

★ MMX HEADS FOR MARS ★ FOREIGN WORKERS BACK IN HOSPITAL KITCHENS ★ CHAMPI TURNS VIOLENT ★ TAX CUT DEBATE OPENS ★ SATO TO BE POSTED ★ FRANCE IMPOSES CURFEWS ★

Japan Sends MMX on Its Way to Mars, Bidding to Bring Back the First Samples Ever Taken From the Martian System

The tenth H3 rocket lifts off from Tanegashima before dawn on Tuesday and JAXA declares the launch a success; the probe is due at Mars next August and back on Earth with sand from the moon Phobos in July 2031

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent



An H3 rocket lifts off from the Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima Prefecture, in a file photo. The tenth H3, carrying the MMX probe to the moons of Mars, left the same launch site at 4:41 a.m. on Tuesday, and JAXA declared the launch a success. (File photo: WPM Productions)

An H3 rocket carrying Japan's Martian Moons eXploration probe, known as MMX, lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima Prefecture at 4:41 a.m. on Tuesday, and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said the launch had succeeded, sending the spacecraft on a voyage of almost five years to the moons of Mars and back.

If the mission goes to plan, MMX will land on Phobos, the larger of the two Martian moons, collect at least 10 grams of sand and rock, and return them to Earth in July 2031. No country has yet brought back material from Mars or its moons, and success would make Japan the first.

The launch keeps alive a line of Japanese exploration that began with the asteroid probe Hayabusa, which brought grains of the asteroid Itokawa home in 2010, and continued with Hayabusa2, which returned samples from the asteroid Ryugu in 2020. MMX is the most ambitious of the three. Its target is a moon held in the grip of a planet, which makes arriving and leaving far harder than at a small asteroid, and it must work close to a body that races around Mars several times a day.

The launch

The rocket, the tenth of JAXA's new flagship H3 series, was rolled out to the launch pad on Monday afternoon. It was moved about 400 metres from the assembly building on a dedicated transporter, a journey that began at about 1:30 p.m. and took around half an hour.

It flew in the H3-24L configuration, with two LE-9 main engines on the first stage and four solid rocket boosters strapped to its sides, the most powerful arrangement in the family. Standing about 63 metres tall, it carried for the first time the long version of the H3's payload fairing, a 16.4-metre nose cover needed to enclose the large spacecraft.

Flight 10 was also the first H3 to send a probe beyond Earth orbit into interplanetary space. Under JAXA's flight plan, the boosters were to fall away in the second minute, the fairing after a little over three

minutes and the first stage after about five, with the second stage firing twice before releasing MMX onto its path toward Mars about 71 minutes after liftoff. JAXA declared the launch a success after the spacecraft had been placed on that path.

The agency had warned that the launch, which took place before sunrise, might be visible across much of Japan in clear weather, because the climbing rocket would catch the sunlight about five and a half minutes after it left the pad.

The spacecraft

MMX weighed 4,480 kilograms at launch. It is built in three parts. An outbound module carries the craft to Mars and is discarded on arrival; an exploration module carries out the work around the moons and is left behind when the probe departs; and a return module, the only part to come home, will carry the samples back to Earth, where a capsule is to be recovered in Australia.

The spacecraft carries two ways of gathering material. A Japanese coring sampler will drive a tube into the surface. A second sampler, provided by NASA, uses jets of gas to stir up surface particles and capture them. JAXA plans two landings on Phobos to make sure of its target of at least 10 grams.

Before the main spacecraft touches down, a small four-wheeled rover called IDEFIX, built by the French and German space agencies, CNES and DLR, is to be lowered to the surface. It will study the ground and help engineers judge how safely the probe can land.

MMX also carries a suite of scientific instruments, including cameras, a laser altimeter, a near-infrared spectrometer developed with France and a gamma-ray and neutron spectrometer from NASA, and an ultra-high-definition 8K camera developed with the public broadcaster NHK.

SOCIETY

Foreign Workers to Return to Hospital and Care-Home Kitchens From April 2027 Under a Rule Change, but the Freeze on Restaurants Stays

The government will move institutional catering out of the suspended food-service field to keep patients and elderly residents fed; every meal provider surveyed in August reported vacancies

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The government plans to resume accepting foreign workers with Specified Skilled Worker status to prepare meals at hospitals and welfare facilities, reversing a freeze that had threatened the supply of food to patients and elderly residents, it said on Monday.

The plan was presented on Monday afternoon to a government panel of experts on the acceptance of foreign workers, which met at the Ministry of Justice in Tokyo. Under it, catering for medical and welfare facilities would be moved out of the food service field, where new acceptance has been halted, and into the field of food and beverage manufacturing, which covers food factories and similar operations.

Acceptance under the new arrangement would begin in April 2027. The government intends to reach a final decision within the year, after hearing the panel's views.

Why the freeze

The Specified Skilled Worker program sets a ceiling on the number of foreign workers in each field for its first, entry-level category, based on conditions in each industry. The ceiling for the food service field, which until now has included catering at medical and welfare facilities, is 50,000 people up to the end of March 2029.

Because the number of workers was expected to exceed that ceiling, the government suspended new acceptance in the field from April this year. The suspension applied to restaurant chains and to the companies that cook for hospitals and care homes alike.

Kitchens without staff

The Immigration Services Agency cited a survey of meal providers at medical and welfare facilities conducted in August by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, which found vacancies at every business that took part.

Concern has grown that the shortage could disrupt the nutritional care of hospital inpatients and residents of facilities for the elderly, who depend on meals prepared to medical requirements every day of the year. The worry is strongest in regions where it is hard to recruit staff locally.

The government said the change was meant to prevent a situation in which it became difficult to provide meals to hospital inpatients.

Restaurants left waiting

For restaurants, nothing changes. The suspension of new acceptance in the food service field remains in force, with no date set for it to be lifted, and there is no prospect yet of relief for an industry short of workers.

Restaurant companies that had planned their hiring around foreign workers have had to change course since the freeze began, and some recruits who had trained for jobs in Japan have gone home without taking them up.

How the program works

The Specified Skilled Worker system began in April 2019 to bring foreign workers into industries facing serious shortages. It has two levels. The first is for

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WEATHER — TOKYO

28°C

Low 19°C · Cloudy

Sapporo

19°

Osaka

26°

Fukuoka

29°

Naha

31°

Heavy morning rain in Kanazawa and Niigata eases by mid-afternoon; 28°C and cloudy in Tokyo, 31°C in Naha. Typhoon No. 30, Champi, now violent, forecast to pass near the Sakishima Islands on Friday and Saturday. Full weather, Page 16.

TODAY IN BRIEF

- Space: the H3 launches MMX toward the moons of Mars, aiming to bring back samples from Phobos in July 2031.
- Labour: foreign workers will return to hospital and care-home kitchens from April 2027; restaurants stay frozen.
- Typhoon: Champi, now violent at 935 hPa, is forecast to pass south of the Sakishima Islands on Friday.
- Diet: the food tax cut bill reaches the lower house; the PM says the cut will reach shop prices.
- Cyber: traces of a Chinese-made AI tool are found in attacks on Japanese companies.
- Baseball: Hanshin will post Triple Crown winner Teruaki Sato to the major leagues.

MMX

- Launched 4:41 a.m. Tuesday.
- At Mars: August 2027.
- Phobos samples: 10 g or more.
- Home: July 2031.

TODAY

- Tax cut bill in the lower house.
- Empress Emerita turns 92.
- Newspaper Advertising Day.
- Tokyo 28, cloudy.

MARKETS

Nikkei 225 (Mon)	64,916.70 ▼407.59
Topix (Mon)	4,067.48 ▲1.48
Dow (Mon)	51,966.03 ▼36.38
Nasdaq (Mon)	26,430.89 ▲290.86
WTI crude (Mon)	\$103.66 ▲2.25
Yen (Mon, 5 p.m.)	158.16-18 per \$
Bank of Japan	meets Oct. 29-30

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THE WEEK

- Wed. 21: coalition turns one.
- Thu. 22: baseball draft.
- Fri. 23: Champi near Sakishima.
- Sat. 24: Japan Series.

THE TROPICS

- Champi: 935 hPa, violent.
- 925 hPa forecast this evening.

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The voyage

The probe is due to reach the Mars system in August next year. It will first enter orbit around Mars, then move into a so-called quasi-satellite orbit that keeps it close to Phobos, which has too little gravity to hold a spacecraft in an ordinary orbit.

After surveying Phobos from close range, MMX will land, collect its samples and lift off again, then fly past Deimos, the smaller outer moon. It is scheduled to leave the Mars system in 2030 and to bring its capsule home in July 2031.

Why Phobos

Phobos is a lumpy, potato-shaped body about 22 kilometres across, and scientists have argued for decades about where it came from. One view holds that it is a captured asteroid; another that it formed from debris thrown into orbit when a large body struck Mars.

The samples should settle the question. A captured asteroid might contain water-bearing minerals and organic matter like those found in Ryugu, while a moon born of a giant impact would hold material from the Martian crust and mantle mixed with that of the impactor. Because Phobos orbits so close to Mars, its surface is also thought to carry fragments blasted off the planet itself, so the probe may bring the first material from Mars itself to Earth aboard a spacecraft.

The answers matter beyond Mars. Scientists hope the samples will help explain how water and the ingredients of life were carried to the rocky planets, Earth included, in the early solar system.

A delayed start

MMX was originally to have launched in 2024, but its departure was postponed after the first H3 rocket failed in March 2023 and had to be destroyed.

