world, and the IMF has warned of its potential to reshape labour markets.

In Japan

In Japan, the law enacted last year to promote research into and use of the technology refers to it as artificial intelligence.

TECHNOLOGY

Voice Actors' Union Says No to Reviving the Voices of the Dead With AI and No to AI Dubbing, in New Guidelines for Businesses

The Japan Actors Union acted as unauthorised AI copies of performers' voices spread; recreating a deceased actor's voice would be allowed only in exceptional cases with the family's permission

By the Technology Desk

The Japan Actors Union, which represents voice actors and actors, has issued guidelines for businesses on the use of artificial intelligence to generate people's voices, saying that the voices of the dead should not, in principle, be recreated for new works.

The union announced the guidelines on Thursday amid a growing number of cases in which voice actors' voices have been generated by AI without permission, and rising attention to what has been called the right to one's voice.

The dead

Recreating the voices of deceased performers with generative AI is technically possible. The guidelines say it should be done only in exceptional cases, and even then only with the permission of the bereaved family or others entitled to give it.

The aim, the union says, is to protect working voice actors' opportunities for employment.

Dubbing

The guidelines also say that AI should not, in principle, be used to replace human voices in dubbing films and dramas.

A wider debate

Voice actors in Japan, whose work in anime and games has a large following at home and abroad,

have campaigned for protection since AI tools able to imitate a voice from short recordings became widely available.

Government action

The government has also been working on guidelines on protecting voices from unauthorised use by AI, including how damages might be calculated.

Abroad

Performers' unions in other countries have negotiated similar protections, and the question of who controls a performer's voice and likeness after death has become a central issue in the entertainment industry worldwide.

TECHNOLOGY

Osaka University Team Finds That a 'Glue' Collagen Disappears From Cartilage at the Very Start of Osteoarthritis

In rats, type IX collagen, which ties the main fibres together, fell sharply within a week of the disease being induced, before any visible damage; the team has also developed a way to replenish it

By the Science Desk

A team including researchers at Osaka University has found that type IX collagen, a molecule that holds the structure of cartilage together, decreases at the very earliest stage of osteoarthritis, a discovery that could point to new ways of slowing the disease.

The results were published in an international journal and announced on Saturday.

The disease

Osteoarthritis wears away the cartilage in joints such as the knee, elbow and hip, changing the shape of the bone around them and causing pain and stiffness. A health ministry report in 2008 estimated that about 10 million people in Japan have symptoms in their knees, and the number is rising as the population ages.

No effective drug currently slows the progression of the disease, and recreating cartilage's complex structure artificially has proved difficult.

The structure

Healthy cartilage depends on type II collagen, which forms fibres folded over one another to give the tissue its elasticity. In osteoarthritis these fibres become disordered and the structure breaks down. Type IX collagen consists of small molecules that link the type II fibres together.

The experiment

The researchers operated on the knee joints of rats so that osteoarthritis would develop over time, and then examined the cartilage.

A week after the operation the surface of the cartilage looked almost unchanged. But type IX collagen had already fallen substantially, and the type II structure was beginning to break down.

A possible treatment

The team also developed a method of supplementing the collagen, which may suppress the degeneration of cartilage. Further research will be needed before any treatment for people.

TECHNOLOGY

1356: An Earthquake Destroys Basel, the Strongest Recorded Shock in Central Europe North of the Alps

Fires spread through the wrecked city for days, and castles across the region were damaged; seismologists still study it to judge the risk to modern Switzerland

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On the evening of October 18, 1356, the feast of St Luke, an earthquake struck the city of Basel on the Rhine, in what is now Switzerland, and brought down much of it.

Chroniclers recorded a foreshock earlier in the day that drove many people out of their houses, which may have saved lives when the main shock came. Fires started by overturned hearths and lamps then swept through the timber buildings and burned for days.

The damage

Churches, including the cathedral, were badly damaged, and the city's walls and many houses collapsed. Across the surrounding region, dozens of castles were damaged or destroyed, in what is now north-western Switzerland, Alsace and south-western Germany.

TECHNOLOGY

How big

Modern estimates of its magnitude vary, but it is regarded as the most significant historical earthquake in Central Europe north of the Alps, and it remains the benchmark for the seismic hazard of the Upper Rhine region.

Lessons from the past

Because instruments did not exist, seismologists reconstruct such quakes from chronicles, damage reports and the geology of the faults beneath the region. The Basel quake has been studied intensively to understand how often such events might recur.

A modern echo

In 2006, a geothermal energy project in Basel that injected water deep underground was halted after it set off small earthquakes that alarmed residents, a reminder of the city's history.

Japan's lesson

For Japan, where earthquakes are measured in seconds by a dense network of instruments, the episode is a reminder of how much modern seismology depends on data, and how a single wrong reading, as on Friday, can mislead.

TECHNOLOGY

1866: Philipp Franz von Siebold Dies in Munich, the Doctor Who Brought Western Medicine to Nagasaki and Japan's Nature to Europe

Expelled in 1829 after maps of Japan were found among his belongings, he returned three decades later; his daughter Ine became one of Japan's first women doctors trained in Western medicine

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Philipp Franz von Siebold, the German physician whose years in Nagasaki made him one of the most important bridges between Japan and Europe in the age of national seclusion, died in Munich on October 18, 1866, at the age of 70.

Born in Wurzburg in 1796, Siebold came to Japan in 1823 as a doctor for the Dutch trading post on Dejima, the only European foothold allowed in the country.

Narutaki

The following year he was allowed to open a school, the Narutaki-juku, on the outskirts of Nagasaki, where he taught Western medicine and natural science to Japanese students and treated patients. Many of his pupils became leading scholars of Dutch learning.

Collector

Siebold collected plants, animals and objects on a vast scale, and on the Dutch delegation's journey to Edo he gathered information about the country. His collections later became the basis of works such as Flora Japonica and Fauna Japonica, and of Japanese collections in museums in Leiden and Munich.

The Siebold Incident

In 1828, as he prepared to leave, maps of Japan, whose export was forbidden, were found among his possessions. Japanese who had helped him were punished, and he was expelled in 1829.

His daughter

His daughter with a Japanese woman, Kusumoto Ine, studied medicine and became one of the first Japanese women to practise Western medicine.

Return

After Japan opened its ports, Siebold returned in 1859 and stayed for several years, advising on relations with the West. His work, Nippon, remained one of Europe's main sources on Japan for decades.

Legacy

Many plants he introduced to European gardens, from hydrangeas to hostas, still carry his name or names he gave them, and a museum in Nagasaki beside the site of his school keeps his memory alive.

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TECHNOLOGY

1871: Charles Babbage Dies, the Mathematician Who Designed Computers a Century Before Anyone Could Build One

His Analytical Engine had a mill, a store and punched cards; Ada Lovelace saw that it could manipulate symbols as well as numbers

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Charles Babbage, the English mathematician whose designs for calculating machines anticipated the modern computer by more than a century, died in London on October 18, 1871, at the age of 79.

Frustrated by errors in the printed mathematical tables used by navigators, engineers and bankers, Babbage set out in the 1820s to build a machine that would calculate and print them automatically.

The Difference Engine

His first design, the Difference Engine, used the method of finite differences to compute polynomial values with gears and columns of figure wheels. The British government funded its construction, but the project stalled amid disputes and cost overruns, and only a portion was completed.

The Analytical Engine

Babbage then conceived something far more ambitious. The Analytical Engine would have had a "mill" to perform arithmetic and a "store" to hold numbers, the equivalents of a processor and memory, and it would have been programmed with punched cards borrowed from the Jacquard loom.

Ada Lovelace

In 1843 Ada Lovelace, the daughter of Lord Byron, published notes on the engine that included a method for calculating Bernoulli numbers, often described as the first published computer program. She saw that such a machine could manipulate symbols, not just numbers.

Proven right

None of Babbage's engines was completed in his lifetime. In 1991 the Science Museum in London finished building his Difference Engine No. 2 from his drawings, and it worked as he had intended.

Legacy

The principles he laid out, a programmable machine with separate processing and memory, are the foundation of every computer in use today, from supercomputers to the phone in your pocket.

TECHNOLOGY

1922: The British Broadcasting Company Is Formed, Starting the Public Service Model That Shaped Radio Around the World

Wireless manufacturers set it up to supply programmes that would sell radios; within five years it became a public corporation, the model for broadcasters including NHK

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 18, 1922, a group of British wireless manufacturers, including the Marconi company, formed the British Broadcasting Company to provide a national radio service.

The manufacturers needed programmes so that people would buy their sets, and the government wanted to avoid the chaos of the American airwaves, where hundreds of stations competed for frequencies.

Reith

John Reith, a Scottish engineer, became general manager that December. His view that broadcasting should "inform, educate and entertain," and serve the public rather than advertisers, became the founding philosophy of public service broadcasting.

On air

The company's London station, 2LO, began daily broadcasts in November 1922. Programmes were funded by a licence fee paid by owners of radio sets, rather than by advertising.

A corporation

On January 1, 1927, the company became the British Broadcasting Corporation, a public body established by royal charter, independent of government in its programmes.

Japan

Japan followed a similar path. The Tokyo Broadcasting Station began radio broadcasts in March 1925, and in 1926 the stations in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya were merged into the Japan Broadcasting Corporation, the forerunner of today's

NHK, funded by receiving fees.

Today

Public broadcasters in many countries face questions about funding and relevance in the age of streaming and social media, but the principle set out in 1922, of broadcasting as a public service, remains influential.

TECHNOLOGY

1931: Thomas Edison Dies, the Inventor of the Phonograph Whose Light Bulbs Once Glowed With Bamboo From Kyoto

He held more than 1,000 American patents and built the first industrial research laboratory; a monument near Iwashimizu Hachimangu shrine recalls the Japanese filaments

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Thomas Alva Edison, the American inventor whose work on the phonograph, the electric light and motion pictures helped create the modern world, died at his home in West Orange, New Jersey, on October 18, 1931, at the age of 84.

Born in Milan, Ohio, in 1847, Edison had little formal schooling. He worked as a telegraph operator before making his name with improvements to telegraph equipment.

Menlo Park

In 1876 he set up a laboratory at Menlo Park, New Jersey, often regarded as the first industrial research laboratory, where teams of workers pursued inventions systematically. In 1877 he invented the phonograph, the first machine to record and play back sound.

Light

In 1879 he demonstrated a practical incandescent lamp, and in 1882 his Pearl Street Station in New York began supplying electricity to customers, a model for the power systems that followed.

Kyoto bamboo

Searching for a long-lasting filament, Edison's team tested thousands of materials and found that carbonised bamboo from the area of Yawata, near Kyoto, worked well. Lamps with Japanese bamboo filaments were produced for years until metal filaments replaced them, and a monument to Edison stands near Iwashimizu Hachimangu shrine in Yawata.

Patents

He received 1,093 American patents, a record for many years, covering inventions from motion picture cameras to batteries.

Legacy

Edison's greatest invention may have been the method itself: organised, well-funded research aimed at practical products, the model for the corporate laboratories that have driven technology ever since.

TECHNOLOGY

1954: The Regency TR-1, the First Transistor Radio Sold to the Public, Is Announced, and Sony Takes the Idea Further

Built with four transistors from Texas Instruments, it went on sale for \$49.95; Sony's first transistor radio followed in 1955 and made the company's name

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 18, 1954, Texas Instruments and the Regency division of Industrial Development Engineering Associates announced the Regency TR-1, the first transistor radio to be sold commercially.

The transistor had been invented at Bell Laboratories in 1947, but it was still expensive and unproven in consumer products. Texas Instruments wanted to show that its transistors could be made in large numbers for everyday goods.

Small and light

The TR-1 used four transistors instead of vacuum tubes and ran on a small battery. It went on sale in November 1954 for \$49.95, a considerable sum at the time, in a range of colours.

Sony

In Tokyo, Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo, which would soon rename itself Sony, had licensed the transistor from Western Electric and was working on its own radio. Its TR-55, released in 1955, was Japan's first transistor radio.

Pocket-sized

Sony's TR-63 of 1957 was small enough to market as a pocket radio and became a major export, helping establish Japan's reputation for compact electronics.

A revolution

The transistor radio changed how people listened, freeing music from the living room and helping to spread rock and roll among teenagers in the 1950s and 1960s.

The chip that followed

The same semiconductor technology led to the integrated circuit and the microprocessor, and the industry it began now supplies the chips at the centre of the economy, including those to be made at TSMC's plants in Kumamoto.

TECHNOLOGY

1958: Visitors to Brookhaven Line Up to Play 'Tennis for Two' on an Oscilloscope, One of the First Video Games

Physicist William Higinbotham built it in a few weeks from an analogue computer to liven up an open day; it was dismantled two years later and never patented

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 18, 1958, visitors to the annual open day at Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island, New York, found an unusual exhibit: a tennis game played on the round screen of an oscilloscope.

"Tennis for Two" was the work of William Higinbotham, a physicist who had worked on the Manhattan Project and wanted something more engaging than the usual static displays.

How it worked

The game ran on an analogue computer designed to calculate trajectories. A ball bounced over a net seen from the side, and two players used controllers with a knob to set the angle and a button to hit it. The computer calculated the ball's path, including the effect of gravity.

A hit

Visitors queued to play, and the game returned the following year in an improved version.

Forgotten

Higinbotham did not patent it, and the equipment was later dismantled so that its parts could be used for other work. For years the game was largely forgotten outside the laboratory.

Ahead of its time

It was one of the earliest games to use an electronic display, more than a decade before commercial video games such as Pong appeared in the early 1970s.

Japan's role

The industry that grew from such beginnings became one of Japan's great success stories, from the Famicom to today's consoles, and games and anime are now at the centre of the government's plans to expand content exports.

TECHNOLOGY

1967: Venera 4 Parachutes Into the Atmosphere of Venus, the First Probe to Measure the Air of Another Planet

The Soviet capsule found an atmosphere of carbon dioxide and rising heat and pressure before falling silent; America's Mariner 5 flew past the planet the next day

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 18, 1967, the Soviet space probe Venera 4 released a capsule that entered the atmosphere of Venus and sent back the first direct measurements of the atmosphere of another planet.

Launched in June 1967, the probe travelled for four months before reaching the planet hidden beneath its clouds.

The descent

The capsule descended by parachute, measuring temperature, pressure and the composition of the atmosphere, and transmitted data for about an hour and a half.

What it found

Venera 4 showed that the atmosphere was overwhelmingly carbon dioxide and that temperature and pressure rose steeply as it fell. It stopped transmitting before reaching the surface, crushed or overheated in an atmosphere far denser than scientists had expected.

TECHNOLOGY

A hellish world

Later missions confirmed that the surface of Venus has temperatures of more than 450 degrees Celsius and a pressure about 90 times that on Earth, the result of a runaway greenhouse effect.

Mariner 5

The next day the American probe Mariner 5 flew past Venus, and scientists from the two countries later compared their results, a rare collaboration at the height of the Cold War.

Japan at Venus

Japan's own Venus orbiter, Akatsuki, reached the planet in 2015 at its second attempt, after missing orbit in 2010, and studied its atmosphere until contact ended in 2024.

TECHNOLOGY

1985: Nintendo Tests Its Famicom in New York as the Nintendo Entertainment System, and Revives a Video Game Market Left for Dead

Two years after the American video game crash, Nintendo disguised its console as an 'entertainment system' with a robot; inside was a processor derived from the 6502 that powered the Apple II

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 18, 1985, Nintendo began test sales in the New York area of the Nintendo Entertainment System, the American version of the Family Computer, or Famicom, which it had launched in Japan in July 1983.

It was a risky move. The American video game market had collapsed in 1983 under a flood of poor-quality games, and retailers wanted nothing to do with consoles.

Not a toy

Nintendo redesigned the machine as a grey, front-loading "entertainment system" that looked more like a video recorder than a games console, and offered it with R.O.B., the Robotic Operating Buddy, to persuade shops that it was something new. Super Mario Bros. was among the games available at launch.

Inside

The console was built around a processor made by Ricoh, a variant of the MOS Technology 6502, the chip that also powered the Apple II, the Commodore 64 and the Atari 2600.

Quality control

Nintendo controlled which games could run on the system through a lockout chip and a licensing programme for outside developers, a response to the glut that had caused the crash.

Success

After the test in New York and later in Los Angeles, the console went on sale across the United States in 1986 and became a huge success, establishing Nintendo, and Japan, at the centre of the industry.

Legacy

Franchises born on the Famicom and NES, from Mario to Zelda, remain among the most valuable in entertainment, and the business model it pioneered still shapes the industry.

TECHNOLOGY

1989: Atlantis Lifts Off With Galileo, the Probe That Would Spend Eight Years Orbiting Jupiter Despite a Stuck Antenna

It dropped a probe into Jupiter's atmosphere and found signs of an ocean beneath the ice of Europa before being sent into the planet in 2003

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 18, 1989, the space shuttle Atlantis lifted off from Florida on mission STS-34 carrying Galileo, the American spacecraft that would become the first to orbit Jupiter.

The probe was released from the shuttle's cargo bay the same day and began a long, looping journey, gaining speed from flybys of Venus and twice of Earth.

Trouble

In 1991 its main high-gain antenna failed to open fully, threatening to cripple the mission. Engineers rescued it by using a smaller antenna and new software to compress data, at a far lower rate.

Arrival

Galileo reached Jupiter in December 1995, releasing a probe that plunged into the planet's atmosphere and sent back data for almost an hour before being destroyed.

Europa

Over eight years in orbit, Galileo studied Jupiter's moons, finding evidence of a salty ocean beneath the icy crust of Europa and volcanic activity on Io.

A deliberate end

In September 2003 the spacecraft was sent into Jupiter's atmosphere, to avoid any risk of it crashing into Europa and contaminating a world that might harbour life.

Successors

NASA's Europa Clipper and the European Space Agency's Juice mission, launched in 2024 and 2023, are now on their way to follow up on Galileo's discoveries.