FROM PAGE 1

Foreign Workers to Return to Hospital and Care-Home Kitchens From April 2027 Under a Rule Change, but the Freeze on Restaurants Stays

Continued from Page 1

workers with a certain level of skill, who must pass skills and Japanese-language tests and may stay for up to five years in total without bringing their families. The second is for workers with advanced skills, whose stays can be renewed and who may bring their spouses and children.

Moving hospital and care-home catering into the food manufacturing field will count its workers against that field's ceiling instead of the restaurant sector's, which stays as it is.

TECHNOLOGY

MMX: The Road to Phobos and Back

By the Technology Desk

MISSION: Martian Moons eXploration, led by JAXA, to bring back samples from the Martian moon Phobos.

PHOBOS: About 27 kilometres long, it circles Mars roughly 6,000 kilometres above the surface, three times a day.

THE QUESTION: Whether the two moons are asteroids captured by Mars or debris thrown up when a large body struck the planet. The samples are expected to help settle it.

LAUNCH MASS: 4,480 kilograms, in three modules: outbound, exploration and return.

INSTRUMENTS: Cameras, a French infrared spectrometer, NASA's MEGANE gamma-ray and neutron spectrometer, a laser altimeter, a dust monitor and an ion analyser, plus an 8K camera built with NHK.

AUGUST 2027: Arrival in the Mars system, about ten months after launch; entry into orbit around Mars, then a quasi-satellite orbit near Phobos.

AT PHOBOS: Close observation; the French-German

Because Earth and Mars line up for an efficient launch only about once every 26 months, the delay cost the mission two years.

JAXA had kept a reserve launch period running until November 9 in case of bad weather or technical trouble. It was not needed.

An international mission

MMX is led by Japan but built with partners, chief among them NASA and the French and German space agencies.

On Monday, the eve of the launch, the United States Embassy in Tokyo posted a statement and a video on X calling the mission an unprecedented challenge. In the video, embassy staff cheered "Ganbare MMX!", and Aaron Snipe, the embassy's deputy chief of mission, said NASA's instruments would help answer questions such as how Phobos was formed.

The United States was part of the challenge, he said, and the alliance between Japan and the United States was stronger than ever, on Earth and in space.

What comes next

For now the probe faces a cruise of about ten months. Mission controllers will check its systems, test its instruments and fine-tune its course as it falls outward toward the orbit of Mars.

The hardest parts lie ahead: braking into orbit around Mars, matching the motion of a moon that circles the planet three times a day, and landing on a surface whose strength and texture no one has yet touched. If all goes well, the capsule that falls through the sky over Australia in five years' time will carry pieces of another world that no human hand has held.

rover IDEFIX is set down first to study the surface. LANDINGS: Two planned, to collect at least 10 grams of material with a Japanese coring sampler and a NASA gas-jet sampler.

DEIMOS: A flyby of the smaller, outer moon after the sampling.

2030: Departure from the Mars system.

JULY 2031: The return capsule lands in Australia.

PARTNERS: NASA, the French space agency CNES and the German Aerospace Center, DLR.

WORLD FIRST: No mission has yet returned samples from Mars or its moons.

NAMES: Phobos and Deimos, Fear and Dread in Greek, were discovered by the American astronomer Asaph Hall in 1877.

SOURCE: JAXA, Kyodo News.

TECHNOLOGY

From Itokawa to Ryugu to Phobos: How Japan Became the World's Specialist in Bringing Back Pieces of Other Worlds

Hayabusa limped home with a few grains; Hayabusa2 returned more than five grams from Ryugu. MMX aims for ten grams from a moon of Mars, as China prepares its own Mars sample mission

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Bringing a piece of another world back to Earth is among the hardest things a space agency can attempt, and Japan has made a speciality of it.

Hayabusa

The first Hayabusa probe left Earth in May 2003 and reached the small asteroid Itokawa in 2005. Its sampling attempts did not go as planned, and on the way home it lost thrusters, batteries and contact with controllers for weeks at a time.

Engineers nursed it back, and in June 2010 its capsule landed at Woomera in the South Australian outback. Inside were tiny grains of Itokawa, the first material ever collected from the surface of an asteroid and returned to Earth. The probe itself burned up on re-entry, a moment that moved many in Japan.

Hayabusa2

Its successor, Hayabusa2, launched in December 2014 and arrived at the asteroid Ryugu in June 2018. It touched down twice in 2019, the second time after firing a projectile to blast a crater, so that it could gather material from beneath the surface.

The capsule landed in Australia in December 2020 with more than five grams of samples, far more than the mission's target. Analysis has since found amino acids and other organic matter in the grains, and the samples are among the most studied extraterrestrial materials on Earth. The spacecraft itself carried on, on an extended mission to another small asteroid. It is due to reach a tiny, fast-spinning asteroid, 1998 KY26, in 2031.

Others in the field

The United States followed with OSIRIS-REx, which touched the asteroid Bennu in October 2020 and delivered its samples in September 2023. China has twice returned samples from the Moon, including the first from its far side in 2024.

A race to Mars

No country has yet brought back material from Mars or its moons. NASA collected samples on the Martian surface with its Perseverance rover, but its plans to bring them home have run into steep cost increases and delays.

China has announced its own Mars sample-return mission, Tianwen-3, which it has said it aims to launch around 2028 and bring home around 2031. If MMX keeps to its schedule, its capsule is due in July 2031.

Why Phobos is different

MMX's target is harder than an asteroid in one respect and easier in another. Phobos orbits close to Mars, deep in the planet's gravity, so arriving and departing take more effort. But a landing on a small moon needs far less energy than a landing on Mars itself, and lifting off again is far easier than climbing out of the planet's gravity and atmosphere.

That is part of the appeal. Material knocked off Mars by impacts over billions of years is thought to have landed on Phobos, so a sample of the moon may also contain grains of the planet.

SOCIETY

Hospital Kitchens: What Changes

By the Society Desk

WHO: Foreign workers with first-level Specified Skilled Worker status who prepare meals at medical and welfare facilities.

NOW: Part of the food service field, where new acceptance has been suspended since April 2026.

THE PLAN: Move the work into the food and beverage manufacturing field.

FROM: April 2027.

DECISION: To be made within this year after the expert panel's discussions.

WHY: To avoid a situation in which meals cannot be provided to hospital inpatients.

THE SHORTAGE: A health ministry survey in August found vacancies at every meal provider for medical and welfare facilities that took part.

UNCHANGED: The suspension for restaurants and other food service businesses, with no date for lifting it.

FOOD SERVICE CEILING: 50,000 workers up to the end of March 2029.

SOURCE: Immigration Services Agency, Kyodo News, Yomiuri Shimbun.

SOCIETY

How the Specified Skilled Worker System Works, and Why One Field Was Closed to New Workers This Spring

The program has grown into one of Japan's main channels for foreign labour since 2019; each field has a ceiling, and the food service field hit its limit first

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The Specified Skilled Worker program, introduced in April 2019, was Japan's first status of residence designed openly to bring in foreign workers for jobs that do not require a university degree, in industries where employers cannot find enough people.

Two levels

The first level is for workers who have a certain degree of skill in the field. Applicants generally have

to pass a skills test and a Japanese-language test, although those who complete the government's technical intern training in a related job can be exempted. Workers at this level may stay for up to five years in total and may not bring their families.

The second level is for workers with advanced skills. Their permission to stay can be renewed without limit, and they may bring a spouse and children, which opens a path to settling in Japan.

Fields and ceilings

The program is limited to designated fields, among them nursing care, building cleaning, construction, shipbuilding, agriculture, fisheries, food and beverage manufacturing and food service. The list has been extended several times, including in 2024 to fields such as automobile transport and railways.

For the first level, the government sets a ceiling on the number of workers in each field, based on its view of the industry's labour shortage. The idea is to bring in enough workers to fill gaps without displacing Japanese employees.

For the five years from April 2024, the ceiling across all fields is 820,000 people, more than double the 345,150 set for the program's first five years.

The food service freeze

The food service field's ceiling stands at 50,000 people for the period up to the end of March 2029. Because the number of workers was expected to pass that figure, the government stopped accepting new workers in the field from April this year.

The field had covered not only restaurants but also the companies that prepare meals for hospitals, care homes and other facilities, so the freeze hit institutional kitchens as well.

The fix

Under the plan presented on Monday, institutional catering at medical and welfare facilities will move into the food and beverage manufacturing field from April 2027, so that its workers count against that field's ceiling. Restaurants remain frozen.

Changes ahead

The technical intern training system, long criticised for abuses, is to be replaced from April 2027 by a new program called Employment for Skill Development, intended to train workers who can then move on to Specified Skilled Worker status. The two programs together will shape how many foreign workers Japan admits in the years ahead.

POLITICS

The Week Ahead

By the Political Desk

TUESDAY 20: The bill cutting the consumption tax on food goes before a plenary session of the House of Representatives. The Empress Emerita turns 92. Newspaper Advertising Day.

WEDNESDAY 21: First anniversary of the coalition between the Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Innovation Party. Typhoon No. 30, Champi, stays violent as it moves west.

THURSDAY 22: Professional baseball draft. The Internal Affairs Ministry's expert panel on cyber security for telecoms carriers meets for the first time. Jidai Matsuri in Kyoto.

FRIDAY 23: Champi is forecast to pass south of the Sakishima Islands. The World Series opens in Milwaukee, on Saturday morning Japan time.

SATURDAY 24: The Japan Series opens at Yokohama Stadium, DeNA against SoftBank. The Asian Para Games close in Aichi.