TECHNOLOGY

2019: Christina Koch and Jessica Meir Make the First All-Female Spacewalk, Replacing a Failed Unit on the Space Station

The seven-hour walk came months after a planned all-woman spacewalk was called off for lack of a spacesuit in the right size

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 18, 2019, NASA astronauts Christina Koch and Jessica Meir stepped outside the International Space Station together, making the first spacewalk carried out entirely by women.

Their task was to replace a failed battery charge and discharge unit, part of the station's power system. The spacewalk lasted 7 hours and 17 minutes.

A delay

An all-female spacewalk had been planned for March 2019 but was called off because only one suit in the medium size needed by both astronauts was ready on the station, an episode that drew attention to how equipment had been designed around men.

Records

Koch went on to complete the longest single spaceflight by a woman, 328 days, when she returned to Earth in February 2020. She was later named to the crew of NASA's Artemis II mission around the Moon.

Japan in space

Japan's astronauts have carried out spacewalks from the station, and Japan's Kibo laboratory module is one of its largest components. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency is also taking part in the American-led Artemis programme to return people to the Moon.

The first women

The first woman in space was Valentina Tereshkova of the Soviet Union in 1963, and the first woman to walk in space was Svetlana Savitskaya in 1984.

Today

Women now make up a growing share of astronaut classes, including Japan's, and spacewalks by women have become routine.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology and Science on October 18

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

- 1356: An earthquake destroys much of Basel.
- 1866: Philipp Franz von Siebold, who taught Western medicine in Nagasaki, dies in Munich.
- 1871: Charles Babbage, designer of the Analytical Engine, dies in London.
- 1889: Antonio Meucci, an early developer of the telephone, dies in New York.
- 1911: Alfred Binet, the French psychologist who devised an early intelligence test, dies.
- 1922: The British Broadcasting Company is formed.
- 1931: Thomas Edison dies in New Jersey.
- 1954: The Regency TR-1 transistor radio is announced.
- 1958: "Tennis for Two" is shown at Brookhaven National Laboratory.
- 1963: Felicette becomes the first cat sent into space, on a French rocket, and is recovered alive.
- 1967: Venera 4 sends back data from the atmosphere

of Venus.

1985: Nintendo begins test sales of the NES in New York.

1989: Atlantis launches the Galileo probe to Jupiter.

2019: Christina Koch and Jessica Meir make the first all-female spacewalk.

SOCIETY

Forest Fire Near Lake Notoro in Abashiri Burns About 75 Hectares as SDF Helicopters Keep Up Water Drops Into a Third Day

The blaze in a national forest broke out on Thursday evening on a ridge fire engines cannot reach; no one has been hurt, and officials hope to put it out within days

By the Society Desk

A forest fire in a national forest near Lake Notoro in Abashiri, on Hokkaido's Sea of Okhotsk coast, was still burning on Saturday, two days after it broke out, despite repeated water drops by helicopters of the Self-Defense Forces and other agencies.

About 75 hectares has burned, according to the city's estimate. No one has been injured, and the fire has not spread to any buildings.

'Fire across the water'

The fire was reported at about 5:30 p.m. on Thursday by a caller who told the fire department that flames could be seen from the opposite shore of the lake. It broke out in the Misaki district of the city.

Through the night, flames were visible near the top of the mountain, but fire engines could not get close to where the fire had started.

The SDF is called in

At 8:25 a.m. on Friday, with the fire still spreading, the Hokkaido government asked the Self-Defense Forces for disaster relief. The first SDF helicopter arrived at about 8:40 a.m. and began dropping water.

By the end of Friday, more than 60 water drops had been made, according to the local broadcaster UHB, and drones have been used to check conditions on the ground. The drops resumed at 5:30 a.m. on Saturday.

Still smouldering

The city and the SDF found that the fire was still smouldering on the western ridge, and that wind had caused it to spread slightly on the southern side. The Hokkaido Shimbun reported on Saturday night that officials estimated it could be extinguished in two days at the earliest.

A dry air advisory was in force for the area through Sunday.

The lake

Lake Notoro is a lagoon open to the Sea of Okhotsk, known for the glasswort that turns parts of its shore red each autumn and for the scallops raised in its waters.

Fires in Japan

Forest fires in Japan are most common from late winter to spring, when dead grass and dry winds allow flames to spread quickly. The fire in Ofunato, Iwate Prefecture, in February and March 2025, which burned about 2,900 hectares, was one of the largest in decades.

SOCIETY

Acorns Fail in Parts of Hokkaido and the Autumn Salmon Catch Falls to a Record Low, Leaving Brown Bears Short of Food

A prefectural survey finds poor crops of Mizunara oak acorns in most regions; in Akita, a man in his 80s is clawed by a bear while working in his field

By the Society Desk

The main autumn foods of Hokkaido's brown bears, including acorns, have had a poor crop across much of the island this year, and the autumn salmon catch has fallen to its lowest level since comparable records began, the Hokkaido government said.

The government surveyed four types of food in 14 regions, rating each as a bumper crop, normal, poor or failed.

The acorns

Acorns from the Mizunara oak failed in three regions, including Kushiro, and were poor in most of the others. Wild grapes also tended towards a poor crop. Kokuwa, the hardy kiwi fruit of the northern forests, was mostly normal, and beech nuts, which grow only in southern Hokkaido, were normal or plentiful.

Overall, the government described the crop as

somewhat poor.

The salmon

The autumn salmon catch stood at about 2.1 million fish at the end of September, down 34.1 per cent from a year earlier. It is the fourth annual decline in a row and the lowest since comparable records began in 1989. Rising sea temperatures along the coast are considered one possible cause.

Salmon swimming upriver to spawn are an important source of food for bears before winter, as well as a mainstay of Hokkaido's fishing industry.

Will the bears come to town?

An expert quoted by Kyodo News said that culling should prevent a repeat of last year's mass appearances of bears, but that food shortages could differ from region to region.

Last year bears came into towns in unprecedented numbers across northern Japan, and attacks on people reached record levels. Since September 2025, municipalities have been able to authorise emergency shooting of bears that enter residential areas.

An attack in Akita

In Akita Prefecture, a man in his 80s was attacked by a bear in a field in the Kyowa-Minekichikawa district of Daisen at about 10:10 a.m. on Saturday. His wife called emergency services.

According to the prefectural police and the fire department, he was clawed on the back of the head but remained conscious. Witnesses said three bears left the scene.

Two species

Brown bears live only in Hokkaido within Japan, while the smaller Asiatic black bear is found on Honshu and Shikoku. Both are busy feeding in autumn to build up fat before they hibernate.

Local authorities advise people going into the hills to avoid going alone, to make noise as they walk and to keep away from areas where bears have been seen.

SOCIETY

Two People in Their 70s Die in a Head-On Crash in Shibetsu, Hokkaido; a Driver, 77, Dies After Hitting a Tunnel Wall in Nagano

A kei car and a passenger car collided on a road in the eastern Hokkaido town; earlier, a light truck crashed in a tunnel on the Joshinetsu Expressway in Saku

By the Society Desk

Two people died when a kei car and a passenger car collided head-on in the town of Shibetsu in eastern Hokkaido on Saturday evening, according to the Hokkaido police and the local fire department.

The fire department received a report of the accident at about 5:05 p.m.

Two dead

A woman and a man in their 70s who were in the kei car were taken to hospital, where they were confirmed dead. The man in his 60s who was driving the passenger car suffered minor injuries.

The police are investigating the cause of the collision.

A tunnel crash

Earlier on Saturday, a 77-year-old man from Joetsu in Niigata Prefecture died after the light truck he was driving hit the wall of a tunnel on the Tokyo-bound side of the Joshinetsu Expressway in Saku, Nagano Prefecture, at about 4:50 a.m.

He was alone in the vehicle. A driver behind him called the police, according to the Nagano prefectural police's highway patrol unit.

Autumn roads

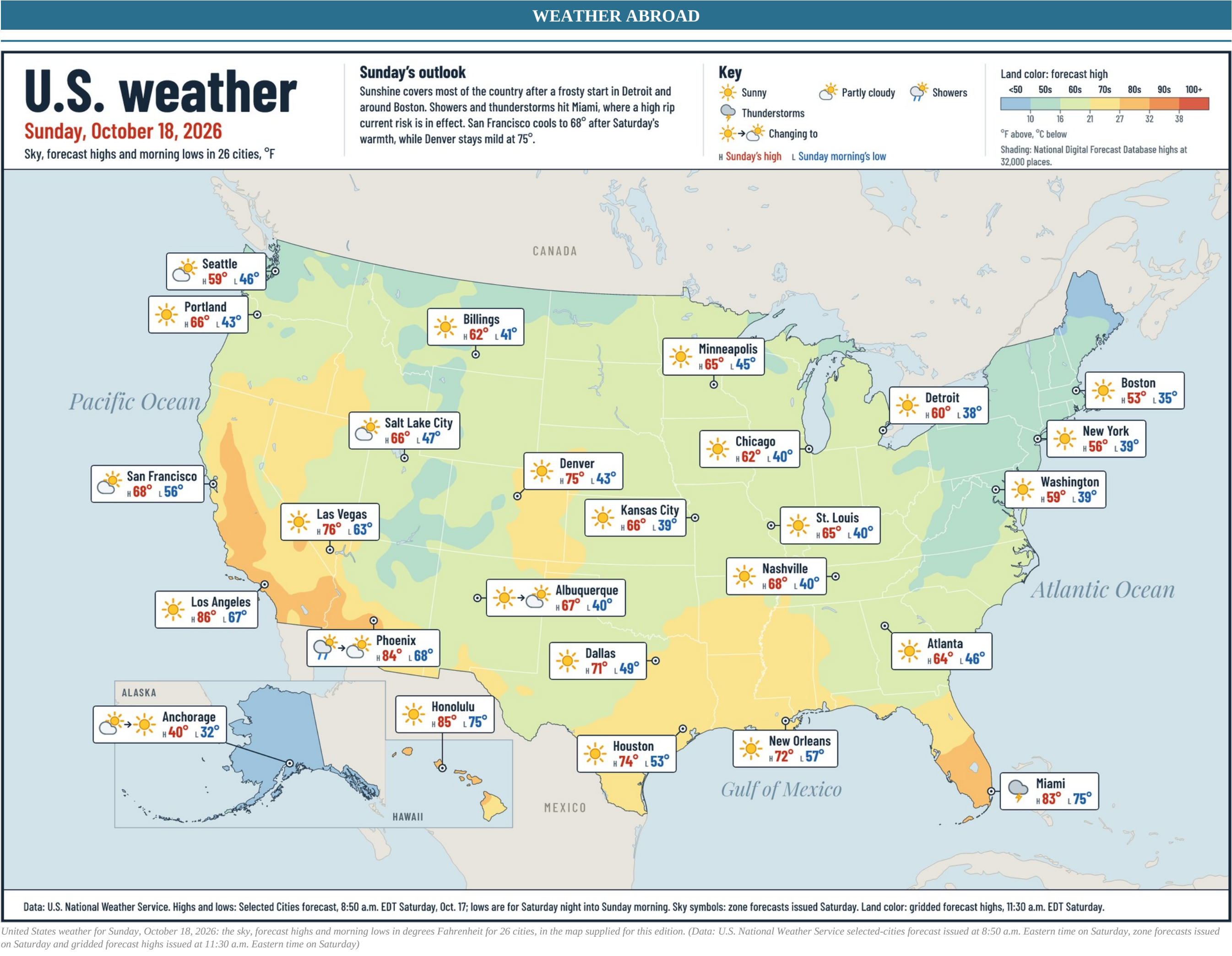
Traffic deaths in Japan have fallen sharply over the past three decades, but older drivers and passengers account for a large share of those killed.

Dark evenings

The police warn that accidents involving pedestrians and vehicles tend to increase in autumn, as the sun sets earlier and the evening rush hour falls in darkness. Drivers are urged to switch on their headlights early.

Safety campaign

Police forces around the country hold an autumn traffic safety campaign each year, encouraging pedestrians to wear reflective materials and drivers to use high beams on dark roads when no other vehicles are near.



SOCIETY



Yuko Fujigaki speaks at a news conference as the University of Tokyo's president-designate, wearing a brooch in the shape of a ginkgo leaf, the university's emblem. A scholar of science and technology studies, she takes office on April 1, 2027, as the first woman to lead the university. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SOCIETY

Profile: Yuko Fujigaki, the Scholar of Science and Society Who Will Lead the University of Tokyo in Its 150th Year

A Komaba graduate who studies how expert knowledge meets public life, she takes office in April as the first woman to head the university; the council that chose her says *Todai* must rebuild trust

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

When Yuko Fujigaki takes office as president of the University of Tokyo on April 1, she will be the first woman to lead the university in its history, and she will do so in the year it marks the 150th anniversary of its founding in 1877.

She will also bring to the job an unusual academic specialism. Professor Fujigaki, 64, is a scholar of science and technology studies, the field that examines how science and society shape each other, and of scientometrics, the quantitative study of research itself.

A Komaba career

Almost all of her career has been spent at Komaba, the university's campus in Meguro Ward that is home to the College of Arts and Sciences. According to the curriculum vitae published by the university, she was born on April 19, 1962, graduated from the college in 1985 after studying basic science, and earned a master's degree in 1987 and a doctorate in 1990 at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

She became an assistant at the college in 1990. In 1996 she moved to the National Institute of Science and Technology Policy, then part of the Science and Technology Agency, as a senior researcher, before returning to the graduate school as an associate professor in 2000. She was promoted to professor in 2010.

Into management

From 2013 she served as an assistant to the university's president, and from 2015 as vice dean of both the graduate school and the college. From 2021 to 2025 she was an executive director and vice-president of the university.

What she studies

Her faculty profile describes her research as the analysis of problems that arise where science meets society, the theory of the social responsibility of scientists and research on research. Among the keywords she lists are science, technology and democracy, expert knowledge and the public interest, the difference between scientific and social rationality, and citizen participation.

Those themes have rarely been more topical. Questions about who should be trusted on matters from pandemics to artificial intelligence, and how experts should explain uncertainty to the public, run

through much of today's political debate.

Why the council chose her

The university's Presidential Selection and Oversight Council, chaired by the journalist Hiroko Kuniya, chose her on September 28. In its published reasons, it said her experience as executive vice-president had made her aware of the university's role as a symbol of scholarship, and that her ability to communicate science to society gave her the will and capacity to restore trust in academia.

It also cited her belief that bringing the sciences and humanities together, and improving communication inside and outside the university, could develop diverse knowledge, and said her international experience suited the task of making *Todai* a more open university that can overcome divisions. The university, the council said, needs to strengthen its risk governance and rebuild public trust.

The vote

The choice was contested. In the second round of the advisory vote among faculty and staff, Takao Someya, an engineer and vice-president, received 1,107 votes and Professor Fujigaki 553. The council acknowledged that it had not chosen the candidate with the most support and said it believed members of the university would understand.

After more than 500 staff backed a request for a fuller explanation, the university replied on Friday that the vote had been "one of the important materials for judgment," and that how much weight each council member gave it differed from member to member.

The road to April

Her six-year term begins on April 1. At her first news conference as president-designate she noted that her appointment comes in the university's anniversary year, which she said gave it particular meaning.

How she answers the critics of the selection process, and what she makes of the university's call for openness, will be watched closely across Japanese academia, where women still hold only a small share of senior posts.

Agency's forecast issued at 5 a.m.

Seven of the 19 cities on the map are sunny all day: Niigata, Sendai, Nagano, Kanazawa, Tokyo, Osaka and Naha. Kyoto, Nagoya, Fukuoka and Kagoshima are sunny with some cloud, while Matsue and Takamatsu have a mix of cloud and sun.

Clouds in the north

Sapporo, Kushiro, Aomori and Akita start bright but cloud over later in the day, and so does Hiroshima. Kochi is the only city on the map with rain, which falls this morning before giving way to cloud.

Close to 30

It is the west that feels most like late summer. Fukuoka and Naha both reach 30 degrees, the highest on the map, Kagoshima 29, and Osaka and Matsue

28. Kyoto and Kanazawa reach 27, and Niigata, Nagoya and Takamatsu 26.

Tokyo is sunny, with a high of 24 after a low of 14 this morning, ideal weather for the city's parks and for the second day of the Kawagoe Festival just to the north-west.

A cold start

The morning was chilly in the north. Kushiro recorded 4 degrees, the lowest on the map, and Sapporo and Aomori 6. Nagano fell to 7 and Niigata to 8, and Akita to 9.

That makes for wide swings. Niigata climbs from 8 to 26 degrees and Nagano from 7 to 25, a rise of 18 degrees in each, the widest on the map. Kushiro, at 14, has the lowest high, and Sapporo reaches 18.

Warm nights in the south

At the other end of the country the night hardly cooled at all. Naha's low was 26 degrees and Kagoshima's 23, so the two cities change by only 4 and 6 degrees over the day.

The typhoon

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, is a very strong typhoon near Guam, far beyond the edge of the map, and has no effect on Japan's weather today. The agency expects it to deepen to 935 hectopascals and head west-north-west towards the waters south of Okinawa, reaching about 460 kilometres south of Ishigaki by early Friday. Its forecast track appears on the typhoon page.

The week ahead

The fine spell is expected to break from Monday, when a front and low pressure bring rain, mainly to northern Japan and the Sea of Japan side. Residents of the Sakishima Islands should keep an eye on the typhoon later in the week.

SOCIETY

Saijo's Deputy Mayor Dies After Being Trapped Under a Festival Float He Was Helping to Carry

Akihiro Nabae, 62, was pulled from beneath a taikodai drum float at the city's autumn festival in Ehime and was pronounced dead about an hour later; police are investigating the cause

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The deputy mayor of Saijo, a city in Ehime Prefecture, died on Saturday evening after being trapped under a float during the city's autumn festival, according to the prefectural police.

Akihiro Nabae, 62, was found beneath a taikodai, a large decorated drum float carried on the shoulders of a team of bearers, at about 5:50 p.m. A police officer on duty at the festival saw him being pulled out.

He was taken to hospital, where his death was confirmed about an hour later.

One of the bearers

Mr Nabae was taking part in the festival as one of the kakifu, the men who lift and carry the floats. The police are investigating how the accident happened.

The festival

According to the city's website, the Saijo Festival dates back to the Edo period and is held each autumn to give thanks for the harvest. On Saturday, 11 taikodai were dedicated at the shrine.

The autumn festivals of eastern Ehime, in which teams carry towering floats through the streets to the beat of drums, draw large crowds every October and are a source of intense local pride.

The work of the bearers

Carrying a float requires dozens of people to lift and move in unison, guided by calls and the rhythm of the drums, and the weight shifts constantly as the team turns, raises and lowers it.

The city

Saijo, on the Seto Inland Sea, has a population of about 100,000. It is known for its natural spring water, which flows from artesian wells called uchinuki, and for Mount Ishizuchi, the highest peak in western Japan.

A senior post

In Japanese cities the deputy mayor is appointed by the mayor with the consent of the city assembly and oversees the administration on the mayor's behalf, standing in for the mayor when necessary.

It was not immediately clear how Mr Nabae came to be under the float.

SOCIETY

Where the Leaves Are Turning: Peak Colour Arrives in the Mountains From Jozankei to Kamikochi as Chilly Mornings Spread

Forecasters say the foliage is at its best at higher elevations in Hokkaido, Tohoku and the mountains of Kanto and Koshin; nights below 8 degrees start the change

By the Weather Desk

The cold mornings of the past few days are doing their work in the mountains. The autumn leaves are at their best, or beginning to turn, at higher elevations from Hokkaido to the mountains of central Japan, according to forecasters at the Japan Weather Association's tenki.jp.

In Hokkaido, the hot spring resorts of Jozankei near Sapporo and Lake Shikotsu are in full colour, the forecasters said on Saturday.

Tohoku and Kanto

In Tohoku, the colour is good on Mount Adatara in Fukushima Prefecture and at Zao Onsen in Yamagata Prefecture. In the Kanto and Koshin regions, it is progressing at Kamikochi in Nagano Prefecture, on Chausudake at Nasu Kogen in Tochigi Prefecture and on Mount Akagi in Gunma Prefecture.

In Niigata Prefecture, the view from the Dragondola gondola at Naeba is also coming into colour.

Why the cold matters

Japanese forecasters commonly say that leaves begin to change when the morning low falls below about 8 degrees, and that the change speeds up once it drops to around 5 or 6 degrees. A big difference between day and night temperatures, as on Sunday, helps produce vivid colour.

This morning Kushiro fell to 4 degrees, Sapporo and Aomori to 6 and Nagano to 7.

Red and yellow

Maple leaves turn red because they produce new pigments called anthocyanins as the green chlorophyll breaks down in autumn. Ginkgo leaves turn yellow because the breakdown of chlorophyll reveals yellow pigments that were there all along.

Moving south

Each year the colour spreads from the north and from the mountaintops down to the plains, reaching the cities of Kanto and Kansai from mid-November into December.

Plan ahead

Popular spots can be crowded at weekends, and mountain roads can be icy in the early morning, so visitors are advised to check road conditions and to dress for the cold, which can be sharp at altitude even on sunny days.

SOCIETY

A 'Blue-Eyed Doll' Sent to Japan in 1927 Goes Home to Indiana and Meets the Family of the Man Who Gave Her

Francetta, kept at an elementary school in Seijo, Ehime, is the centrepiece of an exhibition marking a century of doll exchanges between Japan and the United States

By the Society Desk

A doll sent from the United States to Japan nearly a century ago as a messenger of friendship returned to Indiana on Friday for the first time, and met a descendant of the man who gave her.

The doll, Francetta, is one of the "blue-eyed dolls" that an American private group sent to Japan in 1927. She is kept by Akehama Elementary School in Seijo, Ehime Prefecture.

A reunion in Bloomington

The meeting took place in Bloomington at the opening ceremony of an exhibition on 100 years of doll exchanges between Japan and the United States, which opened on Saturday at the Indiana University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Leslie Newhouse, 77, a grandchild of the donor's younger brother, repeatedly said "wonderful" as she looked at the doll, Kyodo News reported. Meetings between a friendship doll and a direct descendant of its donor are rare.

Tracing the donor

Records kept at the school allowed Fumiyasu Arakawa, an associate professor in Indiana University's Department of Anthropology, to identify

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the donor as Frank Jordan of Indianapolis. Professor Arakawa then traced Ms Newhouse.

Dolls for peace

About 12,700 dolls were sent to schools and kindergartens across Japan in 1927, at a time of rising anti-Japanese feeling in the United States, driven in part by opposition to immigration from Japan. The campaign was led by Sidney Gulick, an American missionary who had lived in Japan, and the dolls arrived in time for the Doll Festival on March 3.

Japan responded by sending 58 large "ambassador dolls" to the United States, an initiative backed by the industrialist Eiichi Shibusawa.

Lost in the war

During the Pacific War many of the American dolls were destroyed as symbols of the enemy. Only a few hundred are known to survive, and many of those were hidden by teachers and others who refused to give them up.

A living link

The surviving dolls are treasured by the schools that keep them, and exchanges of new dolls between the two countries have continued in their spirit.

SOCIETY

'The Road Is Still Long. Work With Us,' Hidankyo's Terumi Tanaka, 94, Tells a Nagasaki Audience Ahead of the Nuclear Ban Treaty Review

The survivor shared the stage with the singer Comuai and the writer Erika Kobayashi at a 'Dialogue for Peace' organised by a third-generation hibakusha

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Terumi Tanaka, a co-chair of Nihon Hidankyo, the confederation of atomic and hydrogen bomb sufferers' organisations, urged younger people in Nagasaki on Saturday to join the campaign to abolish nuclear weapons, saying the goal was still far off.

Mr Tanaka, 94, took part in a dialogue with the singer Comuai and the writer Erika Kobayashi at an event in the city titled "Dialogue for Peace," which seeks paths to peace through conversation.

The treaty

He referred to the first review conference of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which opens in New York in November. "The road ahead is still long," he said. "I want you to work together with us."

The day of the bomb

Asked what he saw immediately after the atomic bombing, Mr Tanaka said he walked through a city buried in rubble, astonished that a single bomb could cause such destruction.

He was 13 and living in Nagasaki when the city was bombed on August 9, 1945.

A new generation

The event was organised by Mitsuhiro Hayashida, 34, a third-generation survivor whose grandparents lived through the bombing. The first dialogue was held in July in Shibuya, Tokyo, and Saturday's was the second.

Hidankyo

Nihon Hidankyo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2024 for its decades of testimony about the human cost of nuclear weapons, and Mr Tanaka delivered the group's Nobel lecture in Oslo that December.

Japan and the treaty

The treaty entered into force in January 2021. Japan, which relies on the nuclear deterrence of the United States, has not joined and has not taken part in its meetings as an observer, a stance that survivors' groups have repeatedly urged the government to change.

Time running out

The average age of the survivors is now over 86, and the number holding survivors' certificates continues to fall each year, adding urgency to efforts to pass their experiences on.

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SOCIETY

The Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty: What It Prohibits, Who Has Joined, and Why Japan Stays Outside

Adopted at the United Nations in 2017 and in force since 2021, the treaty holds its first review conference in New York next month; survivors urge Tokyo at least to attend as an observer

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, whose first review conference opens in New York in November, is the first international agreement to ban nuclear weapons outright.

It was adopted at the United Nations in July 2017 and entered into force on January 22, 2021, after 50 countries had ratified it.

What it bans

The treaty prohibits its members from developing, testing, producing, acquiring, possessing or stockpiling nuclear weapons, and from using them or threatening to use them. It also bars members from allowing nuclear weapons to be stationed on their territory.

Who has joined

More than 70 countries have ratified the treaty, most of them in Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. None of the nine countries known or believed to have nuclear weapons has joined, and neither have the allies that rely on American nuclear protection, including Japan, South Korea and the members of NATO.

The campaign behind it

The treaty grew out of a campaign by civil society groups and governments to highlight the humanitarian consequences of nuclear war. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which led the effort, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017.

Survivors of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki played a central role, and Nihon Hidankyo, their national confederation, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2024.

Japan's position

The Japanese government says it shares the treaty's goal of a world without nuclear weapons but that joining it would be incompatible with the deterrence provided by the United States, on which Japan relies in a region with nuclear-armed neighbours.

It argues that progress is better pursued through the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which includes the nuclear powers, and has not attended the treaty's meetings as an observer, unlike some NATO members, such as Germany, which did so at the first meeting of states parties in 2022.

The review

November's review conference will assess how the treaty has been implemented since it took effect. Survivors' groups and many local governments in Japan have urged Tokyo at least to attend as an observer.

SOCIETY

Girl, 12, Is Sent to a Child Guidance Centre After an Attempted Robbery at an Osaka Convenience Store That Left the Clerk Injured

Police say the junior high school student threatened the clerk, a woman in her 80s, with a kitchen knife; the clerk resisted and the girl fled without money

By the Society Desk

The Osaka prefectural police have sent a 12-year-old first-year junior high school student to a child guidance centre on suspicion of attempting to rob a convenience store in Osaka's Sumiyoshi Ward and injuring a clerk.

Because the girl is under 14, the age of criminal responsibility in Japan, she cannot be charged.

What police say happened

According to police at Sumiyoshi station, on the morning of Friday, October 16, the girl threatened the clerk, a woman in her 80s, with a kitchen knife and demanded money.

She is also suspected of spraying deodorant in the clerk's face and injuring her arm. The injury is expected to take about 10 days to heal.

The clerk fought back

The clerk resisted, and the girl fled without taking any money. She was found on Saturday.

The police quoted her as saying that she had wanted money, and that she was sorry.

How the law treats young children

Under the Penal Code, acts committed by children under 14 are not punishable. Cases involving them are handled under the Juvenile Act and child welfare law, and a child guidance centre decides whether to refer the case to the family court.

Older workers

The case also highlights the growing number of older people working in shops and convenience stores, many of them on late or early shifts, as the industry struggles with labour shortages.

Support

Child guidance centres can be reached nationwide on the number 189 for consultations about children in difficulty.

SOCIETY

A Racehorse Bolts From Kasamatsu Before Dawn and Gallops Along the Meitetsu Line Until Staff Catch Her Near the Kiso River

The three-year-old filly threw her rider during training and ran out through a gate opened for other horses; no one was hurt

By the Society Desk

A racehorse escaped from Kasamatsu Racecourse in Kasamatsu, Gifu Prefecture, early on Saturday and ran along the tracks of the Meitetsu Nagoya Line before staff caught her about five minutes later. No one was hurt.

The escape happened at about 3:25 a.m., during training.

Over the crossing

The horse, a three-year-old filly, entered a level crossing on the line, operated by Nagoya Railroad, and ran along the tracks. Staff from the racecourse caught her just before a railway bridge over the Kiso River.

How she got out

According to the Gifu Prefecture Regional Horse Racing Association, which runs the course, a stable hand fell off the horse during training, and the filly ran out alone through a gate that had been opened temporarily so that other horses could leave. She then left the racecourse grounds.

Training in the dark

Racehorses in Japan are often exercised before dawn, when it is cool and the track is free, and many stables begin work in the middle of the night.

A storied track

Kasamatsu, which stands beside the Kiso River, is a local track run by the prefecture's racing association rather than the Japan Racing Association. It is famous as the place where Oguri Cap, one of the most popular horses in Japanese racing history, began his career in the 1980s.

No trains at that hour

The escape came well before the first trains of the morning on the line, which links Gifu and Nagoya and crosses the Kiso River on its way into Aichi Prefecture.

A lucky outcome

The horse was caught within minutes, and nobody was injured.

SOCIETY

Society in Brief

By the Society Desk

HIKONE: More than 100 local mascots from 35 prefectures gathered in Hikone, Shiga Prefecture, on Saturday for the two-day Gotochi Chara Haku 2026. The event began in 2008 as a festival of yuru-chara mascots, and about 88,000 people attended over two days last year. Shippei, a dog mascot from Iwata in Shizuoka Prefecture, drew laughter by dancing and showing off its paw pads.

REGIONAL AWARD: Fifty-one groups from every prefecture have passed the first round of the 17th Regional Revitalisation Award, run by 47 regional newspapers and Kyodo News. The judges, led by Toyo University professor Namiko Numao, will consider sustainability for the first time this year. Winners will be announced in late January, and the ceremony is on March 4.

KOCHI: An immersive museum in which visitors are surrounded by projected paintings and sound opened

in Kochi on Saturday and runs until December 6. A report appears on the Culture page.

TENRI: A 67-year-old construction worker died on Friday afternoon after being caught in a freight elevator he was repairing in a three-storey building in Tenri, Nara Prefecture, when it moved upward for reasons not yet known. The Nara prefectural police are investigating.

MOTOR SPORT: The number of officials who marshal motor races in Japan has fallen by about 30 per cent over 30 years, and Toyota has held a hands-on event to show possible recruits the appeal of the role, Kyodo News reported.

FESTIVALS: The Kawagoe Festival in Saitama Prefecture continues on Sunday, with its towering floats in the old merchant quarter.

WEATHER: A dry air advisory remains in force for parts of eastern Hokkaido, where a forest fire is still burning in Abashiri.

BEARS: People in Tohoku and Hokkaido are urged to take care in fields and on mountain paths after a man in his 80s was injured by a bear in Daisen, Akita Prefecture, on Saturday.

ROADS: The National Police Agency urges drivers to switch on headlights early as autumn evenings draw in.

HELP: Child guidance centres, 189. Police consultation, #9110. Consumer hotline, 188.

TOKYO: Sunny today, with a high of 24 degrees.

SAPPORO: Sunny, then cloudy, with a high of 18 degrees.

SPORTS

The Gap With Brazil Was the Speed of Decisions, Moriyasu Says, Recalling How Vinicius Left Japan's Defenders on the Ground

The outgoing national team manager reflects on the World Cup in Shizuoka and urges his successor, Go Oiwa, to take bold risks

By the Sports Desk

Hajime Moriyasu, the outgoing manager of Japan's national football team, said on Saturday that the biggest difference between Japan and Brazil at this summer's World Cup had been the speed at which players made decisions.

Speaking at an event titled "After the World Cup" in Shizuoka City, Moriyasu was asked what separated his team from the Brazilians, who beat Japan at the tournament in North America.

Vinicius

He singled out the dribbling of Brazil's Vinicius Junior. Takehiro Tomiyasu had the ball played through his legs, Moriyasu recalled, and Kaishu Sano was knocked off balance and ended up on the ground. He said he had never seen anything like it.

Judgment

The lesson, he said, was that Brazil's players made their choices faster, a quality he described as judgment.

The successor

Go Oiwa, the manager of Japan's under-21 team, has already been named as Moriyasu's successor. Moriyasu said he hoped Oiwa would take bold risks to win the next match and help Japanese football keep developing.

Eight years

Moriyasu took charge of the national team in 2018 and became the longest-serving manager in its history. At the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, Japan beat Germany and Spain to top their group before losing to Croatia on penalties in the round of 16.

A long run

Japan have qualified for every World Cup since 1998, and reached the round of 16 in 2002, 2010, 2018 and 2022.

A new cycle

The 2026 World Cup, played in the United States, Canada and Mexico, was the first with 48 teams. Japan's next target is the 2030 tournament.

In Europe

Japanese players continue to feature prominently in Europe. On Friday, Ritsu Doan and Keita Kosugi both played the full match as Eintracht Frankfurt beat Cologne 1-0 in the Bundesliga.

SPORTS



Shoki Oda pitches for Japan in a file photo. The Yokohama High School right-hander, whose 156 km/h fastball set a Koshien record this summer, said on Thursday that he would pursue a career in American baseball rather than enter Japan's draft. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

The Week in Baseball: A Teenager Turns His Back on the Draft, the Hawks and BayStars Book a Rematch, and Sato Keeps His Counsel

Shoki Oda's choice of an American path, two Climax Series sweeps and a new manager in Nagoya made it one of the busiest weeks of the autumn; the draft on Thursday will be the first test of what comes next

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

Japanese baseball crammed a season's worth of drama into the past seven days. A high school pitcher walked away from the draft, two league champions met very different fates in the Climax Series, and the offseason began in earnest before the Japan Series had even been decided.

It started on Thursday, when Shoki Oda of Yokohama High School told a news conference at his school that he would pursue a career in American baseball instead of entering Japan's professional draft. "I had the desire to become the best in the world, so I decided," the 18-year-old right-hander said.

A rare path

Oda, who stands 186 centimetres, threw a pitch measured at 156 kilometres an hour at this summer's national championship at Koshien, the fastest in the tournament's history, and had been widely expected to be a first-round pick. He helped Yokohama win the spring invitational tournament in 2025 and pitched for Japan at the under-18 Asian championship in September.

He said he was weighing both the minor leagues and American universities. "There are the minors, but I'm also thinking about university," he said. Japanese clubs, which have watched a stream of established stars leave for the major leagues, now face the prospect of losing some of the best talent before it ever reaches them.

Three in a row for the Hawks

On Friday the SoftBank Hawks completed a sweep of the Nippon-Ham Fighters in the Pacific League's final stage, winning 6-2 in Fukuoka behind Tomoya Masaki's go-ahead two-run homer. It was their third straight Japan Series appearance under manager Hiroki Kokubo.

On Saturday it was the Yokohama DeNA BayStars' turn. They scored four runs with two out in the ninth to beat the Hanshin Tigers 8-5 at Koshien and sweep the Central League champions, setting up a repeat of the 2024 Japan Series, which DeNA won from third place.

A quiet star

For Hanshin, the defeat left questions hanging over the winter. Teruaki Sato, the Central League's triple

crown winner, has told the club he wants to play in the major leagues. Asked about his future after the final game, he would say only: "It has only just finished, so I can't say anything."

A new era in Nagoya

The Chunichi Dragons, last in the Central League this season, named Kimiyasu Kudo as their manager on Thursday. Kudo, 63, won five Japan Series as manager of SoftBank. "The final goal is the championship," he said. By Saturday his coaching staff was taking shape, with Takeshi Yamasaki, who hit 403 home runs in his career, reportedly in line to become batting coach.