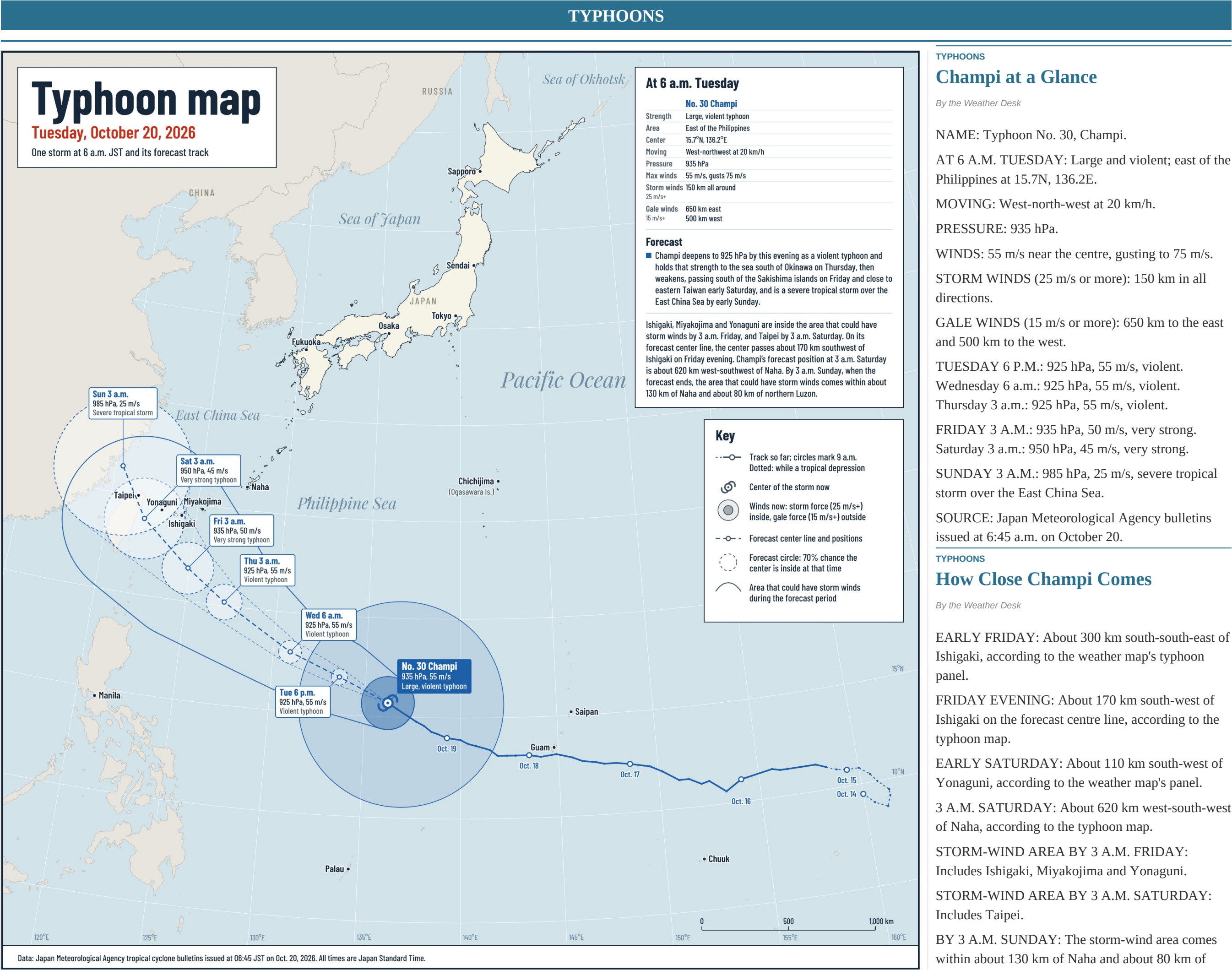
SUNDAY 25: Fukushima governor election. Naha mayoral election. Champi is forecast to be over the East China Sea as a severe tropical storm.

MONDAY 26: Tomoka Nishiyama, holder of the women's Hakurei title, holds a news conference on whether to become a professional shogi player.

LATER: Israeli general election, October 27; U.S. Federal Reserve, October 27-28; Bank of Japan, October 29-30; Keen Sword ends, October 29; U.S. midterm elections, November 3; APEC leaders' meeting in Shenzhen, November 18-19.

OCTOBER 28: Narita International Airport holds the first briefing for landowners in Narita City on compulsory purchase of land for its new runway.

DECEMBER 12: The Diet session ends; the government aims to enact the food tax cut by then.



TYPHOONS

Champi Becomes a Violent Typhoon and Is Forecast to Deepen to 925 Hectopascals as It Bears Down on the Seas South of Okinawa

The large storm is expected to stay violent until Thursday, pass south of the Sakishima Islands on Friday and graze eastern Taiwan early Saturday; Ishigaki, Miyakojima and Yonaguni lie inside the area that could see storm-force winds

By the Weather Desk

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, has strengthened into a violent typhoon, the highest grade on the Japan Meteorological Agency's scale, and is forecast to intensify further today as it moves west-north-west across the Philippine Sea toward the waters south of Okinawa.

At 6 a.m. on Tuesday, Champi was a large, violent typhoon east of the Philippines, at 15.7 degrees north and 136.2 degrees east, moving west-north-west at 20 kilometres an hour, according to the agency's bulletin issued at 6:45 a.m. Its central pressure was 935 hectopascals, with maximum sustained winds of 55 metres a second near the centre and gusts of up to 75 metres a second.

Storm-force winds of 25 metres a second or more extended 150 kilometres in all directions from the centre. Gale-force winds of 15 metres a second or more reached 650 kilometres to the east and 500 kilometres to the west, making Champi a large typhoon as well as a violent one.

Stronger, sooner

The storm intensified faster than forecast. At 9 a.m. on Monday it was a very strong typhoon with a central pressure of 950 hectopascals and winds of 50 metres a second, and the agency expected it to turn violent by Wednesday morning. By Monday evening it had already reached 935 hectopascals with winds of 55 metres a second.

The agency now expects Champi to deepen to 925 hectopascals by 6 p.m. today and to hold that

strength, with winds of 55 metres a second, through Wednesday morning and into the early hours of Thursday, when it is forecast to be over the sea south of Okinawa.

The track

After that, Champi is expected to weaken slowly. At 3 a.m. on Friday it is forecast to be a very strong typhoon of 935 hectopascals, with winds of 50 metres a second, south of the Sakishima Islands. By 3 a.m. on Saturday it is expected to be near the east coast of Taiwan, still very strong at 950 hectopascals and 45 metres a second.

By 3 a.m. on Sunday, when the agency's forecast ends, Champi is expected to have weakened to a severe tropical storm of 985 hectopascals, with winds of 25 metres a second, over the East China Sea.

How close

On the forecast centre line, the storm passes about 170 kilometres south-west of Ishigaki on Friday evening, according to the map supplied for this edition. Its forecast position at 3 a.m. on Saturday is about 620 kilometres west-south-west of Naha.

The typhoon panel on the weather map gives two further reference points: about 300 kilometres south-south-east of Ishigaki early on Friday, and about 110 kilometres south-west of Yonaguni early on Saturday.

The forecast circles widen with time, and the agency's track can still shift. Ishigaki, Miyakojima

and Yonaguni are inside the area that could have storm-force winds by 3 a.m. on Friday, and Taipei by 3 a.m. on Saturday. By 3 a.m. on Sunday that area comes within about 130 kilometres of Naha and about 80 kilometres of northern Luzon.

What Okinawa can expect

The private forecaster Weathernews expects average winds of around 15 metres a second in the Sakishima Islands and around 10 metres a second on the main island of Okinawa on Wednesday night, strengthening from Thursday, with high waves. It urged residents to prepare early.

Champi is far from the main islands of Japan and does not affect their weather today. The weather map's outlook says the typhoon is forecast to pass near the Sakishima Islands on Friday and Saturday.

Where it came from

The map traces Champi's path from October 14, when it was still a tropical depression far to the east, near 160 degrees east, across the Pacific past Guam. It has travelled more than 2,000 kilometres westward in six days, gathering strength over warm water.

Champi is the 30th typhoon of the year, a number last reached in 2013.

TYPHOONS

Champi at a Glance

By the Weather Desk

NAME: Typhoon No. 30, Champi.

AT 6 A.M. TUESDAY: Large and violent; east of the Philippines at 15.7N, 136.2E.

MOVING: West-north-west at 20 km/h.

PRESSURE: 935 hPa.

WINDS: 55 m/s near the centre, gusting to 75 m/s.

STORM WINDS (25 m/s or more): 150 km in all directions.

GALE WINDS (15 m/s or more): 650 km to the east and 500 km to the west.

TUESDAY 6 P.M.: 925 hPa, 55 m/s, violent.

Wednesday 6 a.m.: 925 hPa, 55 m/s, violent.

Thursday 3 a.m.: 925 hPa, 55 m/s, violent.

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

Saturday 3 a.m.: 950 hPa, 45 m/s, very strong.

SUNDAY 3 A.M.: 985 hPa, 25 m/s, severe tropical storm over the East China Sea.

SOURCE: Japan Meteorological Agency bulletins issued at 6:45 a.m. on October 20.

TYPHOONS

How Close Champi Comes

By the Weather Desk

EARLY FRIDAY: About 300 km south-south-east of Ishigaki, according to the weather map's typhoon panel.

FRIDAY EVENING: About 170 km south-west of Ishigaki on the forecast centre line, according to the typhoon map.

EARLY SATURDAY: About 110 km south-west of Yonaguni, according to the weather map's panel.