Across the Pacific

In the United States, the Milwaukee Brewers swept the Los Angeles Dodgers, ending Shohei Ohtani's season despite his three-run homer in the final game, and will play in the World Series for the first time since 1982. Their opponents will be the Cleveland Guardians or the Tampa Bay Rays; Cleveland lead the American League Championship Series 2-1, but Game 4 was postponed by rain on Friday and moved to Saturday, local time.

The week ahead

The professional draft is on Thursday, October 22, without Oda among the candidates. Two days later, on Saturday, October 24, the Japan Series opens at Yokohama Stadium. The World Series begins the day before, American time.

What it all means

The week offered a snapshot of the forces shaping the game: the pull of America on Japan's best players, now even before they turn professional, a playoff system in which a third-placed team can reach the Japan Series twice in three years, and clubs turning to proven winners to rebuild. Thursday's draft will show how Japanese teams intend to respond.

School, third at this year's national high school championships, won the boys' A javelin at the National Sports Festival in Aomori with 66.70 metres. Mizuki Kobayashi of Nippon Sport Science University won the women's pole vault with a meet record of 4.21 metres.

OPEN WATER: Ichika Kajimoto of Obayashi won the women's 10 kilometres at the Japan Open Water Swimming Championships off Tateyama, Chiba Prefecture, in 1:59:49.6, and Hironobu Minamide of the Kinoshita Group retained the men's title in 1:53:27.8. They and the two runners-up earned places at next year's world championships in Budapest.

VOLLEYBALL: The men's SV League opened at Ariake Colosseum in Tokyo with Tokyo Great Bears beating the newly promoted Hokkaido YS 3-2. The league has grown to 12 teams this season, and the top six reach the playoffs. In the women's league, Osaka M came from behind to beat Okayama 3-1.

BASKETBALL: Hiroshima beat A Chiba 89-71 to stay unbeaten after seven games in the B.League Premier, and Alvark Tokyo beat Gunma 100-86 to improve to 7-1.

BADMINTON: Akane Yamaguchi and Nozomi Okuhara reached the women's singles semi-finals of the Denmark Open in Odense on Friday. Okuhara advanced when her opponent, Yuka Miyazaki, retired during the match. Two Japanese women's doubles pairs, Hinata Suzuki and Nao Yamakita and Miyu Takahashi and Sumire Nakade, also reached the last four.

OLYMPICS: The International Olympic Committee is abolishing 12 commissions, including its programme commission and its culture and Olympic heritage commission, and will tackle specific issues through working groups set up under President Kirsty Coventry.

CYCLING: The UCI has cancelled its urban cycling world championships, which were to be held in Riyadh from November 3 to 7, citing the situation in Saudi Arabia after Houthi attacks on the capital. The BMX freestyle park event was also a qualifier for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

MLB: Game 4 of the American League Championship Series between Cleveland and Tampa Bay, postponed by rain in Cleveland on Friday, was moved to Saturday, local time, with Game 5 on Sunday. Cleveland lead the series 2-1, and the winner meets Milwaukee in the World Series from October 23.

FOOTBALL: FIFA is set to roughly double its spending on developing the game, to about 1 trillion yen over the four years from 2027, with each of its 211 member associations eligible for up to about 4 billion yen, according to reports this week.

SPORTS

Batting Champion Franmil Reyes Will Stay With Nippon-Ham, and Takeshi Yamasaki, 403 Home Runs, Joins Kudo's Staff in Nagoya

The Dominican slugger hit .313 with 32 homers; Chunichi also bring back Kazuki Yoshimi, Ryosuke Morioka and Iori Katsura as coaches, according to people familiar with the plans

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Franmil Reyes, the Nippon-Ham Fighters' slugger who won the Pacific League batting title this season, is set to stay with the club for a fourth season next year, people familiar with the matter said on Saturday.

Reyes, 31, a native of the Dominican Republic, hit .313 with 32 home runs and 82 runs batted in this season. He left Japan for home on Saturday.

'Getting closer'

In a statement released through the club, Reyes said he believed the Fighters were getting closer to their goal of winning the Japan Series for Hokkaido, that the team's future looked bright, and that he wanted to be part of it.

Nippon-Ham, who finished third in the Pacific League, were swept by SoftBank in the Climax Series final stage this week.

Yamasaki returns

In Nagoya, the Chunichi Dragons are bringing in Takeshi Yamasaki, 57, as batting coach for next season, according to people familiar with the plans. It would be his first full-time coaching job since he retired after the 2013 season.

His task will be to fix the team's run production, a

long-standing weakness.

A slugger's record

Yamasaki, a right-handed power hitter from Aichi Prefecture, joined Chunichi after being drafted in the second round and spent many years with the club, helping it win the Central League pennant in 1999. He led the league in home runs with Chunichi in 1996 and with Rakuten in 2007, one of the few players to win home run titles in both leagues.

In 2,249 games he hit .257 with 1,834 hits, 403 home runs and 1,205 runs batted in.

Kudo's team

The new manager, Kimiyasu Kudo, 63, was Yamasaki's senior at Aikodai Meiden High School in Nagoya. Three other former Dragons are expected to join the staff: Kazuki Yoshimi, 42, Ryosuke Morioka, 42, and Iori Katsura, 35. Their roles have not been decided.

Kikuchi at home

Yusei Kikuchi, the Los Angeles Angels pitcher, held a baseball clinic at his old school, Hanamaki Higashi High School in Iwate Prefecture, on Saturday for about 110 children from preschool to junior high school age. He hit fly balls and grounders for them and told them to eat well and sleep well while they were growing. He said he wanted to help the children achieve their dreams, and that the day had renewed his own determination.

SPORTS

The Hakone Ekiden: How a Relay Proposed by Japan's First Olympic Marathoner Became the Country's New Year Ritual

Ten runners from each team cover about 217 km between central Tokyo and Lake Ashi over January 2 and 3; first run in 1920, it now draws huge television audiences

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The Tokyo-Hakone Round-Trip College Ekiden Race, known simply as Hakone, is the most famous of Japan's long-distance relays and one of the most-watched sporting events of the year.

It was first held in 1920 with four universities taking part. The idea is credited to Shizo Kanakuri, Japan's first Olympic marathon runner, who wanted to develop runners capable of competing with the world.

The course

The race covers about 217 kilometres in 10 legs over two days. On January 2, five runners from each team carry a sash, called a tasuki, from Otemachi in central Tokyo to Lake Ashi in Hakone, climbing into the mountains on the fifth leg. On January 3, five more run the route back to Tokyo.

Who runs

The race is for universities belonging to the Kanto student athletics federation. The top 10 teams from each year's race are seeded for the next, and the remaining places are decided at the October qualifier, in which each team's 10 fastest times over a half marathon are added together.

A team made up of runners from universities that did not qualify also takes part, but its results are not officially ranked.

The mountain

The fifth leg, an ascent of more than 800 metres into the Hakone mountains, has produced some of the race's most famous performances, and runners who excel on it have been nicknamed "god of the mountain."

A television event

The race has been broadcast live from start to finish since 1987 and regularly draws some of the highest television ratings of the year. Spectators line the roadside along almost the entire route despite the winter cold.

Its critics

Critics say the race's popularity concentrates talent and attention on a single event, and that some young runners are worn down by the demands of training for it. Supporters say it has given Japanese distance running a depth of talent few countries can match.

The 103rd race

This season's race, the 103rd, will be run on January 2 and 3 with 21 teams, including Toyo University, which won Saturday's qualifier.

SPORTS



The emblem of the 5th Asian Para Games, Aichi-Nagoya 2026, which open on Sunday evening. (File image: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

The Asian Para Games Open in Nagoya Tonight With a Record 45 Countries and Regions, Including North Korea, and Full Stands

About 4,000 athletes will compete in 18 sports until Saturday; wheelchair tennis star Tokito Oda chases a place at the Los Angeles Paralympics, and organisers promise no repeat of the Asian Games' blunders

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games open on Sunday with a ceremony at Paloma Mizuho Stadium in Nagoya, bringing a record 45 countries and regions, including North Korea, to the second half of the region's biggest sports festival.

About 4,000 athletes are expected to take part in 18 sports over seven days, until Saturday, October 24. Some events began before the opening ceremony, and Japan, the host nation, has entered around 280 athletes.

The ceremony

According to the official tournament website, a pre-show begins at 4 p.m., and the ceremony itself at 6 p.m.

Spectators welcome

Aichi Governor Hideaki Omura, who chairs the organising committee, urged people to come and cheer at a news conference in Nagoya on Saturday. "The Tokyo Paralympics were held without spectators in principle," he said, "but this time the Games are being held with spectators."

A Paralympic ticket at stake

The competitions in wheelchair tennis and shooting double as qualifying events for the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics. Tokito Oda of Tokai Rika, the world No. 1 in men's wheelchair tennis and a native of Aichi Prefecture, will earn a place in Los Angeles if he wins the men's singles, and is expected to be one of the faces of the Games.

Learning from the Asian Games

The Asian Games, which closed in the prefecture on October 4, were marred by a string of operational mistakes, including the playing of North Korea's national anthem at a men's hockey match involving South Korea and a bus carrying athletes that failed to arrive.

Mr Omura said the organisers would strengthen their checking systems and share information thoroughly so that the Para Games run without trouble. He said they wanted to do everything possible so that athletes could compete with peace of mind.

Born in Oita

The Asian Para Games grew out of the Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled, known as FESPIC, first held in Oita Prefecture in 1975. They were championed by the late Dr. Yutaka Nakamura, the Oita doctor often called the father of the Paralympic movement in Japan.

A strong start

Japan's athletes have already made an impact. The men's wheelchair basketball team beat China 76-38 on Friday, and on Saturday both goalball teams won their opening games by wide margins.

Where to watch

Events are spread across venues in Aichi Prefecture, including Toyohashi, where the goalball tournament is being held, and the organisers have urged the public to come and watch.

SPORTS

Paris Champions Japan Open the Goalball Tournament by Routing Qatar 12-2, and the Women Beat Thailand 10-0

Daiki Kajiware wins his first para badminton match and blind football beat India 6-1, but Japan's women's wheelchair basketball team lose to China

By the Sports Desk

Japan's goalball teams began their campaigns at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games with emphatic victories on Saturday, a day before the official opening ceremony.

The men's team, gold medallists at the 2024 Paris Paralympics, beat Qatar 12-2 in their first-round game at Toyohashi City General Gymnasium, and the women beat Thailand 10-0.

Goalball

Goalball is played by visually impaired athletes, who wear blackout eyeshades so that all compete on equal terms. Teams of three try to roll a ball containing bells into the opponents' goal, which stretches the full width of the court, while defenders listen for the ball and dive to block it.

Boccia

In boccia, Kazuki Takahashi of Forval won his opening match in the men's individual BC3 class, for athletes with severe physical impairments. Hiromi Endo of the Fukushima Prefecture association, runner-up at this summer's world championships, lost her first match in the women's BC1 class.

Table tennis

Katsukazu Yagi of Dentsu Digital won both of his group matches in men's singles class 7 and advanced to the last eight.

Badminton

Daiki Kajiware of Daihatsu, the Paralympic champion at both the Tokyo and Paris Games, won his opening match in the men's WH2 singles for wheelchair players convincingly.

Blind football

Japan's blind football team beat India 6-1 for their first win, leaving them with one win and one defeat after losing to China 1-0 on Friday.

A setback

The women's wheelchair basketball team, who beat Iran 65-20 on Friday, lost their second game to China 31-48.

Today

The Games open officially on Sunday evening, and competition continues until October 24.

SPORTS

Yusaku Hosono Takes a One-Shot Lead Into the Final Round of the Japan Open; Ai Suzuki and Lee Min-young Share the Fujitsu Ladies Lead

Shugo Imahira shoots 66 to close in at Tarao; Ayaka Furue slips to eighth in Chiba, and Rio Takeda is five behind in Shanghai

By the Sports Desk

Yusaku Hosono kept his lead after the third round of the Japan Open Golf Championship at Tarao Country Club in Shiga Prefecture on Saturday, and will take a one-stroke advantage into the final round as he chases the second win of his career on the Japan Golf Tour.

Hosono shot a two-under-par 68 for a 54-hole total of 197, 13 under par on the 7,411-yard, par-70 course. The day's play also included the completion of the second round, which had been held over from Friday.

Imahira closes in

Shugo Imahira, a two-time money leader on the tour, shot 66, the best round reported on the day, to move into second place, one stroke behind.

Three players were tied for third at eight under, among them Hirotsugu Ikemura, and Ryuichi Oiwa was among those tied for sixth at seven under.

Sixty-four players, including four amateurs, made it through to the weekend, and 2,373 spectators came out in sunshine.

Fujitsu Ladies

At the Fujitsu Ladies at Tokyu Seven Hundred Club in Chiba Prefecture, Ai Suzuki shot 69 and Lee Min-young of South Korea 68 to share the lead at 12 under par, on a total of 204.

Suzuki, who has won 22 times on the Japan LPGA

Tour, moved up from third place, and Lee, an eight-time winner, from fourth. Nana Suganuma was among those one stroke behind, and Megumi Kido, Kotone Hori and Minami Hiruta were tied for fifth.

Ayaka Furue, who has won the tournament three times, began the day in a share of the lead but shot 74 and fell to eighth.

Shanghai

On the American LPGA Tour, Rio Takeda shot 71 in the third round of the Buick LPGA Shanghai and was tied for fourth at four under par, five strokes behind the leader, Choi Hye-jin of South Korea.

Yuri Yoshida shot 67 to move up to ninth at even par, while Erika Hara shot 76 and slipped to 14th.

Sunday

All three tournaments end on Sunday.

SPORTS

Hiroshima Go Top of J1 With a Fourth Straight Win as FC Tokyo Thrash Verdy in the Derby for Their Fifth in a Row

Sanfrecce beat Kyoto 3-0 and FC Tokyo beat their neighbours 4-0, leaving the two level on 23 points; Verdy are still without a win after 10 games

By the Sports Desk

Sanfrecce Hiroshima moved provisionally to the top of the J1 League on Saturday with a 3-0 win over Kyoto Sanga at Edion Peace Wing Hiroshima, their fourth victory in a row.

FC Tokyo kept pace by beating Tokyo Verdy 4-0 in the Tokyo derby for their fifth straight win. Both clubs have 23 points, with Hiroshima ahead on goal difference.

Verdy's struggles

The defeat left Tokyo Verdy without a win in their first 10 matches of the season.

Elsewhere

Nagoya Grampus won 3-1 away to Kashiwa Reysol, who stayed on 21 points. Kashima Antlers beat Nagasaki 2-0 to reach 19 points, and Kawasaki Frontale beat Cerezo Osaka 4-2.

Urawa Reds edged Mito Hollyhock 1-0, Gamba Osaka came from behind late to draw 2-2 at Shimizu S-Pulse, and JEF United Chiba and Yokohama F. Marinos drew 0-0.

The round

Saturday's eight matches made up most of the 10th round of the season. The J.League has moved to an autumn-to-spring calendar this season, starting in August and running through to next spring, in line with the major European leagues.

Hiroshima's form

Hiroshima, who won the league three times in four years between 2012 and 2015, moved into Edion Peace Wing, a new stadium in the centre of the city, in 2024.

The cup

Hiroshima are also the holders of the YBC Levain Cup, the league cup, and are still in this year's competition.

SPORTS

Figueroa Is Stripped of His WBA Featherweight Belt for Missing Weight, Leaving Kazuki Kameda One Win From a Third World Title

The American came in about 360 grams over the limit in Las Vegas; if Kameda wins on Saturday night, local time, he becomes champion, and any other result leaves the title vacant

By the Sports Desk

Brandon Figueroa of the United States was stripped of his World Boxing Association featherweight title after failing to make the weight for his defence against Japan's Kazuki Kameda in Las Vegas, Kyodo News reported.

At the official weigh-in on Friday, local time, Figueroa was about 360 grams over the limit. Kameda, who fights for the TMK gym, came in at 57.0 kilograms, 100 grams inside it.

What is at stake

The fight was due to go ahead on Saturday night in Las Vegas, which is Sunday in Japan. Only Kameda can win the title: if he wins, he becomes the new champion, and if Figueroa wins or the fight is drawn, the belt becomes vacant.

Third weight

Victory would make Kameda a world champion at a third weight, a long-held goal. He said he was grateful for the opportunity and would give everything in the ring.

A second chance

Kameda lost a challenge for the International Boxing Federation's featherweight title in May 2025, and the WBA fight offered a fresh chance at the top of the division.

Four belts

The WBA is one of the four major sanctioning bodies in professional boxing, along with the WBC, the IBF and the WBO, each of which recognises its own champions.

A boxing family

Kameda is the youngest of three brothers who all became world champions, a family that has long drawn huge television audiences in Japan, along with controversy.

Weight rules

Boxers who miss the weight for a title fight lose the title on the scales, but the bout can still go ahead if both camps and the sanctioning body agree. Penalties often include a fine from the fighter's purse.

The result

The result was not known when this edition went to press.

SPORTS

Tsuyaka Uchino and Maho Kakita Win Madison Bronze at the Track Cycling World Championships; Kaiya Ota Reaches the Sprint Semi-Finals

Uchino adds a second medal in Shanghai after her omnium silver; Kazushige Kuboki, last year's silver medallist, finishes 11th in the men's omnium

By the Sports Desk

Tsuyaka Uchino and Maho Kakita won the bronze medal in the women's madison at the track cycling world championships in Shanghai on Saturday, giving Japan another podium finish on the fourth day of competition.

For Uchino, of the Japan Keirin Riders Association, it was a second medal of the championships after her silver in the women's omnium on Friday. Kakita is a student at Waseda University.

The madison

The madison is a long-distance race for teams of two, in which riders take turns racing and hand over to each other with a hand sling, scoring points in intermediate sprints and by lapping the field.

Ota marches on

In the men's sprint, Kaiya Ota advanced to the semi-finals, but Shinji Nakano and Minato Nakaishi went out in the second round.

Omnium

Kazushige Kuboki of the Japan Keirin Riders Association, who won silver in the men's omnium at last year's championships, finished 11th.

Time trial

In the women's 1,000-metre time trial, which is not an Olympic event, Mizuki Ikeda of Waseda University finished 14th.

A New York name

The madison takes its name from Madison Square Garden in New York, where six-day races for teams of riders drew big crowds in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Back at the Olympics

The event returned to the Olympic programme for men at the Tokyo Games in 2021, when a women's madison was held at the Olympics for the first time.

A rising force

Japan's track cyclists, many of them professionals in the country's keirin racing system, have become regular medal contenders in recent years, particularly in the sprint events and the women's endurance races.

Still to come

Ota now goes on to the semi-finals of the men's sprint, one of the championships' blue riband events.

SPORTS



A poster advertising the Grand Sumo Thailand Tournament, organised to celebrate the 84th birthday of King Bhumibol Adulyadej in 2011. The Japan Sumo Association plans a tour of Bangkok next June, the 140th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Thailand. (File image: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

Sumo Will Go to Bangkok Next June for the 140th Anniversary of Ties With Thailand, and a Wrestler With a Thai Mother Is Fired Up

Juryo wrestler Ikumeda says he wants to climb into the top division in time to make the trip; a visit to the site of the old Japanese town in Ayutthaya is under consideration

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

The Japan Sumo Association held a press event in Tokyo on Saturday for its tour of Bangkok next June, marking the 140th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Thailand, and one wrestler had a particular reason to look forward to it.

Ikumeda, a wrestler in the second-tier juryo division whose mother is from Thailand, said the occasion had fired him up. "I want to do my best and rise up the rankings," he said.

Makuuchi first

Overseas tours are in principle for wrestlers in the top makuuchi division, so Ikumeda will need to win promotion to be sure of a place on the trip.

A public celebration

The event, at Roppongi Hills in Tokyo's Minato Ward, was open to the public and included a kagami-biraki, the ceremonial breaking open of a sake barrel, with Ikumeda, the makuuchi wrestler Midorifuji and Takasaki oyakata, the former top-division wrestler Kinkaizan.

Takasaki oyakata said it was a great honour to help celebrate the milestone through sumo.

Bouts and ceremonies

The association stages overseas tours at the invitation of foreign countries to promote friendship. The programmes are built mainly around bouts and

dohyo-iri, the ring-entering ceremonies of the top wrestlers.

An event at the site of the old Japanese town in Ayutthaya, the former Thai capital, is also being considered.

Japan's oldest ties in Southeast Asia

Japan and Thailand established diplomatic relations in 1887. Contacts go back much further: in the 17th century a community of Japanese merchants and former samurai lived in Ayutthaya, and one of them, Yamada Nagamasa, rose to high rank at the Siamese court.

Sumo abroad

The association's tours abroad are rare events. Last October it staged five days of bouts at the Royal Albert Hall in London, its first visit there since 1991.

Not the first

Sumo has been seen in Thailand before. The poster on this page advertised the Grand Sumo Thailand Tournament, organised to celebrate the 84th birthday of King Bhumibol Adulyadej in 2011.

An open year

Neither of the spring's classic winners is running. Star Anise, the Oka Sho winner, went to the Sprinters Stakes instead, and Juryoku Pierrot, who won the Oaks, has been withdrawn. That means there will be no Triple Tiara winner this year.

The history

The Shuka Sho has been the final leg of the fillies' Triple Crown since 1996. Last year's race went to Embroidery.

The trials

The Rose Stakes, which Monroe Walk won, and the Shion Stakes, won by Master Soarer, are the two main trial races for the Shuka Sho, and Master Soarer is also in Sunday's field.

SPORTS

Scoreboard

By the Sports Desk

CLIMAX SERIES, CENTRAL: DeNA 8, Hanshin 5 (DeNA win 4-1, counting Hanshin's one-win advantage, and advance to the Japan Series).

J1: Hiroshima 3, Kyoto 0; FC Tokyo 4, Tokyo Verdy 0; Kashiwa 1, Nagoya 3; Kashima 2, Nagasaki 0; Kawasaki 4, Cerezo Osaka 2; Urawa 1, Mito 0; Shimizu 2, Gamba Osaka 2; Chiba 0, Yokohama F. Marinos 0.

GOLF, JAPAN OPEN, ROUND 3: 1. Yusaku Hosono 197 (-13); 2. Shugo Imahira (-12); 3= Hirotosugu Ikemura and two others (-8).

GOLF, FUJITSU LADIES, ROUND 3: 1= Ai Suzuki, Lee Min-young 204 (-12).

GOLF, BUICK LPGA SHANGHAI, ROUND 3: 1. Choi Hye-jin (-9); 4= Rio Takeda (-4); 9. Yuri

Yoshida (E); 14. Erika Hara.

TRACK CYCLING WORLDS, SHANGHAI: Women's madison bronze, Tsuyaka Uchino and Maho Kakita.

ASIAN PARA GAMES: Goalball, men, Japan 12, Qatar 2; women, Japan 10, Thailand 0. Blind football, Japan 6, India 1. Wheelchair basketball, women, Japan 31, China 48.

B.LEAGUE PREMIER: Hiroshima 89, A Chiba 71; Alvark Tokyo 100, Gunma 86; Sendai 85, Utsunomiya 81.

SV LEAGUE, MEN: Tokyo GB 3, Hokkaido YS 2. WOMEN: Osaka M 3, Okayama 1.

TOKYO BIG SIX: Keio 9, Meiji 5; Rikkyo 1, Waseda 0.

OPEN WATER, 10 KM: Women, Ichika Kajimoto 1:59:49.6; men, Hironobu Minamide 1:53:27.8.

CULTURE

Japan on UNESCO's Intangible Heritage List

By the Culture Desk

NOGAKU, NINGYO JORURI BUNRAKU AND KABUKI: Inscribed in 2008, the year the list was established.

GAGAKU: The music and dance of the imperial court, 2009.

WASHOKU: Traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese, 2013.

WASHI: The craft of handmade paper, 2014.

YAMA, HOKO, YATAI: Thirty-three float festivals, including Kawagoe's, 2016.

RAIHO-SHIN: Rituals of visiting deities in masks and costumes, including the Namahage of Akita, 2018.

WOODEN ARCHITECTURE: Traditional skills for conserving and passing on wooden buildings, 2020.

FURYU-ODORI: Ritual dances of hope and prayer, 2022.

SAKE: Traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making with koji mould, 2024.

SHODO: Calligraphy, awaiting a decision at the committee in Xiamen from November 30; it would be Japan's 24th entry.

CULTURE

Japanese Calligraphy Awaits UNESCO's Verdict: Advisers Are Due to Say Within Weeks Whether Shodo Should Join the Intangible Heritage List

If recommended, the art of brush, ink and inkstone would become Japan's 24th entry at the committee meeting in Xiamen from November 30; the government calls it a custom rooted in daily life

By the Culture Desk

UNESCO's advisory body is expected to issue its recommendation soon on whether shodo, Japanese calligraphy, should be added to the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, according to the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

The agency says UNESCO's deadline for releasing the recommendation is early on the morning of November 3, Japan time, though the exact date is not known.

The final decision

If the evaluation body recommends inscription, the decision is expected to be confirmed at the meeting of UNESCO's intergovernmental committee from November 30 to December 5 in Xiamen, in China's Fujian Province. Shodo would become Japan's 24th entry on the list.

Japan's entries

Japan's 23 existing entries include washoku, traditional Japanese cuisine, added in 2013, and washi, handmade paper, in 2014. The most recent, in 2024, was the traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making with koji mould.

What shodo is

Shodo is the art of writing kanji and kana by hand with a brush, ink and an inkstone, using traditional brush techniques. The government applied for it to be listed in 2024 and resubmitted the application in 2025.

Part of daily life

The government's case rests on the idea that shodo is a social custom deeply rooted in everyday life. It is

used in letters, in kakizome, the first calligraphy of the New Year, and in signing the guest books at weddings and funerals.

Millions of children learn calligraphy at school, and kakizome contests are held across the country every January.

A long history

Calligraphy developed in Japan after Buddhism arrived around the sixth century and monks began copying sutras by hand. In the Heian period, from the late eighth century to the late 12th, a distinctively Japanese style emerged, along with the flowing kana script.

At home first

In 2021 the Agency for Cultural Affairs made shodo one of the first two registered intangible cultural properties under a new national system, alongside traditional sake brewing, a step that prepared the way for the UNESCO application.

In the digital age

Recognition would come at a time when most everyday writing is done on keyboards and screens, and when the brush has become, for many people, something used only at school or at New Year.

CULTURE

Walk Into Van Gogh's 'Starry Night Over the Rhone' in Kochi, Where an Immersive Museum Surrounds Visitors With Paintings and Sound

The prefecture's show, open until December 6, also brings to life the folding screens of the Kochi painter known as Ekin

By the Culture Desk

An immersive museum that wraps visitors in paintings and sound opened in Kochi on Saturday, in an effort by the prefecture to draw young people to art.

Immersive Museum Kochi surrounds visitors with large screens on all four sides, on which artworks are projected with accompanying sound. It runs until December 6.

Under the stars

In one sequence, Vincent van Gogh's "Starry Night Over the Rhone" comes to life as the light on the water sparkles in time with the sound of a slowly flowing river, creating the feeling of gazing at the stars from the riverbank.

From Provence to Tosa

The programme also includes works by Paul Cezanne and other Post-Impressionists, alongside the folding-screen paintings of Hirose Kinzo (1812-1876), the Kochi artist better known as Ekin, famous for vivid scenes from kabuki and puppet plays.

Ekin's story

The son of a hairdresser in Kochi, Ekin trained in Edo under painters of the Kano school and became head painter to the Kirima family, chief retainers of the Tosa domain. He lost the post after a rival accused him of forging a work by the master Kano Tan'yu, and went on to paint dozens of dramatic screens of scenes from the theatre.

Why immersive

"We hope it will give young people a reason to take an interest in art," a prefectural official said.

Immersive exhibitions, which use projection and sound to place visitors inside famous paintings, have become popular around the world in recent years, drawing audiences who might not visit a traditional gallery.

Ekin's festival

Ekin's screens are best known from the Ekin Festival in the Akaoka district of Konan, east of Kochi City, where they are displayed outdoors by candlelight on the third weekend of July. A museum in the town, the Ekingura, holds 23 of his screens of kabuki scenes.

The original

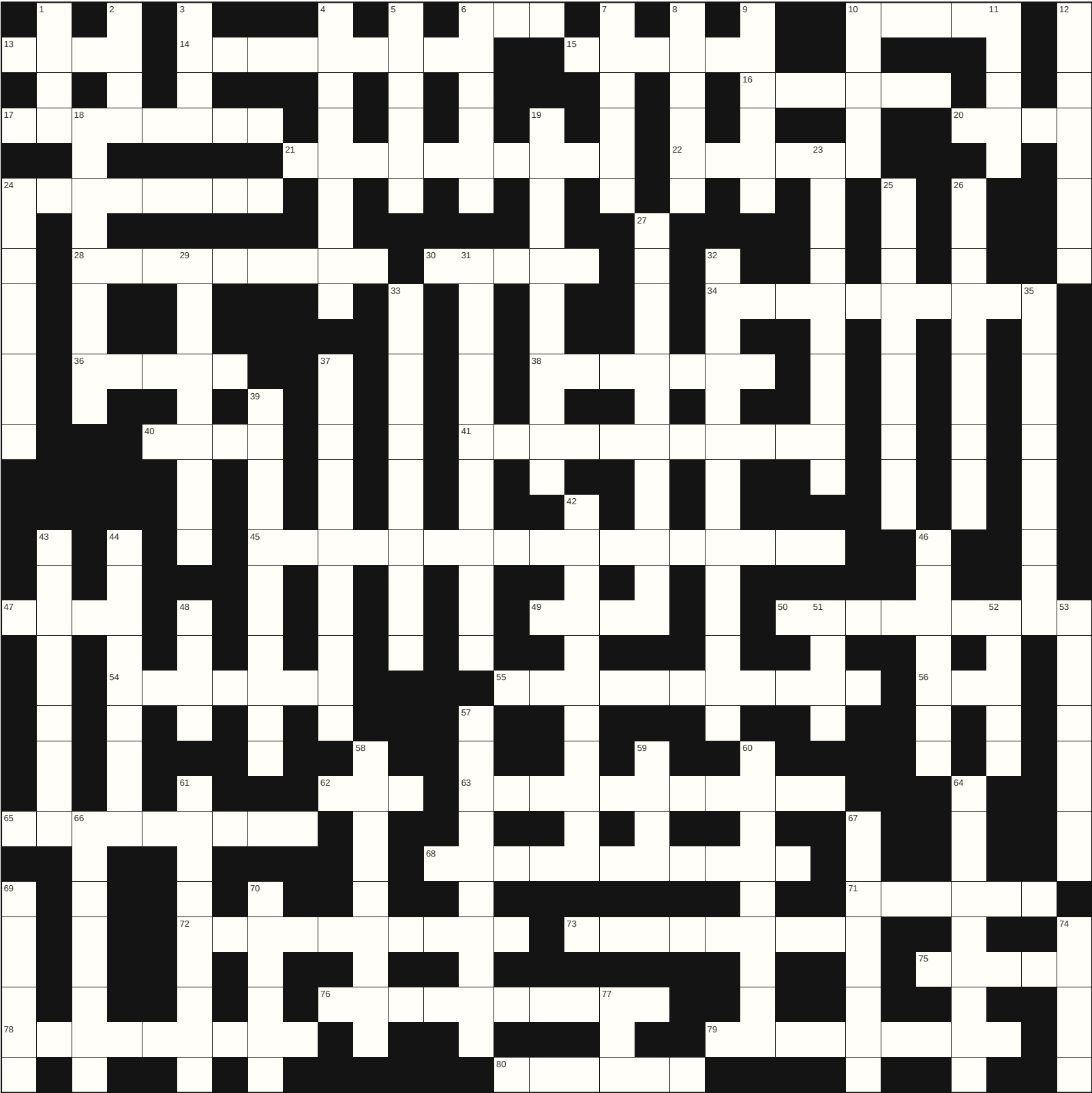
Van Gogh painted "Starry Night Over the Rhone" in Arles in 1888, the year before his more famous "The Starry Night." The original hangs in the Musee d'Orsay in Paris.

Seven weeks

The exhibition runs for seven weeks, closing on December 6.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 83 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional.

SPORTS

Toyo Win the Hakone Ekiden Qualifier as Ten Universities Earn Places in the 103rd Race on January 2 and 3

Chuo Gakuin, Tokai, Senshu and Tokyo University of Agriculture follow Toyo through the half marathon at Showa Kinen Park; Hosei take the last place

By the Sports Desk

Toyo University won the qualifying race for the 103rd Hakone Ekiden on Saturday, leading 10 universities into the New Year relay from Tokyo to the mountains of Hakone and back.

The half marathon started at the Ground Self-Defense Force's Tachikawa garrison in western Tokyo and finished in Showa Kinen Park. Each team's result is the combined time of its 10 fastest runners.

The qualifiers

Toyo's 10 runners covered the 21.0975-kilometre course in a combined 10 hours, 31 minutes and 30 seconds. Chuo Gakuin were second, about two minutes behind.

They were followed by Tokai, Senshu, Tokyo University of Agriculture, Yamanashi Gakuin, Daito Bunka, Kanagawa, Nippon Sport Science University and Hosei.

The field

The race on January 2 and 3 will have 21 teams. Ten seeded schools from the last race qualified automatically: Aoyama Gakuin, the defending champions, Kokugakuin, Juntendo, Waseda, Chuo, Komazawa, Josai, Soka, Teikyo and Nihon.

A team of runners from universities that did not qualify, representing the Kanto student federation, also takes part.

Toyo's return

For Toyo, a perennial contender, the qualifier was a reminder of how fine the margins have become. The school, which has won the race four times, lost its seeding at the last race and had to earn its place the hard way.

The race

The Hakone Ekiden covers about 217 kilometres in 10 legs over two days and is one of the most-watched sporting events in Japan, drawing huge crowds along the roadside and a large television audience every New Year.

The season

The other two major university relays of the season are the Izumo Ekiden, held on Sports Day in October, and the All-Japan University Ekiden in early November.

CULTURE

Kawagoe's Towering Floats Take to the Streets of 'Little Edo' for a Final Day, With Musicians Battling Wherever Two Meet

The festival, dating to the mid-17th century and on UNESCO's list since 2016 among Japan's float festivals, draws around a million visitors over its two days

By the Culture Desk

The Kawagoe Festival in Saitama Prefecture reaches its second and final day on Sunday, as ornate double-decked floats are pulled through the old merchant quarter of a city that likes to call itself Little Edo.

The festival is held every year on the third weekend of October, and around a million people visit over the two days, under clear skies this weekend.

Dolls on top

About 20 of the 29 floats kept in the city take part. Each carries a large doll on its upper level, drawn from Noh plays, folk tales or history, and the upper storey can be raised and lowered and turned to face the crowd.

The musical battle

The highlight comes when floats from different neighbourhoods meet. Their musicians, playing flutes and drums on the stages of the floats, turn to face one another and try to outplay their rivals, a contest known as hikkawase that draws the densest crowds of the weekend, especially after dark when the floats are lit by lanterns.

A long history

The festival traces its origins to the mid-17th century, when Matsudaira Nobutsuna, the lord of the Kawagoe domain, donated a portable shrine and festival equipment to Hikawa Shrine.

National and world recognition

It was designated an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property of Japan in 2005, and in 2016 it was added to UNESCO's list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as one of the Yama, Hoko, Yatai float festivals of Japan.

Little Edo

Kawagoe, north-west of Tokyo, prospered in the Edo period as a supplier of goods to the capital. Its streets of kurazukuri, the clay-walled storehouse shops built by merchants as protection against fire, and its wooden bell tower, the Toki no Kane, draw visitors throughout the year.

The season of floats

October is the high season for Japan's float festivals, and the Kawagoe weekend coincides with drum-float festivals in Ehime and with preparations for Kyoto's Jidai Matsuri on Thursday.