3 A.M. SATURDAY: About 620 km west-south-west of Naha, according to the typhoon map.

STORM-WIND AREA BY 3 A.M. FRIDAY: Includes Ishigaki, Miyakojima and Yonaguni.

STORM-WIND AREA BY 3 A.M. SATURDAY: Includes Taipei.

BY 3 A.M. SUNDAY: The storm-wind area comes within about 130 km of Naha and about 80 km of northern Luzon.

WHY TWO DISTANCES FOR ISHIGAKI: The storm moves west-north-west, so it lies south-south-east of the island early on Friday and south-west of it by the evening; the closest approach comes in between.

UNCERTAINTY: Each forecast circle marks where the centre is expected to be with a probability of 70 per cent.

SOURCE: The typhoon and weather maps supplied for this edition, based on JMA bulletins.

TYPHOONS

What 'Violent' Means: How the Meteorological Agency Grades a Typhoon's Strength and Size

The agency's top category starts at 54 metres a second, sustained over ten minutes; American agencies measure over one minute, which is why their figures look higher

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

When the Japan Meteorological Agency calls a typhoon violent, it is using a precise term. The agency grades typhoons by the strength of their maximum sustained winds, and violent is the top of its scale.

Strength

In Japanese usage, a tropical cyclone in the north-western Pacific is called a typhoon, and given a number, once its maximum sustained winds reach about 17 metres a second. In English, the agency and other international bodies keep the word typhoon for storms of about 33 metres a second or more, and call weaker ones tropical storms or severe tropical storms.

The agency adds a strength label only from about 33 metres a second. From 33 to under 44 metres a second it calls a typhoon strong; from 44 to under 54, very strong; and from 54 metres a second up, violent.

Champi's winds of 55 metres a second put it just over that threshold. At that speed, about 200 kilometres an hour, winds can topple utility poles, bring down trees and blow apart poorly built structures.

TYPHOONS

Size

Size is graded separately, by the radius of gale-force winds of 15 metres a second or more. A typhoon is called large when that radius is 500 kilometres or more, and very large when it reaches 800 kilometres.

Champi's gales extend 650 kilometres on its eastern side, so it is both large and violent, a combination that means strong winds will be felt over a wide area even far from the centre.

Ten minutes or one

The agency measures sustained winds as a ten-minute average, the international standard used by the World Meteorological Organization. The United States' Joint Typhoon Warning Center uses a one-minute average, which gives higher numbers for the same storm. That is why American reports often describe the same typhoon in more dramatic terms, as a super typhoon or as the equivalent of a high category on the Atlantic hurricane scale.

Pressure

Central pressure is a further guide. In general, the lower the pressure, the stronger the winds circling the centre. Champi's 935 hectopascals this morning, forecast to fall to 925, marks a deep and powerful storm.

What the grade does not say

A typhoon's grade describes its winds at sea. What happens on land depends on the track, the speed of movement, the tide and the ground. Slow-moving storms can bring days of rain, and a storm surge can do the most damage even when the wind has eased.

TYPHOONS

Ishigaki, Miyakojima and Yonaguni Have Two Days to Prepare: What Residents and Travellers Should Do Before Champi Arrives

Winds are forecast to rise from Wednesday night; flights and ferries are likely to be affected toward the weekend, and outages on small islands can last for days

By the Society Desk

The Sakishima Islands, at the south-western end of the Japanese archipelago, know typhoons well. But a large, violent storm passing close by can still cut power, halt transport and isolate islands for days, and the time to prepare is before the wind rises.

The timing

Weathernews expects average winds of around 15 metres a second in the Sakishima Islands on Wednesday night, strengthening from Thursday, with high waves. The agency's map shows Ishigaki, Miyakojima and Yonaguni inside the area that could have storm-force winds by 3 a.m. on Friday.

At home

Residents are advised to secure or bring indoors anything that could be blown away, such as potted plants, laundry poles and bicycles, and to check that shutters and windows are sound. Gutters and drains should be cleared so that heavy rain can run off.

A stock of drinking water, food that needs no cooking, medicine, batteries and a portable radio for at least three days is recommended. Mobile phones and power banks should be charged in advance, and bathtubs can be filled to provide water for toilets if the supply stops.

Evacuation

Residents should check the location of their nearest evacuation shelter and the safest route to it, and should move early, while it is still light and before the wind becomes dangerous, if they live in low-lying, flood-prone or landslide-prone areas.

Once the storm is overhead, going outside is far more dangerous than staying in a sturdy building.

Travel

Air and sea services to and between the islands are likely to be disrupted toward the end of the week. Travellers planning to visit Okinawa should check with airlines and ferry operators and consider changing their plans, and those already on the islands should allow for the possibility of being unable to leave for several days.

After the storm

Fallen power lines should never be touched. Damage to homes should be photographed before repairs for insurance claims, and residents should beware of the strong winds that often return once the eye has passed.

Emergency help at sea is available on 118, the coast

guard's number.

TECHNOLOGY

Flight 10: The Plan From Liftoff to Release

By the Technology Desk

LIFTOFF: 4:41 a.m. on Tuesday, October 20, from the large rocket launch pad at the Tanegashima Space Center, Kagoshima Prefecture.

ROCKET: H3 Flight 10, in the H3-24L configuration: two LE-9 main engines, four SRB-3 solid boosters and a long fairing.

HEIGHT: About 63 metres.

ABOUT 1 MIN 56 SEC: First pair of solid boosters separates; the second pair follows two seconds later.

ABOUT 3 MIN 17 SEC: The 16.4-metre fairing, flown for the first time, separates.

ABOUT 4 MIN 59 SEC: First stage separates; the second stage fires until about 10 minutes 40 seconds.

ABOUT 1 HR 4 MIN: After a coasting phase, the second stage fires again.

ABOUT 1 HR 11 MIN: MMX separates onto its path to Mars.

FIRSTS: The first H3 to send a probe into interplanetary space, and the first to fly the long fairing.

RESERVE PERIOD: October 21 to November 9, not needed.

SOURCE: JAXA's published flight plan; times are planned times after liftoff.

POLITICS

The Food Tax Bill at a Glance

By the Political Desk

THE CUT: Consumption tax on food and non-alcoholic drinks from 8 per cent to 1 per cent.

WHEN: From April 2027, for two years only.

NOT COVERED: Eating out, alcohol and other goods, which stay at 10 per cent.

NO ESCAPE CLAUSE: No provision to extend the cut if the economy weakens.

COST: About 10 trillion yen over two years.

FUNDING: A review of spending and revenue, without deficit-financing bonds, according to the bill.

ALSO: An income-linked cash benefit for working people, averaging about 30,000 yen a year for some 20 million people.

UNDECIDED: Support for restaurants and small farmers, to be settled in the fiscal 2027 budget by year-end.

THE VOTES: The ruling bloc is four seats short of an upper house majority; the Conservative Party of Japan, with two members, will vote in favour.

TARGET: Lower house passage in early November; enactment by December 12.

POLITICS

From Plenary Speeches to an Upper House Vote: How the Food Tax Cut Bill Will Make Its Way Through the Diet

The government wants the bill through the lower house in early November and enacted by December 12; the upper house, where the ruling bloc lacks a majority, will decide its fate

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The bill to cut the consumption tax on food begins its journey through the Diet on Tuesday. Here is how the process works.

Explanation and questions

In a plenary session of the House of Representatives, a Cabinet minister explains the purpose of the bill, and representatives of the parties put questions to the prime minister and ministers. These set-piece exchanges, broadcast live, frame the debate.

Committee

The bill then goes to a committee, in this case the lower house Committee on Financial Affairs, where most of the detailed examination takes place. Opposition parties have asked for about 30 hours of questions and for joint sessions with other committees, including agriculture, and for the prime minister to attend.

The committee may hold hearings with experts and members of the public. When questioning ends, it votes, and the bill returns to the plenary for a vote of the whole chamber.

Amendments

Bills can be amended in committee. The Liberal Democratic Party has signalled that it is open to changes to win opposition support, and the opposition parties have their own alternatives, from a cut in resident tax to cash payments for every resident.

The upper house

After passing the lower house, the bill goes through the same stages in the House of Councillors. The ruling coalition is four seats short of a majority there, so it needs the votes of other parties or independents. The Conservative Party of Japan, with two seats, has said it will vote in favour.

If the upper house says no

Under Article 59 of the Constitution, a bill rejected by the upper house becomes law if the lower house passes it again by a two-thirds majority of the members present. The lower house can also treat a bill as rejected if the upper house fails to vote on it within 60 days.

Budget bills differ

Budgets and treaties follow different rules, under which the lower house's decision prevails more easily. The tax bill, however, is ordinary legislation and needs the upper house's approval or a two-thirds override.

The deadline

The extraordinary Diet session ends on December 12. The cut is due to take effect in April 2027.

POLITICS

Opposition Demands Former Farm Minister Yana Appear Before the Upper House, as Tochigi's Governor Says Power 'Must Not Be Used to Intimidate'

The Constitutional Democrats want a special Budget Committee session; the Liberal Democrats take the request away to consider, and the governor promises to make up any road money his towns have lost

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

The Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan demanded on Monday that Kazuo Yana, who resigned as agriculture minister last week, be summoned to the House of Councillors to answer questions, as the governor of his home prefecture publicly criticised his conduct.

At a meeting of the directors of the upper house Budget Committee, Kiyomi Tsujimoto, the opposition's senior director, said Mr Yana had given answers in the House of Representatives Budget Committee before he resigned, and argued that he now had to be questioned directly as an unsworn witness. She asked for a special concentrated session of the committee for that purpose.

Masahiro Ishida, the Liberal Democratic Party's senior director, took the request back to his party without giving an answer.

'Not freed from accountability'

Shunichi Mizuoka, the leader of the Constitutional Democrats, told a news conference that resigning did not free Mr Yana from his accountability. He said there were claims that Mr Yana had violated the Public Offices Election Law, and urged the ruling side to consider the summons favourably.

The road money

Mr Yana stepped down on October 14 after a recording surfaced in which he told a meeting of supporters that he had "greatly cut" road budgets for two municipalities in his Tochigi constituency, the town of Nakagawa and the city of Nasukarasuyama, whose mayors had not backed him in a general election. He has withdrawn the remark and denied asking for any cut.

The governor speaks

At his regular news conference on Monday, Tochigi Governor Tomikazu Fukuda criticised Mr Yana in unusually direct terms. "Power must not be used to intimidate those involved," he said. "It could create anxiety and doubt about the fairness of road administration."

He asked Mr Yana to fulfil his accountability as a member of the Diet.

Making up the shortfall

Mr Fukuda acknowledged that the budgets had been reduced in numerical terms. If residents' requests were not being met in practice, he said, the prefecture would do its utmost to provide the necessary money

in a supplementary budget or next year's budget.

Little contact

The governor said his dealings with Mr Yana had been limited. When Mr Yana became minister, he said, he had sent a congratulatory email and received a reply, and he had had no contact with him since the resignation.

The prime minister's view

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said on Monday morning that leaving the Cabinet did not end Mr Yana's accountability as a politician, and urged him to explain himself carefully.

POLITICS

Seventy Years After the Joint Declaration, Japan and Russia Mark the Day Apart, With a Japanese Reporter in a Moscow Cell

Diplomats were unable to see the Hokkaido Shimbun journalist held on spying charges; the 1956 accord that restored relations and promised two islands remains the starting point for talks that no longer take place

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Seventy years to the day after Japan and the Soviet Union restored diplomatic relations, Japanese diplomats in Moscow were still struggling on Monday to see a Japanese journalist held on spying charges, a measure of how far ties between Tokyo and Moscow have fallen.

The Japanese Embassy in Russia said on Monday that a consular meeting with the reporter, a man working for the Hokkaido Shimbun, was "in a difficult situation." It did not say whether a meeting had taken place.

The detention

Russia's Federal Security Service announced on October 13 that it had detained the reporter in Sakhalin, in the Russian Far East, on suspicion of espionage. He was moved to Moscow, where a court ordered him held in pre-trial detention. Espionage is punishable in Russia by up to 20 years in prison.

Japan summoned Russia's ambassador, Nikolai Nozdrev, on October 14 to protest that Russia had announced the detention unilaterally without adequate explanation. Embassy staff went to a detention facility in Moscow on October 16 but were not allowed to meet him.

Russia claims he collected information about soldiers mobilised for the war in Ukraine, according to Jiji Press.

The declaration

On October 19, 1956, Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama and Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin signed the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration at the Kremlin. It ended the state of war between the two countries, restored diplomatic relations and opened the way for the return of Japanese still held in Soviet camps. The Soviet Union also dropped its opposition to Japan's membership of the United Nations, which Japan joined that December.

The declaration left the territorial dispute unresolved. The Soviet Union agreed to hand over Habomai and Shikotan, the two smallest of the four islands off Hokkaido that Japan calls the Northern Territories, after a peace treaty was concluded. No treaty has been signed.

'A starting point'

Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi described the declaration last December as a basic document that set the starting point for negotiations on a peace treaty, and said Japan would negotiate on the basis of it and other agreements if talks resumed.

A frozen relationship

Talks are not taking place. Japan joined Western sanctions after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and Russia suspended the peace treaty negotiations in response. Relations worsened again in August, when President Vladimir Putin visited Etorofu, one of the disputed islands.

An event in Moscow last month to mark the anniversary, organised by a Russian civic group, was held out of sight of the media. Former residents of the islands, whose average age is now close to 90, have been unable to visit their ancestors' graves there since Russia halted the visits in 2022.

POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi speaks in the Diet, in a file photo. She told the upper house Budget Committee on Monday that the cut in the consumption tax on food would basically be reflected in shop prices, and that it could be paid for without deficit-financing bonds. (File photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

Takaichi Says the Food Tax Cut Will Reach Shop Prices as Debate Opens in the Lower House, and a Small Conservative Party Pledges Its Votes

The prime minister insists the money can be found without deficit bonds; support for restaurants and small farmers will not be settled until the year-end budget, and the ruling bloc still needs four more votes in the upper house

By Naomi Kato | Political Desk

The government's bill to cut the consumption tax on food and drink goes before a plenary session of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, after Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the Diet that the cut would show up on price tags and that her government could pay for it.

Asked in the House of Councillors Budget Committee on Monday whether shops might simply pocket the difference, Ms Takaichi said she understood that the cut would "basically be reflected" in retail prices. Even if prices rose for other reasons, she said, the seven percentage points of tax being removed would still be removed, so the measure would have an effect.

The bill

The bill would lower the reduced consumption tax rate on food and non-alcoholic drinks from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027. It contains no clause allowing the cut to be extended if the economy weakens, a choice made to reassure those worried about the public finances.

It also includes special provisions on the rule that prices must be displayed including tax, to give retailers time to change their price labels and reprogram their tills.

Alongside the cut, the government plans a new income-linked cash benefit for working people, which it has said would average about 30,000 yen a year for some 20 million people. Who will qualify, and how much each will actually receive, are expected to be among the main questions in the debate.

Paying for it

The cut will cost about 10 trillion yen over the two years, Kyodo News reported. The bill says the money will be found through a review of spending and revenue, "without relying on deficit-financing bonds."

Ms Takaichi said on Monday she was confident that the necessary funds could be secured. The government was reviewing spending and revenue as part of a reform of how budgets are drawn up, she said, and possible sources included non-tax revenue, the return to the treasury of unused money held in government funds, and any rise in tax revenue.

POLITICS

'Prime Minister Koizumi... Too Early': Takaichi Promotes Her Defence Minister by Mistake, and the Chamber Laughs

The slip in the upper house Budget Committee came after Shinjiro Koizumi answered a question on disaster relief; the two fought each other in the last two Liberal Democratic Party leadership races

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi briefly promoted her defence minister to her own job in the House of Councillors Budget Committee on Monday, drawing laughter from the chamber.

Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi had just answered a question from an opposition member about the Self-Defense Forces' disaster relief missions. When

She rejected criticism that her policies had caused what some call "Takaichi yen weakness" and "Takaichi high interest rates," saying she clearly denied it, and argued that building a strong economy would raise confidence in the yen.

What is still missing

No specific help has yet been announced for the industries the change will hurt. Meals eaten in restaurants stay at the standard 10 per cent rate, so restaurants could lose customers to takeaway food and supermarkets taxed at 1 per cent, and support for small and very small farmers has also yet to be decided. Decisions on both, and on the final funding, are to be made by the end of the year as the fiscal 2027 budget is compiled.

Opposition parties say the bill leaves too many questions unanswered, and some observers argue that the government will need to explain itself in more concrete terms to win their support.

Four votes short

The arithmetic in the upper house makes that support essential. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Innovation Party are four seats short of a majority there and need opposition or independent members to pass the bill.

On Monday they picked up two. Naoki Hyakuta, leader of the Conservative Party of Japan, which has two members in the upper house, told a news conference at the Diet that his party would vote for the bill. "Our thinking is to do what can be done, starting where we can," he said.

Mr Hyakuta added that the cut should not be limited to two years and should also cover eating out, and said he would put those requests to the government and the ruling parties.

The timetable

The government and the ruling parties aim to pass the bill through the lower house in early November and to enact it before the Diet session ends on December 12.

Ms Takaichi rose to add her own answer, she began: "Just now, Prime Minister Koizumi..."

She stopped and corrected herself at once. "I'm sorry. It's still too early for 'prime minister,' isn't it," she said, before referring to him as the defence minister and continuing her answer.

Old rivals

The slip drew laughter partly because of the history between the two. Ms Takaichi and Mr Koizumi both ran for the presidency of the Liberal Democratic Party in 2024 and again in 2025.

In the 2024 race, won by Shigeru Ishiba, Ms Takaichi reached the runoff and Mr Koizumi finished third. In the 2025 race the two met in the runoff, and Ms Takaichi won, going on to become the country's first woman prime minister.

She then appointed Mr Koizumi, the son of former

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, as defence minister, one of the most demanding posts in her Cabinet.

Still a contender

At 45, Mr Koizumi is widely seen as a future candidate for the top job, which is perhaps why the prime minister's words, "too early," caused as much amusement as the slip itself.

A long day

The exchange was a light moment in a long session in which Ms Takaichi faced questions on the funding of the food tax cut, the weak yen, the conduct of her education minister and the affair surrounding Kazuo Yana, the agriculture minister who resigned last week.

In her answer, the prime minister went on to speak about the Self-Defense Forces' role in disasters, the subject of the question.

POLITICS

Takaichi Tells Education Minister Seki to 'Reflect and Straighten Up' Over a Fundraising Party Held in Breach of Lower House Rules

The prime minister says she learned of the party from the media; the opposition sees another lapse of discipline in a Cabinet already shaken by the farm minister's resignation

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told her education minister, Yoshihiro Seki, on Monday to reflect on his conduct after it emerged that he had held a political fundraising party in the office building of members of the House of Representatives, in breach of the chamber's internal rules.

"I want him to reflect, straighten himself up and devote himself to his duties," Ms Takaichi said in the House of Councillors Budget Committee.

She said she had not known about the party until it was reported in the media.