CULTURE

October 18 in History

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1866: Philipp Franz von Siebold, the German doctor who taught Western medicine in Nagasaki, dies in Munich.

1867: The United States formally takes possession of Alaska from Russia, a day still marked in the state as Alaska Day.

1889: Foreign Minister Shigenobu Okuma loses a leg when a nationalist throws a bomb at his carriage in Tokyo, in protest at his plans to revise the unequal treaties.

1898: The United States takes control of Puerto Rico after the Spanish-American War.

1922: The British Broadcasting Company is formed.

1929: Britain's Privy Council rules that women are "persons" under Canadian law and can sit in the Senate.

1931: Thomas Edison dies in New Jersey.

1967: The British model Twiggy arrives in Japan, setting off a boom in miniskirts; the date is marked as Miniskirt Day.

1977: West German commandos storm a hijacked Lufthansa jet at Mogadishu airport and free the hostages.

1989: Erich Honecker steps down as leader of East Germany, weeks before the fall of the Berlin Wall.

2007: A bombing in Karachi kills more than 130 people as crowds welcome Benazir Bhutto home from exile.

2011: Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit is freed after five years in captivity in Gaza, in exchange for more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners.

IN JAPAN: October 18 is Frozen Food Day, chosen

ACROSS

6. Siebold's daughter, a pioneer doctor (3)
10. Katsuki ___, DeNA's starter (5)
13. Japan's laboratory module on the station (4)
14. Stimulus policy ministers have distanced themselves from (9)
15. Hokkaido point used in the faulty quake calculation (6)
16. Capital whose airport has been hit (6)
17. Dr Yutaka ___, father of Japan's Paralympic movement (8)
20. What readers tend to do on screens (4)
21. Unbeaten 1.3 favourite for the Shuka Sho (10)
22. Typhoon No. 30 (6)
24. Children with it can have digital books read aloud (8)
28. Shota ___, who homered twice for Hanshin (9)
30. Handmade paper on UNESCO's list since 2014 (5)
34. The new textbooks arrive with the next ___ guidelines (10)
36. Home of some authors of the 2018 reading analysis (5)
38. Stadium where the sweep was completed (7)
40. Kimiyasu ___, Chunichi's new manager (4)
41. Keep at least 30 of them between eyes and screen (11)
45. Trump's preferred name for AI (17)
47. Jessica ___, her partner outside the station (4)
49. Christina ___, on the first all-female spacewalk (4)
50. \$10 billion framework launched in April (9)
54. Kazuki ___, former Dragons pitcher joining the coaching staff (7)
55. What Teruaki Sato won in the Central League (11)
56. Pope ___ XIV, out of hospital (3)
62. Yamagata hot spring where the colour is good (3)
63. And another (11)
65. First cat in space (9)
68. Creator of Tennis for Two (11)
71. Base where the Global Hawk wreckage is being taken (6)
72. Laboratory where Tennis for Two was shown (10)
73. Island whose 2020 quake also fooled the system (9)
75. Yusuke ___, whose two-out single tied it in the first (5)
76. The TR-1 had four (10)
78. GSDF garrison where the qualifier started (9)
79. Nagano highland where the colour is progressing (9)
80. District where the fire broke out (6)

DOWN

1. Prefecture where FESPIC began in 1975 (4)
2. Genta ___, Okinawa's governor (4)
3. Nagano city of the tunnel crash (4)
4. ___ tax, floated to pay for defence (9)
5. Oda is weighing them, and American universities (6)
6. Home of the other authors (6)
7. Site of the Futenma replacement base (6)
8. Sidney ___, missionary behind the doll campaign (6)
9. Non-EU country that could qualify for the car preference (6)
10. Gunma mountain where leaves are turning (5)
11. ___ III, one of the new cruise ships (5)
12. Thai king whose 84th birthday a sumo tournament marked (8)
18. Racecourse a filly bolted from (9)
19. Events whose applicants' data may have leaked (11)
23. The principle of the draft guidelines, in two words (10)
24. Her school, ___ International High School (8)
25. Danger off Miami on Sunday (10)
26. They will edit the new elementary textbooks in fiscal 2027 (10)
27. Shoki Oda's school (12)
29. Western Japan's highest peak (9)
31. Pigments that turn maples red (12)
32. Quantitative study of research, one of Fujigaki's fields (14)
33. Fully digital textbooks barred at and below it (11)
35. Makuuchi wrestler at the Roppongi event (10)
37. Donetsk town Putin claims to have captured (11)
39. Where Tokage came ashore (11)
42. Indiana city of the reunion (11)
43. Oaks runner-up, second favourite (9)
44. Tottori city where Aiko heard women's views on disasters (9)
46. The rice forecast points to one (7)
48. River near which she was caught (4)
51. Go ___, the next national team manager (4)
52. Calligraphy awaiting UNESCO's verdict (5)
53. Hokkaido city where a forest fire burns (8)
57. Expressway where a truck hit a tunnel wall (10)
58. Indonesian island the plant would supply (9)
59. University one win from the Big Six title (4)
60. Mitsuhiro ___, organiser of the Nagasaki dialogue (9)
61. Paper will stay at their heart under the draft guidelines (9)
64. He called the violence 'unacceptable' (9)
66. Ada ___, who saw the engine's potential (8)
67. Takeshi ___, 403 career home runs (8)
69. Kyoto area whose bamboo made lamp filaments (6)
70. Hardy kiwi of the northern forests (6)
74. Kaoru ___, national javelin winner (5)
77. Shoki ___, who will skip Japan's draft (3)

by the industry because frozen food is kept at minus 18 degrees and the tenth month can be read "to," as in reito, freezing.

CULTURE

Festivals and Events This Week

By the Culture Desk

KAWAGOE FESTIVAL, SAITAMA (SUNDAY): The final day of the parade of towering floats through the old merchant quarter.

NIIHAMA TAIKO FESTIVAL, EHIME (SUNDAY): The last day of one of Shikoku's great drum-float festivals.

GOTOCHI CHARA HAKU, HIKONE (SUNDAY): More than 100 local mascots from 35 prefectures.

ASIAN PARA GAMES, AICHI (FROM SUNDAY): The opening ceremony at Paloma Mizuho Stadium begins at 6 p.m.; competition runs until October 24.

SHUKA SHO, KYOTO RACECOURSE (SUNDAY): The final leg of the fillies' Triple Tiara, post time 3:40 p.m.

JAPAN OPEN GOLF AND FUJITSU LADIES (SUNDAY): Final rounds in Shiga and Chiba.

TOKYO BIG SIX (SUNDAY): Keio can clinch the autumn title at Jingu.

JIDAI MATSURI, KYOTO (THURSDAY): A costume procession spanning more than a thousand years of Kyoto's history, from the Imperial Palace to Heian Shrine.

KURAMA FIRE FESTIVAL, KYOTO (THURSDAY NIGHT): Huge burning torches are carried through the village of Kurama.

BASEBALL DRAFT (THURSDAY): Japan's 12 professional clubs choose their new players.

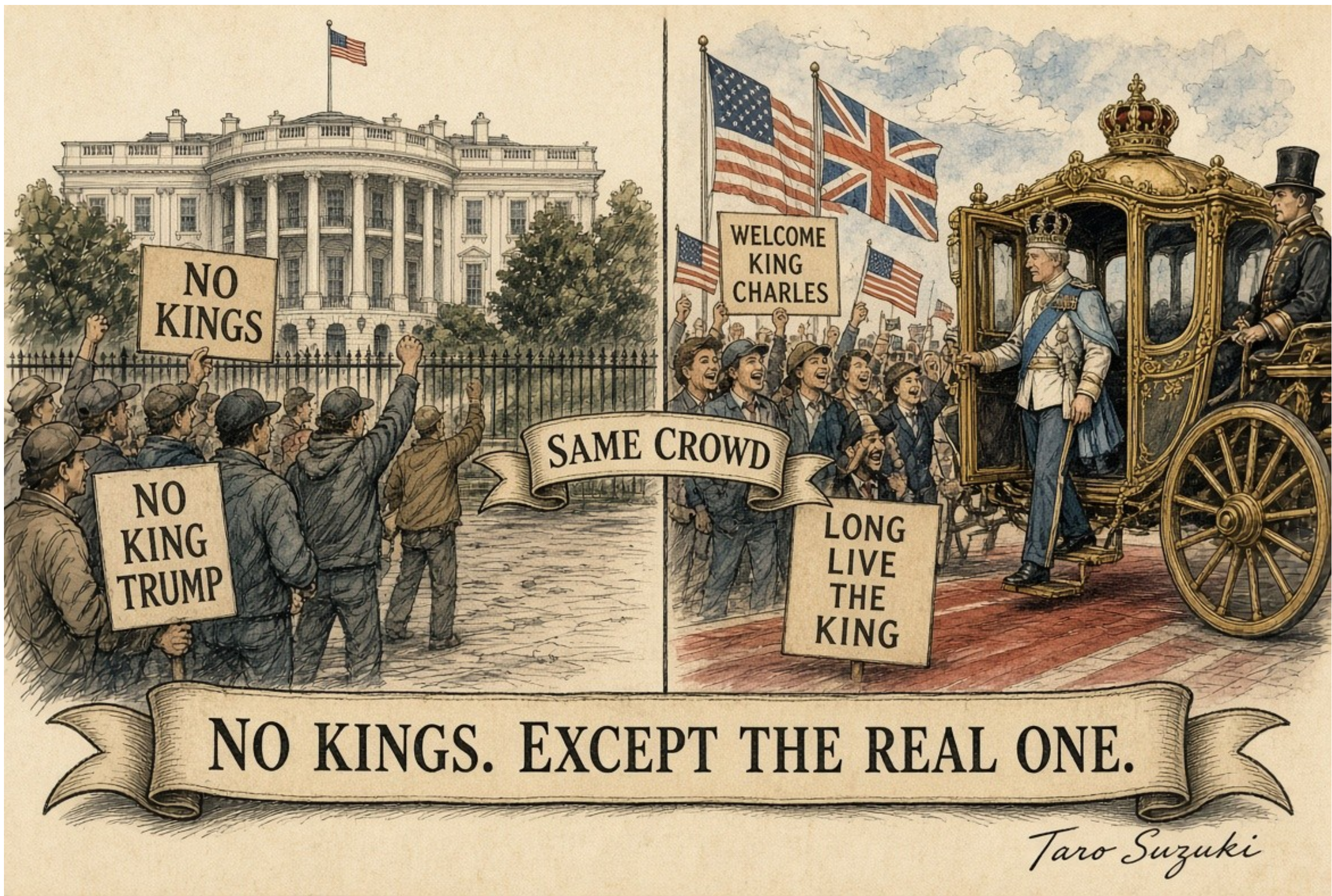
JAPAN SERIES (FROM SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24): SoftBank against DeNA, opening at Yokohama Stadium.

IMMERSIVE MUSEUM KOCHI (UNTIL DECEMBER 6): Van Gogh, Cezanne and Ekin in sound and light.

AUTUMN LEAVES: At their best at higher elevations from Jozankei and Lake Shikotsu to Kamikochi and Mount Akagi.

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

No Kings. Except the Real One. America May Quarrel About Power as It Likes; Its Allies Need Its Institutions to Hold

Taro Suzuki's cartoon catches a genuine irony: Americans who denounce their president as a monarch cheered a real king this spring. The answer lies in the difference between a crown without power and power without a crown, a distinction Japan understands better than most

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki's cartoon on this page is drawn in two halves, divided by a thin line and joined by a single banner. On the left, a crowd in work jackets and baseball caps presses against the railings of the White House, fists in the air, waving placards that read NO KINGS and NO KING TRUMP. On the right, under American and British flags, a crowd dressed much the same cheers with delight as King Charles, crowned and sashed, steps down from a gilded state coach onto a red carpet. Their placards read WELCOME KING CHARLES and LONG LIVE THE KING. The banner that links the two scenes says SAME CROWD. The caption beneath reads: NO KINGS. EXCEPT THE REAL ONE.

It is a good joke, and like most good cartoons it is a little unfair. Nobody knows whether the people who rallied across America on Saturday are the same people who turned out to welcome the King in April, and the cartoonist is not claiming that they are. He is pointing at a contradiction in the national mood rather than in any individual.

The joke lands because it touches something true about the American relationship with monarchy, and about the confusion buried in the slogan that has given a protest movement its name. Untangling that confusion tells us something about the United States, about Japan, and about what an ally on the far side of the Pacific should want from both.

Saturday's rallies

On Saturday, supporters of the No Kings movement held hundreds of rallies across the United States, billed as nonpartisan. This time their message was not simply protest but turnout: they urged Americans to vote early in the midterm elections on November 3. At the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, people carried signs reading VOTE EARLY and HANDS OFF MY VOTE! In Atlanta, City Councilman Michael Julian Bond told the crowd: "The Constitution gives you one power, right? That is the power to vote."

The movement began on June 14, 2025, the day of the U.S. Army's 250th anniversary parade and President Donald Trump's 79th birthday, when organisers said more than 5 million people took part. A second day of protests in October 2025 drew millions more, and organisers said a third, in March this year, was the largest single day of protest in American history. Mr Trump has dismissed the protests, saying he is not a king.

The King who came to Washington

Six months ago a real king did come to Washington. In late April, King Charles III and Queen Camilla made a state visit to the United States to mark the 250th anniversary of American independence, the first state visit by a British monarch since Queen Elizabeth II's in 2007. They were received at the White House, the King and the president reviewed troops on the South Lawn, and on April 28 the King addressed a joint meeting of Congress, the first British monarch to do so since his mother in 1991.

It was a remarkable scene. The country was celebrating the anniversary of a declaration whose longest passage is a list of charges against a king. "The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations," the signatories wrote of George III in 1776. Two and a half centuries later, his five-times-great-grandson was applauded in the Capitol by the representatives of the republic that rebellion created.

What the slogan means

The slogan "No Kings" draws on that founding moment. The Americans built a republic in which no one would rule by birthright. Their Constitution forbids the United States to grant titles of nobility and bars federal officials from accepting titles from foreign states without the consent of Congress. The office of president was hedged about with elections, a legislature with the power of the purse and an independent judiciary, precisely so that it could never become a crown by another name.

When the protesters chant "No Kings," then, they are not for the most part objecting to monarchy as a form of government. Few of them lose sleep over the House of Windsor. They are making a charge about the use of power: that the president governs by decree, pushes against the limits that Congress and the courts place on him, and treats the federal government as an extension of his will. It is an argument about executive power, dressed in the costume of 1776.

What the founders feared

The framers of the Constitution argued at length about the presidency, and their critics warned that they were creating an elected monarch. Alexander Hamilton devoted one of the Federalist Papers, No. 69, to answering the charge. The president, he explained, would be elected for four years rather than inherit his office for life; he could be impeached and removed; his veto could be overridden by two-thirds of Congress; and the treaties he made would need the consent of the Senate. The King of Great Britain was bound by none of those limits.

Later generations added more. After Franklin Roosevelt won four presidential elections, the 22nd Amendment, ratified in 1951, limited presidents to two terms. The American system was designed, and redesigned, around the fear that the executive might grow into something its citizens had fought a war to escape.

That is why the cartoon's crowd is not, on reflection, as inconsistent as it first appears. Cheering King Charles implies no endorsement of royal power, because the King has almost none. In Britain the Crown reigns but does not rule. The King's government is formed by whoever can command the confidence of the House of Commons, and he acts on the advice of his ministers. He is the most visible person in the kingdom and among the least powerful in its politics. Applauding him costs nothing, and that is a large part of his appeal.

The appeal of pageantry

Americans have always been fascinated by the monarchy they rejected. Royal weddings, coronations and funerals are treated by American television as events of almost national importance, and the gilded coaches, the horse guards and the centuries-old ritual offer something a republic cannot easily supply: a

sense of continuity that floats above the quarrels of the day.

There is nothing foolish in that. Every nation needs symbols that belong to everyone, and people have a natural wish to honour something larger than the government of the moment. The question is where a country puts that wish, and how it keeps it separate from the business of governing.

Power without a crown

The American presidency makes that separation unusually hard. The president is head of state and head of government at once: the figure who receives foreign monarchs with ceremony and the politician who issues executive orders, signs or vetoes laws, commands the armed forces and directs federal prosecutors. Americans cannot honour the office without appearing to honour its partisan occupant, and they cannot attack the occupant without appearing to attack the office.

Seen this way, the cartoon's two halves are not a contradiction but a symptom. An American crowd that wants to wave flags for something above politics has to borrow someone else's monarch. And a president who wraps himself in the ceremony of his office invites critics to describe him in the language of kings.

The view from Tokyo

Japan understands this distinction better than most countries. Under Article 1 of the Constitution, the Emperor is "the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power." Article 4 adds that he "shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided for in this Constitution and he shall not have powers related to government."

The arrangement has served the country well. The prime minister governs and answers to the Diet and the voters; the Imperial Family stands apart from politics and attends to the nation's ceremonies, its disaster-stricken communities and its friendships abroad. On Saturday, Princess Aiko began a three-day visit to Tottori Prefecture for a national event on disaster preparedness, spending an hour and a half taking notes as firefighters and students who had volunteered after the Noto Peninsula earthquake described how shelters can be made safe for women.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Nobody watching would mistake that for an exercise of power. It is service of a different kind.

A monarchy of this sort needs tending. Next Saturday, October 24, a revised Imperial House Law takes effect, allowing princesses to keep their status after marriage and opening adoption into the Imperial Family to men from the former branch families, in an effort to secure enough members to carry out its duties. The debate over the future of the throne is far from over, but it is conducted soberly, in the Diet, on the understanding that the institution belongs to the whole nation and to no party.

Royal diplomacy

A crown without power has its uses, and diplomacy is one of them. London plainly hoped that the King's visit would help steady relations with an administration with which it had had its difficulties, including over the war with Iran. A head of state who stands outside party politics can offer warmth without making promises, and can open doors that ministers then walk through.

Japan has used the same instrument. Mr Trump was the first state guest of the Reiwa era, received by Emperor Naruhito in May 2019, weeks after the new reign began. The Emperor and Empress made a state visit to Britain in June 2024, hosted by King Charles. Such occasions are not policy; they create the goodwill in which policy is easier to make. Mr Trump himself plainly enjoys royal ceremony, and was received at Windsor Castle on a state visit to Britain last September.