The rule

Fundraising parties are a common way for Japanese politicians to collect money for their political groups, with supporters buying tickets to attend. The lower house's internal rules restrict how its members' office buildings near the Diet may be used, and holding such a party there was in breach of them, according to Kyodo News.

Details such as when the party was held and how much it raised were not immediately clear.

Bad timing

The rebuke comes at an awkward moment for the government. The agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, resigned on October 14 after 28 days in the post, and a Kyodo News poll at the weekend found that support for the Cabinet had fallen below 50 per cent for the first time, at 49.1 per cent.

Political money has also been a sensitive subject for the Liberal Democratic Party since the scandal over unrecorded income from fundraising parties held by its factions, which led to the dissolution of most of the factions and contributed to heavy election losses.

What happens next

Opposition parties are expected to raise the matter in the Diet this week, and to ask whether the prime minister's warning is enough. Mr Seki, a member of the lower house, oversees the ministry responsible for schools, universities, science and sport.

POLITICS

Yoshimura Says the Coalition Holds and Ishin Will Not Threaten to Walk Out, but Tells the LDP to Find Its Nerve on Cutting Seats

On the eve of the coalition's first anniversary, the Japan Innovation Party leader calls for a stronger team around the prime minister and insists 45 proportional seats must go in this Diet session

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Hirofumi Yoshimura, leader of the Japan Innovation Party and governor of Osaka Prefecture, said on Monday that the most important task for the coalition government was to strengthen the team supporting Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi.

"Strengthening the team that supports Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is important," Mr Yoshimura said in an interview in Osaka, ahead of Wednesday's first anniversary of the coalition between his party and the Liberal Democratic Party.

No threats

He described the relationship of trust between himself and the prime minister as solid. "As long as this relationship does not break down, I have no intention whatsoever of using the idea of leaving the coalition as a threat," he said.

The centre pin

But he left no doubt about what Ishin expects in return. Reducing the number of seats in the House of Representatives was the "centre pin" of reform, he said, using a bowling image for the piece that brings the rest down, and he urged the Liberal Democrats to see it through.

"I want the LDP, too, to steel itself and get it done," he said. Ishin is demanding a cut of 45 proportional representation seats, and Mr Yoshimura said it would be achieved in the extraordinary Diet session now under way.

A year together

The two parties agreed to form a coalition in October last year, after Komeito ended its long partnership with the Liberal Democrats. Ishin has used its position to press its own policy demands, of which a smaller lower house is the most prominent.

The arithmetic

The coalition's position in the Diet depends on cooperation from other parties, especially in the upper house, where the ruling bloc lacks a majority. That gives Ishin leverage, but also a stake in the government's survival.

Pressure points

The first anniversary comes at a difficult time. Support for the Cabinet has slipped after the resignation of the agriculture minister, the food tax cut bill faces close scrutiny, and the seat cut, which has met resistance within the Liberal Democratic Party, has yet to be settled.

POLITICS

Constitutional Democrats 'Somewhat Confused' After Komeito Pulls Back From Their Deal on Next Spring's Local Elections

Komeito cited the collapse of merger talks with the Centrist Reform Alliance; both sides now say they will keep working together where local ties are strong

By the Political Desk

The leader of the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan said on Monday that he was somewhat confused by Komeito's decision to pull back from an agreement on electoral cooperation for next spring's nationwide local elections.

"I don't think it means they are steering in a different direction, but I am a little confused," Shunichi Mizuoka told a news conference.

The agreement

Komeito had reached a basic agreement with the Constitutional Democrats and the Centrist Reform Alliance on cooperation in the unified local elections, which will be held in the spring of 2027.

At a meeting of Komeito's central executive committee on October 14, the party's secretary-general, Makoto Nishida, reported that the cooperation would be ended. Masaaki Taniai, the committee chairman, explained afterwards that merger talks with the Centrist Reform Alliance had broken down and that the basic agreement on electoral cooperation would be dissolved.

Softer words

Two days later Mr Nishida changed the wording. The cooperation had been premised on a merger, he said, and Komeito would "draw a line under it for now." Where cooperation between local branches had already taken root, the parties would take it further.

Puzzled partners

The shift has left the Constitutional Democrats unsure of where they stand. One figure from the Democratic Reform group, formed after a split in the Centrist alliance, said he could not understand what Komeito was aiming for.

Why it matters

Komeito's support base, built on the lay Buddhist organisation Soka Gakkai, is among the best organised in Japanese politics and can swing close local races. Since leaving its coalition with the Liberal Democrats last year, the party has been searching for new partners, and its choices will shape

POLITICS

the opposition's prospects in next spring's elections and beyond.

POLITICS

China 'Firmly Opposes and Strongly Condemns' Takaichi's Yasukuni Offering, as Environment Minister Sasakawa Visits the Shrine

Beijing says the offering reveals an intent to justify aggression and pave the way to remilitarisation; the prime minister did not go to the shrine during its autumn festival
By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

China said on Monday that it firmly opposed and strongly condemned Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's offering to Yasukuni Shrine for its autumn festival, and that it had lodged a strong protest with Japan.

Mao Ning, director-general of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's information department, told a regular news conference in Beijing that the shrine honours Class-A war criminals convicted by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East.

'Malicious intent'

Politicians who continued to pay their respects there despite this revealed a malicious intent to justify aggression and open the way to remilitarisation, Ms Mao said. She urged Japan to face history squarely and to win the trust of its Asian neighbours and the international community through concrete actions.

The offering

Ms Takaichi sent a tamagushi-ryo, a cash offering in place of the sacred sakaki branch traditionally presented at Shinto rites, at her own expense, for the shrine's autumn festival, which ended on Monday. She did not visit the shrine herself during the festival.

Members of her Cabinet did. Hiroyoshi Sasakawa, the environment minister, visited on Monday, and Tatsunori Ibayashi, the land minister, had gone earlier in the festival.

A familiar pattern

Japanese prime ministers have generally avoided visiting Yasukuni in office since Shinzo Abe went in December 2013, a visit that drew protests from China and South Korea and an expression of disappointment from the United States. Sending an offering instead has become the usual practice.

The government's view

Japanese governments have said that paying respects to the war dead is a matter for the individual and is not intended to glorify war. The government has typically described such offerings as made in a private capacity.

Ties with Beijing

The protest adds to strains between Tokyo and Beijing, whose relations have been tense since the prime minister's remarks in the Diet last November about a possible emergency over Taiwan.

POLITICS

Japan to Keep Its Navy in Middle Eastern Waters for Another Year as Piracy Rises and Iran Keeps Hormuz Closed

One destroyer and one P-1 patrol aircraft will continue counter-piracy and information-gathering missions until next November; the Strait of Hormuz stays outside the operating area
By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The government has decided to extend the Maritime Self-Defense Force's deployment in the Middle East by one year, until November next year, because piracy is increasing and tensions in the region have sharpened, according to people familiar with the decision.

The Cabinet is expected to approve the extension shortly. The government judged that efforts to ensure the safety of ships with links to Japan needed to continue, the sources told Kyodo News.

The missions

The deployment has two parts. For counter-piracy, the force operates in the Gulf of Aden off Somalia, in East Africa. For information gathering, it covers the high seas of the Gulf of Oman, the northern Arabian Sea and the waters east of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

The force consists of one destroyer and one P-1 patrol aircraft.

Not Hormuz

The area of operations remains unchanged and excludes the Strait of Hormuz, even though Iran is continuing what amounts to a blockade of the strait. Most of the crude oil Japan imports comes from the

Middle East, and much of it has passed through the strait.

How it began

Japan began sending the Self-Defense Forces to fight piracy in 2009, operating from a base in Djibouti. After a tanker with links to Japan was attacked in the Gulf of Oman in June 2019, the government added the information-gathering mission in 2020, under a clause in the law establishing the Defense Ministry that allows research and study.

Sinai too

The government also plans to extend by a year, to the end of November next year, the dispatch of Self-Defense Force personnel to the Multinational Force and Observers in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, which monitors the ceasefire between Israel and Egypt.

A wider storm

The decision comes as the region grows more dangerous. Yemen's Houthis have stepped up missile attacks on Saudi Arabia, President Donald Trump has warned that the United States may "soon finish the job" against Iran, and crude oil prices in New York have risen for eight straight trading days.

POLITICS

Keen Sword Opens in Ishigaki Behind Closed Doors After the Arrest of a U.S. Marine, as the Type 25 Anti-Ship Missile Makes Its Debut

About 45,000 Self-Defense Force personnel and 12,000 Americans take part across Japan until October 29; the ceremony was to have been open to the media
By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Japan's Self-Defense Forces and the United States military held the opening ceremony for their large-scale joint exercise Keen Sword at the Ground Self-Defense Force's Ishigaki garrison in Okinawa Prefecture on Monday, without allowing the media in.

The organisers had originally planned to open the ceremony to the press, but changed their minds this month after a U.S. Marine stationed in Okinawa was arrested on suspicion of robbery and murder, taking local feeling into account, according to Kyodo News. The Defense Ministry later posted photographs of the ceremony on its website.

The scale

Keen Sword, held roughly every two years, runs until October 29. About 45,000 members of the Self-Defense Forces and about 12,000 U.S. personnel are taking part, at Self-Defense Force facilities across the country.

First held in 1986, Keen Sword is the largest joint field exercise between the two countries. It alternates with Keen Edge, a command-post exercise conducted largely by computer simulation.

The exercise covers land, sea and air as well as cyberspace and outer space, with the aim of strengthening coordination between the two countries' forces.

A new missile

For the first time since it was delivered, the Ground Self-Defense Force has deployed the Type 25 ground-to-ship missile, a long-range weapon designed to strike enemy ships at a distance, for the exercise.