Where the protesters have a point

None of this means that the No Kings movement is wrong to worry. The power of the American executive has been growing for decades, under presidents of both parties, and this administration has pushed it further than most.

The past week alone offered examples. On Friday Mr Trump used a waiver to shelve a sanctions law against buyers of Russian energy that Congress had passed and he himself signed in September, declaring that not implementing it was "in the national interest for now." In September he signed an order telling federal agencies to call artificial intelligence "superintelligence," and on Saturday the International Monetary Fund's policy committee, meeting in Bangkok, duly avoided the term in its statement. On Thursday the administration sued election officials in California, asking a judge to stop the state counting mail-in ballots from people the federal government has flagged as likely noncitizens until their status is confirmed, and on Friday the Justice Department warned local officials who process such ballots that they could face criminal investigation.

Each of those steps can be defended on its own terms. Presidents are entitled to use the waivers that laws give them, and the integrity of voter rolls is a legitimate concern in any democracy. But Americans are right to watch closely when the federal government reaches into the counting of ballots weeks before an election in which the president's party is on the defensive. Three Democratic senators have written to Attorney General Todd Blanche asking the department to commit not to seize ballots or election materials before the results are certified. That such a letter should seem necessary says something about the moment.

An old accusation

The charge itself is nothing new. In the 1830s, opponents of Andrew Jackson printed a famous caricature of him in royal robes, trampling the Constitution, under the title "King Andrew the First." A century later, Franklin Roosevelt's plan to enlarge the Supreme Court was attacked as a grab for unchecked power, and it was defeated in Congress by members of his own party. Presidents of both parties have been called kings by their enemies, and the republic has survived every one of them.

That history is reassuring and sobering at once. It shows that Americans have always been quick to see a would-be monarch in a forceful president, and that the system's defences have repeatedly held. It also shows that those defences hold only because citizens, legislators and judges are willing to use them.

Where they overreach

Yet the word "king" is wrong, and the movement's own conduct shows why. A king does not face a national election in a little over two weeks. A king does not lose cases in the courts, negotiate with a legislature over money, or read in the morning that

millions of his subjects marched against him the day before. That the No Kings rallies take place at all, freely and loudly, at the Lincoln Memorial and outside the White House, is the best evidence that the United States is not a monarchy.

The checks are not theoretical. A court ruled against the administration's "reciprocal" tariffs, and the Treasury has since been paying refunds to importers, which helped push net customs revenue down by 11.1 per cent in the fiscal year that ended in September. The Russia sanctions law that the president has now shelved was written by Congress, and the waiver he used is a power Congress chose to give him and can take away. In November voters may hand control of one or both chambers to the opposition. These are the instruments of a republic, not the trappings of a court.

Hyperbole has costs. When every disagreement becomes a struggle against tyranny, it becomes harder to argue about the real question, which is usually narrower: how far a particular power extends, and who should check it. Inflated language also cheapens the word for people around the world who live under rulers they cannot remove, and it hands the other side an easy reply. A president told that he is a king can simply point to the protesters at his gate and ask what kind of king tolerates them.

The turn the movement took on Saturday, from protest to turnout, is therefore welcome. Councilman Bond made the right point. The remedy for a president who is thought to have overreached lies in the ballot box, the courts and Congress, and in just over two weeks Americans will have the chance to use the first.

What Japan needs

For Japan, the result of the midterm elections is for Americans to decide, and we take no side in them. What Japan needs is something more basic: an America whose institutions function, whose elections are administered cleanly and accepted by those who lose them, and whose commitments survive the change of administrations and congressional majorities.

That is not an abstraction. On Monday more than 50,000 Japanese and American troops begin Keen Sword, the allies' largest field exercise, which runs until October 29 and will see Japan's new Type 25 long-range missile deployed in an exercise for the first time. The alliance on which Japan's security rests depends on the credibility of an American president's word abroad, and that credibility depends in turn on the president being accepted at home as a legitimate leader, constrained by law, rather than as either a usurper or a sovereign.

The stakes are economic as well. Japan is the largest foreign holder of American government bonds. The federal deficit for the fiscal year that ended in September widened to about \$1.99 trillion, and interest on the debt has risen to about \$1.36 trillion a year. A United States consumed by disputes over the legitimacy of its own elections would be a less predictable borrower, a less steady anchor for the dollar and, through both, a source of turbulence for the yen.

It is also a reason for Japan to strengthen itself. A country that relies on a single great ally should be the first to want that ally's politics stable, and the last to let its own security hang on them. The government is now debating how to pay for defence spending that could exceed 10 trillion yen a year. Whatever happens in November, Japan's preparations cannot wait on the American electoral calendar.

Lessons closer to home

Japanese politics is not immune to the temptations of overheated language. Opponents of strong prime ministers have sometimes reached for words like dictatorship, and supporters for words like betrayal. The Takaichi government's position in the Diet, where the ruling bloc lacks a majority in the House of Councillors and must win opposition votes to pass its tax bill, is itself a reminder that power in a parliamentary democracy is checked every day, in committee rooms rather than in the streets.

That is how it should be. The best defence against the abuse of power is not a slogan but working institutions: legislatures that scrutinise, courts that rule, newspapers that report and voters who turn out. Voters who turn out are the weak link here, too. In the 2024 general election, only a little more than half of Japan's eligible voters cast a ballot. Today more

than 3.1 million voters in Yokohama, the country's most populous municipality, choose a mayor. Councilman Bond's reminder in Atlanta applies with equal force in Kanagawa: the Constitution gives citizens one power above all, and it is wasted if they do not use it.

Japanese readers might be tempted to look at the noise of American politics with a certain superiority. They should resist it. A quieter democracy is not necessarily a healthier one, and a public that stays at home on election day hands power to others just as surely as one that shouts in the street.

The real one

Suzuki's caption can be read two ways. Read one way, it mocks Americans for hypocrisy. Read another, it states, almost by accident, the formula for a healthy constitutional order. Power should be held by people who can be voted out, checked by courts and legislatures and criticised in the street. The dignity of the state, the part that crowds cheer and flags celebrate, is best kept in hands that hold no power at all.

Britain has its King, and Japan its Emperor. Americans chose, 250 years ago, to have neither, and to ask their elected president to carry both the ceremony and the power. It is a heavy load for one office, and the strain shows. The protesters should lower their rhetoric; the president should respect the limits of his own authority. And all of us who depend on the American republic should hope that, when the votes are counted on November 3, both sides accept them. That would be a more fitting tribute to 1776 than any slogan.

ANALYSIS

Paper First Is the Right Call. Now the Ministry Must Make Digital Textbooks Earn Their Place

The draft guidelines protect close reading in the early grades; the harder work is training teachers, guarding children's health and measuring what screens actually add

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The education ministry's draft guidelines on digital textbooks, reported by the Yomiuri Shimbun on Sunday, settle a long argument in a sensible way. Paper stays at the centre of the classroom. Screens become a supplement. Fully digital textbooks are ruled out for the youngest children and confined, from the fifth grade, to English and practical subjects.

That is the right balance, and the ministry deserves credit for resisting the pressure to treat every new device as progress.

The case for paper

The evidence on reading, while not unanimous, leans one way. A widely cited 2018 analysis that pooled 54 studies involving more than 170,000 readers found that people understood informational texts better on paper than on screens, particularly when they were under time pressure. Readers on screens tend to skim and to overestimate how much they have understood.

Sweden, which went further than most countries in replacing books with screens, began in 2023 to put money back into printed textbooks after its pupils' reading results fell. Japan has the advantage of learning from that experience before making the same mistake.

No room for complacency

Japan's 15-year-olds ranked first among OECD countries in reading, mathematics and science in the PISA 2025 results. But their average reading score fell by 13 points, to 503. Reading is the foundation of everything else, and it is exactly the skill that the early years of school must protect.

What screens can do

None of this means that digital books have nothing to offer. A pupil learning English can replay a native speaker as often as needed. A science class can watch an experiment step by step. A child who struggles with print can have a passage read aloud and highlighted. The guidelines should protect those uses, especially for pupils with disabilities, for whom digital editions can open doors.

The burden on teachers

The harder problems are practical. With three forms of textbook allowed, paper, hybrid and fully digital, teachers will need to prepare lessons for each. Japan's teachers are already stretched, and a reform that adds to their workload without adding support will fail in the classroom, whatever it says on paper.

Health precautions, such as looking away from the

screen every 30 minutes and keeping it at least 30 centimetres from the eyes, must be simple enough for schools to enforce and for parents to understand.

Measure, then decide

The timetable gives the ministry time to get this right. Publishers will edit the new elementary school textbooks in fiscal 2027, the ministry will screen them in fiscal 2028, and boards of education will choose them in fiscal 2029, for use from April 2030.

It should use that time to commission rigorous studies of how pupils learn with each form of textbook, publish the results and adjust the boundaries as the evidence accumulates. The principle should be paper first, not paper only, and screens wherever they demonstrably help.

ANALYSIS

A Tax Cut, a New Benefit and a Defence Build-Up at Once: The Takaichi Government Must Tell Voters Which Comes First

Defence spending heading above 10 trillion yen a year cannot be financed by goodwill; a corporate tax rise is the wrong answer, and the food tax cut must end on schedule

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Within a single week the Takaichi government has put three large commitments on the table. A bill to cut the consumption tax on food from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from fiscal 2027 goes before the House of Representatives on Tuesday. An outline of a new cash benefit, averaging about 30,000 yen a year for some 20 million working people, has been shown to the parties. And officials are preparing for defence spending that could exceed 10 trillion yen a year, with a further rise in corporate tax floated to pay for it.

Each has a rationale. Together they amount to a promise that the state can give more and spend more without asking anyone to pay more. That promise cannot be kept.

Defence comes first

Of the three, defence is the one that cannot wait. China's aircraft carrier Liaoning sailed into the Pacific this month. North Korea tested a submarine-launched cruise missile on Wednesday and says it has tested an AI-guided torpedo. Russia's war in Ukraine grinds on. The government's revision of the three security documents will set the defence programme for fiscal 2027 to 2031, and a senior official has said the ministry's own estimate of what it needs could reach 70 trillion to 80 trillion yen over five years, against about 43 trillion in the current programme.

A responsible government finances its first duty properly. It does not leave defence to be squeezed whenever a popular measure needs money.

The wrong tax

That is why the corporate tax proposal deserves scepticism. The government has spent years urging companies to raise wages and invest at home. A further rise in corporate tax would cut against both, and business leaders are right to say so. If the country needs more revenue for defence, the burden should be shared broadly and transparently, and agreed with the opposition so that it survives changes of government.

The costly cut

The food tax cut was a political promise, and the prime minister is entitled to keep it. But it will cost several trillion yen a year, and the temptation to extend it when the two years are up will be enormous. The bill should make the return to 8 per cent as firm as the law allows.

The new benefit is the better-designed of the two measures. It targets working people on modest incomes, tapers in four stages to avoid penalising those who earn more, and is paid for with the roughly 600 billion yen that the 1 per cent rate would still raise.

Rates are rising

All of this is being decided as borrowing becomes more expensive. The yield on the 10-year government bond has risen to around 2.9 per cent, and Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda said on Friday that the bank will keep raising rates. Investors are already questioning the government's fiscal discipline. A country that has relied on near-zero interest rates for a generation cannot assume that deficits will remain cheap.

ANALYSIS

Where to find the money

Takayuki Kobayashi, the Liberal Democratic Party's policy chief, says the party will comb through subsidies and government funds, and the prime minister has suggested returning unneeded money held in funds to the treasury. Both are worth doing, and both will raise less than the bills require.

The politics

The ruling bloc lacks a majority in the House of Councillors and needs opposition votes. Komeito wants a payment of about 80,000 yen per person over two years instead of the tax cut; the Democratic Party for the People proposes about 50,000 yen for people on low and middle incomes. Bargaining is inevitable. It should not become a contest to see who can promise the most.

The prime minister's credibility, on defence above all, rests on telling voters plainly what these choices cost and who will pay. Conservatives have always argued that security and sound money go together. This is the moment to prove it.

ANALYSIS

A Masakaki, Not a Visit: Takaichi Has Followed Her Predecessors at Yasukuni, and Seoul Should Take Note

Honouring the war dead is a national duty; staying away from the shrine during the festival is a choice made in the national interest, at a time when cooperation with South Korea matters more than ever

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

Sanae Takaichi went to Yasukuni Shrine for years as a lawmaker and as a cabinet minister, at the spring and autumn festivals and on August 15. As prime minister she has chosen differently. On Saturday she sent a masakaki, a small sacred tree, in her name for the shrine's autumn festival, and people close to her say she will not visit in person while it lasts.

It was the right choice, and it deserves to be recognised as one.

A familiar path

The offering follows established practice. Prime ministers have sent offerings to the shrine's festivals for years rather than going themselves, and the last sitting prime minister to visit was Shinzo Abe, in December 2013. Ms Takaichi stayed away from last year's autumn festival, held just before she took office, and from this spring's.

For a politician so closely identified with the shrine, that restraint carries a cost with some of her supporters. She has accepted it.

The war dead

Remembering those who died for their country is a natural duty for any nation's leaders, and Japan should not apologise for doing so. Yasukuni honours about 2.46 million people who died in Japan's wars, most of them ordinary soldiers. The difficulty, for Japan's neighbours, is the enshrinement since 1978 of 14 wartime leaders convicted as Class-A war criminals by the Allied tribunal in Tokyo.

Beijing and Seoul

China's embassy said Beijing "strongly condemns" the offering and the visits by members of the government; Minoru Kiuchi, the economic and fiscal policy minister, and Takayuki Kobayashi, the Liberal Democratic Party's policy chief, both went on Saturday. Beijing's language was predictable.

South Korea's response, "deep disappointment and regret," was milder, and its call for "future-oriented relations" points to a shared interest. Japan and South Korea, both allies of the United States, face the same threats from North Korea's missiles and the same pressures in the region. Cooperation between them has grown, and it should not be hostage to a ritual offering.

A wider question

The perennial argument over Yasukuni also shows why Japan has never settled the question of how its leaders should mourn the war dead in a way that everyone can accept. The Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery near the Imperial Palace, which holds the remains of unknown soldiers, is one place where they already do so without controversy.

The national interest

The prime minister's decision was not a concession to foreign pressure. It was a judgment that Japan's interests are better served by stable relations with its neighbours, especially Seoul, than by a gesture that

would dominate the headlines for weeks.

That is what a leader is for: to weigh personal conviction against national interest and to choose. Ms Takaichi has chosen well, and her neighbours would do well to acknowledge it.

ANALYSIS

Okinawa Has Given Tokyo a Chance It Has Not Had in 12 Years. Tokyo Must Not Waste It

Governor Genta Koja accepts the Henoko relocation and wants the schedule kept; in return the national government owes Okinawa visible relief from the burden of the bases and a share in the country's prosperity

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

For 12 years, Okinawa's governors opposed the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to Henoko, and relations between the prefecture and the national government were defined by lawsuits and mutual suspicion. Genta Koja's election last month changed that.

On Saturday the new governor, 42, toured the construction site. He apologised to the leaders of the three nearby districts for the added burden the new base will place on them, and said he wanted the construction period kept. It is more than a decade since a governor of Okinawa last went to Henoko as a partner in the project rather than an opponent.

A window, not a blank cheque

Tokyo should not mistake this for a blank cheque. Mr Koja won by a wide margin, but many Okinawans still oppose the new base, and the governor's position depends on showing that cooperation brings results that confrontation did not.

What Okinawa needs

He has told the national government what he wants. He will ask for measures to reduce the burden on the communities next to the base, and he campaigned on doubling per capita income in Okinawa, which is the lowest of any prefecture. The fastest way to return the Futenma site in crowded Ginowan, he argues, is to complete Henoko.

The national government should respond with concrete commitments: a published timetable for the construction, honest accounting for the delays and costs caused by the soft seabed in Oura Bay, and economic measures that Okinawans can see in their own towns.

Safety first

Discipline matters too. American forces in Okinawa announced measures this week to strengthen discipline after the arrest of a serviceman. Each incident erodes the trust on which the alliance depends, and Tokyo should press Washington to make the measures stick.

So does the safety of the visitors on whom Okinawa's economy depends. On Saturday the parents of Chika Takeishi, a Kyoto high school student who died when two boats capsized off Henoko in March, asked the governor for safety rules for school trips. The boats had not been registered as businesses under the Maritime Transport Act. Their request deserves a prompt answer, from the prefecture and from the national government.

The strategic picture

The stakes go beyond Okinawa. Keen Sword, the largest field exercise of Japanese and American forces, begins on Monday, as the allies strengthen their defences across the Nansei Islands. Bases in Okinawa are central to that effort, and they function best with the consent of the people who live beside them.

The test

The relocation was agreed by Japan and the United States in 2006. Twenty years later, the project finally has a governor willing to see it through. If Tokyo responds with indifference, the next election may bring back the confrontation. If it responds with generosity and candour, it can show that the alliance and the interests of Okinawa are not opposites.

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ANALYSIS

The Hormuz Bills Are Expensive Insurance. Japan Should Buy It, and Then Work to Need It Less

Paying companies to bring crude by longer routes protects supply, not prices; the levies will reach consumers, so the scheme must be transparent, temporary and matched by a plan to cut oil dependence

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

The three energy security bills approved by the Cabinet on Tuesday answer an uncomfortable fact. Japan imports almost all of its crude oil, more than 90 per cent of it from the Middle East, and most of that passes through the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway that has been disrupted since the American and Israeli attacks on Iran this year.

The bills would compensate oil wholesalers and others for the extra cost of bringing crude and naphtha by routes that avoid the strait, help insure tankers when reinsurance is hard to obtain, and let JOGMEC invest in alternative pipelines.

Why it is needed

Shipping crude from the United States takes more than twice as long as from the Middle East. Without support, companies have little reason to bear that cost voluntarily, and the country would remain exposed to a single chokepoint. With New York crude above \$101 a barrel on Friday, the risk is not theoretical.