Long-range missiles are central to Japan's plans to build what it calls counterstrike capabilities, adopted in the national security documents revised in 2022.

Ishigaki

Ishigaki, less than 300 kilometres from Taiwan, has had a Ground Self-Defense Force garrison since 2023. Its residents are divided over the build-up of defences on the island, and the arrest of the Marine has added to sensitivities in Okinawa.

Okinawa Prefecture, which makes up about 0.6 per cent of Japan's land area, hosts roughly 70 per cent of the facilities used exclusively by U.S. forces in Japan, and crimes involving American service members have long stirred anger there.

Typhoon in the way

The exercise coincides with the approach of Typhoon Champi, which is forecast to pass south of the Sakishima Islands, Ishigaki among them, on Friday.

POLITICS

Japan and Malaysia Agree to Deepen Defence Ties as Koizumi Hosts the First Malaysian Defence Minister to Visit in Eight Years

Talks in Tokyo focus on the East and South China Seas and the security of sea lanes, as China expands its activity at sea
By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi and his Malaysian counterpart, Mohamed Khaled Nordin, met in Tokyo on Monday and agreed to strengthen defence cooperation between their countries, with China's growing activity at sea as the backdrop.

It was the first visit to Japan by a Malaysian defence minister in eight years.

Sea lanes

The two ministers discussed the situation in the East China Sea and the South China Sea and the stability of the sea lanes through which much of the region's trade passes.

Mr Koizumi said at the start of the meeting that Malaysia played a major role in the peace and stability of the region and was an essential partner in realising a free and open Indo-Pacific. He said he wanted to develop cooperation and deepen defence relations as a whole.

Earlier agreements

Japan and Malaysia signed an agreement on the transfer of defence equipment and technology in 2018, which covers the protection of classified information and the proper management of transferred items.

Why Malaysia matters

Malaysia lies along the Strait of Malacca, the route taken by much of Japan's oil imports and of its trade with Europe and the Middle East, and it has its own claims in the South China Sea, where Chinese coast guard and maritime militia vessels operate near Malaysian oil and gas fields.

Japan has been building security ties with South-East Asian countries in recent years, including through a program that provides defence equipment to friendly militaries.

The handshake

The two ministers shook hands for the cameras before their talks began.

POLITICS

Should Japan Build Nuclear-Powered Submarines? Critics Warn of Breaking With 'Exclusively Defensive' Policy at a Symposium in the Diet

The question has surfaced in the review of the three national security documents due by year-end; a security scholar says the government must explain the strategic case in detail
By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Whether Japan should acquire nuclear-powered submarines was debated at a symposium held inside the Diet building on Monday afternoon, as the question works its way into the government's review of its security strategy.

The government plans to revise its three national security documents by the end of the year, and some voices in that discussion have called for the option of nuclear-powered submarines to be studied.

'Beyond defence-only'

Hajime Matsukubo, secretary-general of the Citizens' Nuclear Information Center, argued that owning nuclear submarines would go beyond the limits of Japan's policy of exclusively defensive defence, which he called a national principle, and would overturn the peace efforts Japan had built up. He called for further debate on the risks of introducing them.

Accidents and the long term

Sumiko Hatakeyama, co-representative of the non-governmental organisation Peace Boat, pointed to the risk of accidents involving nuclear submarines, and urged attention not only to security but also to the long-term harm to people and the environment.

'Explain the strategy'

Heigo Sato, a professor at Takushoku University who specialises in security policy, said that if Japan were to have nuclear submarines, the government should explain their strategic significance in detail.

Why the idea has surfaced

Nuclear-powered submarines can stay submerged far longer than conventional boats, which must surface or snorkel to recharge their batteries, and can travel faster over long distances. Australia is acquiring them under the AUKUS partnership with the United States and Britain, and South Korea has sought American support for building its own.

The obstacles

Japan's Atomic Energy Basic Act limits the use of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes, and successive governments have interpreted it as ruling out nuclear propulsion for military vessels unless such technology becomes widespread in civilian use. Any move would therefore face legal, technical and political hurdles, as well as costs far above those of conventional submarines.

POLITICS

UN Training Agency's Chief Raises the Organisation's Flag in Hiroshima: 'Few Places Speak So Strongly of the Value of Peace'

The visit by the head of UNITAR marked the 70th anniversary of Japan's admission to the United Nations; Governor Yokota pledges to send the message of peace together
By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Michelle Gyles-McDonnough, executive director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, which builds skills for officials in developing countries, visited the agency's only office in Japan, in Hiroshima, on Monday and said the city spoke powerfully of the value of peace.

"There are not many places that speak so strongly of the value and necessity of peace," she said after meeting Hiroshima Governor Mika Yokota. She said she was proud that the institute was based in Hiroshima, contributing to world peace and sustainable development.

The flag

After the talks, the two raised the United Nations flag in front of the building in Naka Ward that houses the office. "At a time when conflict and division are affecting people around the world, raising the UN flag in Hiroshima is an extremely powerful message," she said.

Ms Yokota welcomed the visit and said she wanted to send the message of the importance of peace together with the institute.

Seventy years

The visit was part of events marking the 70th anniversary of Japan's membership of the United Nations. Japan was admitted in December 1956, after the Joint Declaration with the Soviet Union, signed seventy years ago on Monday, removed Moscow's objection.

The office

The institute's Hiroshima office, opened in 2003, trains officials and professionals from Asia, the Pacific, Africa and elsewhere in fields such as disaster risk reduction, nuclear disarmament and the rebuilding of societies after conflict, drawing on the city's own experience of reconstruction after the atomic bombing of 1945.

The office was set up at the invitation of Hiroshima Prefecture, which has supported its work ever since.

POLITICS

Debate Begins in Earnest on Making More Elderly Patients Pay 30 Per Cent of Their Medical Bills

The government and ruling parties want a conclusion by year-end to keep the insurance system afloat and ease premiums on the working generation, but rising prices make the timing awkward
By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Discussion of raising the share of medical costs that elderly people pay at the clinic is gathering pace, with the government and the ruling parties aiming to reach a conclusion by the end of the year, Kyodo News reported on Monday.

The aim is to keep the public medical insurance system sustainable as costs rise with the ageing of the population, and to lighten the burden of premiums on people of working age. But with rising prices straining many households, the process could run into resistance.

Who pays what now

In principle, people from school age to 69 pay 30 per cent of their medical bills. People aged 70 to 74 pay 20 per cent, and those 75 and over pay 10 per cent, or

POLITICS

20 per cent if their income is above a certain level.

Elderly people whose income is judged comparable to that of working people pay 30 per cent. For a single-person household, that currently means annual income of 3.83 million yen or more.

- The options
- Three broad options are under consideration. The first is to raise the age thresholds, extending the 30 per cent band to age 70, or applying the 20 per cent rate from age 75.
- The second is to create intermediate rates of 15 and 25 per cent, to soften the impact of any increase.
- The third is to lower the income levels at which the 20 and 30 per cent rates apply, which would widen the number of elderly people affected.

Financial assets

The health ministry has also signalled that it intends to take financial income, such as dividends and interest, into account in setting insurance premiums and co-payments for the elderly, a change it plans from August 2029.

The arguments

Supporters say that many older people are well off and that younger workers, whose wages have struggled to keep pace with prices, are paying too much to support the system. Opponents warn that higher charges could deter elderly patients from seeing doctors until their conditions worsen, raising costs in the end.

What comes next

The issue will be discussed by the health ministry's advisory councils and within the ruling parties over the coming weeks, with decisions expected as the fiscal 2027 budget is compiled in December.

POLITICS

Home-Care Fees to Reflect Carers' Travel Costs From Fiscal 2027, After Rural Providers Complained of Long Drives and Closures

The health ministry's plan answers operators whose clients live far apart; the size of the increase and the conditions are still to be decided

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare plans to take care workers' travel costs into account when it sets the fees paid for home-visit care, in the fiscal 2027 revision of nursing care fees.

The ministry presented the plan on Monday to a subcommittee of the Social Security Council, its advisory body. The amount of the increase and the conditions for receiving it are still to be worked out.

The service

Home-visit care sends care workers to the homes of elderly people to help with going to the toilet, bathing and meals, allowing many to keep living in their own homes rather than move into facilities.

Japan's long-term care insurance system, introduced in April 2000, is funded half by premiums paid by everyone aged 40 and over and half by taxes. Users generally pay 10 per cent of the cost, and up to 30 per cent if their incomes are higher.

The problem

Operators, mainly in rural areas, have said that because their clients' homes are far apart, travel takes a great deal of money and time and squeezes their finances.

Where clients are scattered and a care worker can make only a limited number of visits a day, travel costs are high but the fees do not cover them, and some providers have closed or stopped offering the service.

The fix

The ministry intends to revise the fee system so that travel costs are reflected in what providers are paid.

Why it matters

Japan's population of people aged 75 and over is still growing, and the number of care workers has not kept pace. In thinly populated areas, the loss of a single home-care provider can leave elderly people with no service at all, pushing families to give up work to care for relatives or to move them into facilities far from home.

Nursing care fees are revised every three years, and the next revision takes effect in fiscal 2027.

POLITICS

Government's Maiden Name Bill Would Let Ministries Allow the Use of a Former Surname Alone in Official Procedures

The bill, which the government is considering submitting in the current Diet session, expands the informal use of maiden names rather than allowing married couples to keep separate surnames

By the Political Desk

The outline of a bill the government is considering submitting to the current extraordinary Diet session to widen the use of maiden names emerged on Monday, according to people familiar with the matter.