The bills deserve to pass.

Who pays

They are not, however, a free lunch. The compensation will be financed by levies on refiners, petrochemical makers and trading houses, and how much of that reaches consumers will depend on the market. In practice, much of it probably will.

The government should therefore be transparent about the size of the levies, publish regularly how the money is spent, and build in a review so that the scheme shrinks if the situation in the Gulf improves.

Not a price cut

Nor should anyone mistake the bills for a remedy for high petrol prices. They protect supply, not prices. The government is already holding gasoline near 170 yen a litre with a subsidy of 43 yen a litre, a measure that is costly and that blunts the signal high prices send.

Help for Asia

The government's Power Asia framework, worth about \$10 billion, is meant to help Asian neighbours secure oil, including by buying American crude. A research institute has argued that it does not match the needs of countries trying to reduce their dependence on imported fuel. The criticism deserves a hearing: helping neighbours lock in oil imports may not be the best long-term use of the money.

The deeper answer

The best insurance against Hormuz is to need less oil. That means continuing to restart nuclear reactors that have passed safety screening, improving efficiency, diversifying gas supplies and accelerating the electrification of transport and industry.

Those are slow remedies, and the bills are a sensible bridge. But a bridge is meant to lead somewhere. The government should say where.

ANALYSIS

Washington Has Blinked on Russian Oil. Tokyo Should Keep Its Nerve on Ukraine

The president's waiver of a sanctions law he signed a month ago puts fuel prices before pressure on Moscow; Japan should hold to the G7 line and keep helping Ukraine through the winter

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Only a month ago President Donald Trump signed a law that would let the United States impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on countries that buy Russian energy. On Friday he used a waiver in the same law to shelve it, saying that not implementing it was "in the national interest for now."

The reasoning is not hard to discern. Oil prices have climbed this autumn as attacks around the Strait of Hormuz and on Saudi Arabia have disrupted supplies, and the midterm elections are on November 3. Mr Trump has also eased sanctions on Russian diesel.

The cost

The cost will be borne in Ukraine. On the same day, Russia carried out what Kyiv described as one of its heaviest strikes on the country's power system, hitting more than 15 generating and transmission facilities,

and President Vladimir Putin claimed the capture of Dobropillia in the Donetsk region.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said the easing "only gives President Putin economic gains and lets him continue his attacks." He is right.

Japan's awkward position

Japan should be candid about its own position. It still buys liquefied natural gas from the Sakhalin-2 project in Russia's Far East, and a law penalising buyers of Russian energy would have raised awkward questions for Tokyo too. That is a reason to plan for reducing that dependence over time, not a reason to welcome Washington's retreat.

Holding the line

Japan has joined the Group of Seven's sanctions against Russia since 2022 and has supported Ukraine with financial aid and help in restoring its power grid. As winter approaches and Russia targets Ukraine's energy system, that help matters more than ever.

Tokyo should keep its own measures in place, coordinate closely with its European partners, and make clear that its position on Russia's aggression does not depend on the fuel-price calculations of any one capital.

Why it matters to Japan

This is not charity. Japan's security depends on the principle that borders cannot be changed by force. If Russia is seen to win in Ukraine because its opponents tired, the lesson will be noted in Beijing and Pyongyang.

Allies and differences

Disagreeing with Washington on a point of policy is not disloyalty to the alliance. Allies are most useful when they are candid. Japan can support the United States across the board while telling it plainly that this decision serves Moscow far more than it serves American drivers.

ANALYSIS

Whatever the Truth About Pyongyang's 'AI Torpedo,' the Threat Beneath the Sea Is Real

North Korea's claims cannot be verified, but its push into underwater weapons is unmistakable; Japan should invest in anti-submarine capability and deepen its intelligence sharing with Washington and Seoul

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

North Korea says it has tested an "ultra-high-speed" torpedo that uses artificial intelligence to find and home in on its targets. The claim, published by the Korean Central News Agency on Saturday, cannot be verified, and the report gave no speed, no location and no evidence of the AI it described.

It would be easy to dismiss it as propaganda. That would be a mistake.

A pattern

The torpedo test, on Thursday, came a day after the North fired a submarine-launched strategic cruise missile into the Sea of Japan. Pyongyang had also planned to complete a third 5,000-ton destroyer by October 10, the anniversary of the founding of the ruling party. Whatever the truth of each claim, the direction is clear: North Korea is building a navy designed to threaten from beneath and beyond the reach of conventional defences.

Why submarines matter

Weapons launched from submarines are harder to detect before launch than those fired from fixed sites on land. That makes them particularly worrying for Japan, whose cities lie within range of North Korean missiles and whose sea lanes carry almost all of its trade and energy.

Russia's shadow

The North's deepening military cooperation with Russia adds a further concern. Technology that Pyongyang could not develop alone may become available through that partnership, and the speed of its recent progress suggests that outside help cannot be ruled out.

What Japan should do

Japan's answer should be practical. Anti-submarine warfare, long a strength of the Maritime Self-Defense Force, deserves continued investment, including undersea sensors and the unmanned systems that the next defence programme is expected to buy in large numbers.

Intelligence sharing matters as much as hardware. Japan, the United States and South Korea began

ANALYSIS

sharing missile warning data in real time in 2023, and that cooperation should extend under the sea as well.

Keen Sword

The Keen Sword exercise that begins on Monday, with more than 50,000 Japanese and American personnel, is a reminder that deterrence depends on being seen to be ready. Exercises send a message to Pyongyang that its tests have been noticed and answered.

Calm, not complacency

The right response to North Korean claims is neither panic nor dismissal. It is steady preparation, so that whatever Pyongyang manages to build, it cannot use to coerce Japan.

ANALYSIS

Europe's 'Made in Europe' Car Rule Is a Warning to Japan's Carmakers, and a Test of the EPA

Britain, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland could qualify for preferences in public buying; Japan, which signed an economic partnership with the EU, could not. Tokyo should press its case before the Parliament votes on November 23

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

France and Germany agreed on Friday on a joint position for Europe's car industry that would soften the European Union's 2035 ban on new combustion-engine cars while tying public support to a strict "Made in Europe" standard. At least 70 per cent of a car's components, excluding the battery, would have to be made in Europe, and 10 per cent of the battery's content would have to come from European sources, for it to benefit from preferences in public contracts and public financing.

Britain, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland could take part if they sign agreements guaranteeing European companies fair access to their own public contracts and funding. Cars built in Japan would not qualify.

Why it matters

Japanese makers sell large numbers of Japan-built cars in Europe, and their sales could fall significantly if public buyers and subsidy schemes are steered towards locally made models. The deal is not yet law, but it sets the direction for the negotiations to come.

A test of the partnership

Japan and the EU have an Economic Partnership Agreement, in force since 2019, which has been phasing out tariffs on Japanese cars and includes commitments on public procurement. Both are also parties to the World Trade Organization's agreement on government procurement.

A preference regime that rewards Britain or Norway for opening their public contracts, but leaves Japan out, sits uneasily with that partnership. Tokyo should say so clearly, and ask on what terms Japan could qualify on the same basis as those countries.

The timetable

Members of the European Parliament are due to vote on the Commission's proposal to revise the 2035 rules on November 23, after which the Parliament and member states must agree on a final text. That leaves a narrow window for diplomacy, and Japan should use it.

Europe's anxieties

It is worth understanding the pressures behind the plan. Europe's car industry is squeezed by high costs, the expense of the shift to electric vehicles and competition from Chinese manufacturers. "This creates a European preference to ensure that our factories do not become mere assembly plants," an official at the Elysee said.

Japan should respond to those anxieties as a partner, not a rival. Japanese companies already build cars in Europe, including in Britain, and employ many thousands of Europeans.

No tit for tat

The worst response would be retaliation. Japan's interest lies in open markets, and it should argue for them rather than abandon them. But open markets are a two-way bargain, and Europe should not be allowed to forget it.

EDITORIAL

Today's Numbers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

2030: The fiscal year in which the new textbooks, including digital ones, come into use, with paper at the centre.

4: The grade at and below which fully digital

textbooks would not be allowed.

8-5: DeNA's winning score at Koshien after four runs with two out in the ninth.

6: Straight postseason wins for DeNA.

945: Typhoon Champi's central pressure, in hectopascals, at 3 a.m. on Sunday.

30,000: The average annual payment, in yen, of the proposed support benefit for working people.

10 trillion: Yen a year that defence spending could exceed.

7,406,000: Tons of rice forecast for this year's harvest.

2.1 million: Autumn salmon caught in Hokkaido by the end of September, the fewest since 1989.

75: Hectares burned near Lake Notoro in Abashiri.

12,700: Friendship dolls sent from the United States to Japan in 1927.

1.3: Monroe Walk's odds for the Shuka Sho on the eve of the race.

CULTURE

Quotes of the Day

By the Copy Desk

"I want the construction period to be kept." Okinawa Governor Genta Koja, after touring the Henoko site.

"I want that obvious thing to be guaranteed." The father of Chika Takeishi, on safe school trips.

"We want to approach it from a different angle from the government." Takayuki Kobayashi, LDP policy chief, on funding the tax cut.

"Unfortunately, the lifting of sanctions will go on." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

"The Constitution gives you one power, right? That is the power to vote." Michael Julian Bond, at a No Kings rally in Atlanta.

"The road ahead is still long. I want you to work together with us." Terumi Tanaka of Nihon Hidankyo.

"It has only just finished, so I can't say anything." Hanshin's Teruaki Sato.

"I had the desire to become the best in the world, so I decided." Shoki Oda, on choosing an American career.

"This time the Games are being held with spectators." Aichi Governor Hideaki Omura, on the Asian Para Games.

"We hope it will give young people a reason to take an interest in art." A Kochi prefectural official.

CULTURE

Words of the Week

By the Copy Desk

KAMI NO KYOKASHO: Paper textbooks, at the centre of the guidelines.

DEJITARU KYOKASHO: Digital textbooks, to be supplementary.

MASAKAKI: Sacred tree the prime minister sent to Yasukuni.

TAIKODAI: A drum float carried at autumn festivals.

KAKIFU: The bearers who shoulder a float.

SANRIN KASAI: A forest fire, as near Lake Notoro.

GEKOKUJO: The lowly toppling the mighty, as DeNA did.

SHODO: Calligraphy, awaiting UNESCO's verdict.

AOI ME NO NINGYO: The blue-eyed friendship dolls of 1927.

HIBAKUSHA: Survivors of the atomic bombings.

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DeNA Rally With Two Out in the Ninth to Sweep Hanshin and Set Up a Japan Series Rematch With SoftBank — Page 1

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From Curriculum to Classroom: How a Japanese Textbook Is Written, Screened and Chosen — Page 2

Paper or Screen? What the Research Says About How Children Read — Page 2

The Japan Series: DeNA v SoftBank — Page 2

Triple Crown Winner Teruaki Sato Says He 'Can't Say Anything' Yet About the Majors as Hanshin's

Season Ends — Page 2

Third in the Summer, Best in October: How DeNA Keep Turning the Climax Series Upside Down — Page 2

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Guam Opens Shelters and Closes Its Port as Champi Arrives in the Small Hours of Sunday — Page 3

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Government Puts Forward a New Benefit of About 30,000 Yen a Year for 20 Million Lower-Paid Workers, Linked to the Food Tax Cut — Page 4

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In a Bomb Shelter in Kyiv, Ukrainian Students Speak Japanese in Public Again for the First Time in Seven Years — Page 9

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CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Japan Morning Post corrects errors of fact as soon as they are identified: corrections@japanmorningpost.com. The notes supplied for today's edition again call Typhoon No. 30 Champa; it is Champi, a name proposed by Laos. They describe four bills on crude oil procurement; the Cabinet approved three. They say DeNA moved one win away from advancing to the Climax Series; DeNA were already in the Climax Series, and on Saturday they completed a sweep of Hanshin to reach the Japan Series. They cite Kakegawa as the landfall of a late-October typhoon in 2017; Typhoon Lan came ashore near Omaezaki in Shizuoka Prefecture. They give the name of the retiring Yakult pitcher as Masaki Ishikawa; he is Masanori Ishikawa. They attribute the promotion of next June's sumo tour of Bangkok to the association's chairman; Saturday's event in Tokyo featured Takasaki oyakata and the wrestlers Ikumeda and Midorifuji. The notes' figure of 2.5 million foreign cruise visitors by 2030 could not be confirmed and is not used. As noted on Saturday, JR Central's announcement gives a Green Car increase of 3,000 yen between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka from December 2027.

Not repeated today because they were reported in earlier editions: the acquittal in the Ohsho shooting case, the prime minister's apology over Kazuo Yana, the record number of foreign residents, Friday's market close, the rise in Nozomi fares, the kerosene subsidy, the first Living National Treasures of lifestyle culture, the counting of financial income towards medical costs for older people, the SoftBank clinch, the University of Tokyo's explanation of its presidential choice, the departure of the White House press secretary, the Nidec report, the abolition of the leap second, the Onagawa reactor leak, the SourceNext and Arcadia data leaks, the review of sensitive personal data, Anthropic's warning, the lawsuits against OpenAI, the nuclear waste survey in Hitachiomiya, the start of active cyber defence, Typhoon No. 29, the judo world championships, the close of the Asian Games, the FIFA rankings, the Tohto League title for Asia University, the Levain Cup and Major League Baseball's proposal for a shorter season. Shoki Oda's decision, reported on Friday, is recalled in the week's baseball review. The PISA results appear as background to the textbook report; they were published on September 8. The 'lineage' items in the technology notes are not October 18 anniversaries; the Technology History page marks events that fell on this date.

THE WEEK AHEAD

SUN. 18: Yokohama mayoral election; Asian Para Games opening, Paloma Mizuho Stadium, 6 p.m.; Shuka Sho, Kyoto, 3:40 p.m.; final rounds of the Japan Open and Fujitsu Ladies; Keio can clinch the Big Six; Kazuki Kameda's title fight in Las Vegas; Yasukuni autumn festival continues. MON. 19: Keen Sword begins; upper house Budget Committee. TUE. 20: Food tax cut bills in the lower house. THU. 22: Baseball draft; telecoms cyber defence study group; Jidai Matsuri and Kurama Fire Festival. SAT. 24: Japan Series opens in Yokohama; Imperial House Law changes take effect; Para Games close. SUN. 25: Fukushima governor election; Brazil runoff. OCT. 27-28: Federal Reserve. OCT. 29: Keen Sword ends. OCT. 29-30: Bank of Japan. NOV. 3: U.S. midterms. NOV. 23: European Parliament vote on 2035 car rules. NOV. 30-DEC. 5: UNESCO committee, Xiamen.

TYPHOON AND MARINE ADVISORIES

3 a.m. Sunday. No. 30, Champi: very strong typhoon near the Mariana Islands, 13.1N, 144.9E, about 40 km south-south-east of Guam; 945 hPa; winds 50 m/s, gusts 70; west-north-west at 25 km/h. Storm-force winds 140 km all around; gale-force 440 km. Forecast 935 hPa from Sunday afternoon; east of the Philippines from Tuesday; about 460 km south of Ishigaki by 3 a.m. Friday, slowing to 10 km/h. Storm warning area by Friday reaches Ishigaki and comes within about 50 km of Miyakojima. Emergencies at sea: 118.

MARKET REFERENCE

Friday: Nikkei 225 65,324.29, up 898.34; Topix 4,066.00, up 66.66; Yomiuri 333 52,620.17, up 1.51 per cent; volume about 2.38 billion shares, value about 7.66 trillion yen. New York, Friday: Dow 52,002.41, down 175.28; WTI crude \$101.41, up \$3.44. Dollar about 158 yen. 10-year JGB about 2.9 per cent. Gasoline 170.10 yen a litre, diesel 159.60 yen; kerosene 2,563 yen for 18 litres. Bank of Japan

EDITORIAL & OPINION

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meets October 29-30.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

Front: rice straw drying in harvested paddies, file photo, WPM Productions. Typhoon map, Japan and United States weather maps: supplied for this edition. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, the European Parliament, the tanker Idemitsu Maru, Yuko Fujigaki, Shoki Oda: file photos, WPM Productions. N700A Nozomi: photo by Akihiko Maeda. Asian Para Games emblem and Grand Sumo Thailand Tournament poster: file images, WPM Productions. Cartoon: Taro Suzuki. U.S. government works are public domain and credited; agency news photographs are not reproduced.

SYMBOLS, UNITS AND TIMES

Map symbols: sun, sunny; cloud, cloudy; cloud with strokes, rain; an arrow, one sky giving way to another; a slanting stroke, one sky with the other at times. Highs in red, this morning's lows in blue, in degrees Celsius; the U.S. map is in Fahrenheit. Wind in metres a second (1 m/s is 3.6 km/h). Japan is 9 hours ahead of GMT, 13 ahead of New York and 16 ahead of Los Angeles and Las Vegas; Guam is one hour ahead of Japan. Japanese names are given family name last. A person arrested or referred to prosecutors is presumed innocent until convicted.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Police 110. Fire and ambulance 119. Coast guard 118. Disaster message dial 171. Police consultation #9110. Child guidance centres 189. Consumer hotline 188. People going into the hills in bear country should not go alone, should make noise as they walk and should keep away from places where bears have been seen.

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 Sunday morning papers, Kyodo News, the Yomiuri Shimbun, the Asahi Shimbun, the Hokkaido Shimbun, NHK, HTB and UHB; on the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the University of Tokyo, the Japan Racing Association and official statements in Japan and abroad; on Reuters, Bloomberg and Inside World Football where cited; on the Japan Meteorological Agency, Weathernews and tenki.jp for weather; and on the U.S. National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the American map.

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crossword solution appears tomorrow; Saturday's solution is published today.

TOMORROW'S EDITION

Monday: the result of the Yokohama mayoral election, the opening ceremony of the Asian Para Games, the Shuka Sho, the final rounds of the Japan Open and the Fujitsu Ladies, Kazuki Kameda's title fight, the start of Keen Sword and the latest on Typhoon Champi's track towards the waters south of Okinawa.

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