The bill concerns the use of former surnames in administrative procedures. Under it, a ministerial ordinance could allow a person's maiden name alone to be written in certain cases, rather than alongside the legal surname.

The background

Under the Civil Code, married couples must share a surname, and in about 95 per cent of marriages it is the wife who changes hers. Many women continue to use their maiden names at work, and the government has gradually allowed former surnames to be shown on residence certificates, passports and other documents alongside the legal name.

The wider debate

Proposals to allow married couples to choose separate surnames have been debated for decades. Business groups and many opposition parties support them, while conservatives in the Liberal Democratic Party argue that a shared surname is part of the family's unity.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has long favoured expanding the use of maiden names rather than introducing separate surnames, and the bill follows that approach.

What remains unclear

Which documents and procedures would be covered by the single-name rule, and when the bill would be submitted, were not immediately clear.

Supporters of separate surnames are likely to argue that wider use of maiden names does not solve the problems of identity and inconvenience that their proposal is meant to address.

POLITICS

Liberal Democrats in Tokushima Move to Field a Bureaucrat Against Governor Gotoda, Pointing to a Conservative Split Next Spring

A group led by Liberal Democratic members of the prefectural assembly will ask a 59-year-old senior official of the Reconstruction Agency to run, two weeks after the assembly censured the governor

By the Political Desk

The conservative camp in Tokushima Prefecture appears headed for a split in next spring's governor election, after a group led by Liberal Democratic members of the prefectural assembly announced on Monday that it would ask a senior government official to run against the incumbent.

Governor Masazumi Gotoda has already said he will seek re-election in the election, expected to be held as part of the unified local elections in the spring of 2027.

The challenger

The group, which calls itself the volunteer association for renewing prefectural government, said it would ask a 59-year-old coordinator-general of the Reconstruction Agency, a native of the prefecture, to stand. Assembly members plan to meet him in Tokyo on Tuesday to hand over a written request.

He graduated from the University of Tokyo and joined the former Ministry of International Trade and Industry in 1991, later serving as a deputy director-general of the Small and Medium Enterprise Agency and in a senior post in the secretariat of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. He has been at the Reconstruction Agency since July last year.

The censure

The move follows a resolution passed by the prefectural assembly on October 7 censuring Mr Gotoda over problems with his remarks and conduct. The Liberal Democratic group in the assembly led the move and has steadily hardened its opposition to him.

The governor

Mr Gotoda, a former member of the House of Representatives from a prominent political family, was elected governor in 2023. His relations with the Liberal Democratic group in the assembly have long been strained.

What it means

A contest between two conservative candidates would split the vote that has traditionally backed the Liberal Democrats in the prefecture, and could make the race unusually open.

POLITICS

Supreme Court Rules That Tokyo's Island District Is Constitutional and Rejects a Bid to Void Last Year's Assembly Election

Keeping a separate seat for the small population of the Izu and Ogasawara islands is within the assembly's reasonable discretion, the Second Petty Bench finds

By the Political Desk

The Supreme Court ruled on Monday that keeping a separate electoral district for Tokyo's islands in elections to the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly does not violate the Constitution, rejecting an appeal by residents who sought to have last year's election declared invalid.

The Second Petty Bench, presided over by Justice Mamoru Miura, upheld the ruling of a lower court and dismissed the appeal.

The case

The residents had argued that maintaining the island district, which has a small population, violated the constitutional principle that every vote should carry equal weight, in the assembly election held in June 2025.

The reasoning

The court said that keeping the island district was within the reasonable discretion of the metropolitan assembly and did not breach the Constitution.

The islands' social and economic conditions differ greatly from those of the rest of Tokyo, and the need to elect representatives from among them is high, it said. Because of their geography, merging the islands with other municipalities to form a district was far more difficult than in cases involving contiguous land.

The islands

The Tokyo islands district covers the Izu Islands, stretching south from Izu Oshima, and the remote Ogasawara Islands, about 1,000 kilometres south of central Tokyo, which can be reached only by a ferry voyage of about a day.

The wider issue

Disparities in the weight of votes are a recurring subject of lawsuits in Japan, chiefly in national elections, where the Supreme Court has several times found the gap between districts to be in a "state of unconstitutionality" while stopping short of voiding the results.

POLITICS

Board of Audit Finds Two Aid Projects Fell Short: Braille Printers in Uzbekistan and an Idle Substation in Mozambique

The grants, worth about 1.07 billion yen, were let down by poor equipment choices and a transformer that sat broken for four and a half years after a lightning strike

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

The Board of Audit has found that two grant aid projects funded by Japan's official development assistance, in Uzbekistan and Mozambique, did not achieve their full effect because of problems in choosing equipment and maintaining it.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan International Cooperation Agency provided a combined total of about 1.069 billion yen for the two projects, the board said.

Uzbekistan

The project in Uzbekistan was meant to produce books in braille. The local association for the visually impaired that chose the equipment lacked the experience and knowledge to do so, and five sets of braille production equipment were bought that were not suited to the purpose.

The equipment was lent to schools for the visually impaired and other facilities, where it was used, but not to produce books as intended.

Mozambique

In Mozambique, a mobile substation with transformers and other equipment was installed near the capital to help meet demand for electricity.

After lightning damaged a transformer, the state electricity company, Electricidade de Mocambique, could not pay for repairs because domestic financial institutions were short of foreign currency. The transformer went unused for about four and a half years, and the substation could not operate as intended in that time.

Why it matters

Japan's aid spending is closely watched at a time when the government is looking for money for defence, social security and tax cuts, and audits of this kind feed the debate over whether aid is being spent well.

The board audits the accounts of the state every year and reports cases of waste or ineffective spending to the Cabinet and the Diet. Its findings are not binding, but ministries are expected to respond with improvements.

INTERNATIONAL

Milan Police Detain 271 Young People After a Second Day of Looting, as Cost-of-Living Protests Spread Across Southern and Western Europe

Meloni says setting cities ablaze is not a right and calls a government meeting; Brussels and Liege see tear gas and water cannon, and tens of thousands march in Lisbon

By the International Desk

Police in Milan detained 271 young people during unrest on Sunday, the authorities said, as protests against rising living costs and poor public services turned violent in Italy's business capital for a second day.

On Monday, police said 32 of those taken to police stations had been arrested, including 23 minors and 13 foreign nationals, and that another 28 had been referred to the judicial authorities, Reuters reported.

The looting

Several hundred hooded protesters set rubbish bins alight and looted shops, including stores of the sporting goods chain Decathlon, the outdoor clothing brand Arc'teryx and the mobile phone operator Vodafone, according to television footage. Riot police used tear gas and water cannon.

On Saturday, clashes had broken out in Milan, Bologna, Brescia, Bergamo and Turin, and 28 people were arrested, according to a police report.

Meloni's warning

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni condemned the violence. "Demonstrating is a right. Setting our cities ablaze is not," she said, and called a meeting of her government on Monday to discuss the situation.

Giuseppe Sala, Milan's centre-left mayor, said the reasons for the protests were understandable but that the violence and damage could not be justified.

Belgium and Portugal

In Belgium, police used tear gas and water cannon against demonstrators in Brussels and Liege on Saturday. Brussels had already seen weeks of student protests against university registration fees.

In Lisbon, tens of thousands marched on Saturday in a protest called by the CGTP trade union confederation, demanding higher wages and pensions and lower housing and fuel costs, and some set up tents in Rossio square. House prices in Portugal have more than doubled since 2017. "The government will not yield to shouts from the street," said Carlos Abreu Amorim, the minister for parliamentary affairs.

A pattern

Alberto Alemanno, a professor at HEC Paris, told Al Jazeera the protests were separate movements with shared grievances, including underfunded education, rising living costs and uncertain prospects for graduates. He said early-stage movements were emerging in Greece, Germany and Austria.

Energy and food prices have risen across Europe this year as conflict in the Middle East has disrupted oil supplies.

INTERNATIONAL



Riot police and protesters in a haze of tear gas on a Paris street, in a file image. Paris banned entry to the Place de la Republique and Les Halles overnight on Monday, and curfews were imposed in Lille, Lyon, Nice and other cities, after riots in which 2,513 people were detained across France. (File photo: WPM Productions)

INTERNATIONAL

France Imposes Night Curfews in Paris, Lyon, Nice and Four Northern Cities as Detentions Pass 2,500 and Damaged Shops Reach 3,000

Entry to the Place de la Republique and Les Halles is banned overnight; the riots show signs of easing, but high school students and unions plan more protests over schools and prices
By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

French authorities imposed night-time curfews in parts of Paris and several other cities on Monday in an effort to stop a third night of rioting and looting, after demonstrations over schools and the cost of living turned violent across the country at the weekend.

The Paris police headquarters banned entry to and presence in the area around the Place de la Republique and the Les Halles district, both scenes of serious rioting and looting, from 11 p.m. on Monday until 6 a.m. on Tuesday.

Curfews were also ordered in the centres of Lille and three other cities in northern France, and in Lyon and Nice in the south. In Lille and the other northern cities and in Nice, the restrictions applied to minors. In Lyon they applied to everyone.

'Very limited areas'

Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu had asked prefects on Monday to impose curfews in very limited areas to protect shops, a forced restriction on freedom of movement aimed at bringing the disorder under control. He was also due to hold a crisis meeting with business organisations.

The toll

Gerald Darmanin, the justice minister, said on Monday that 2,513 people had been detained nationwide in connection with the riots. Serge Papin, the minister for small businesses and trade, said at least 3,000 shops and other businesses had been damaged, citing French media.

One protester died after suffering a cardiac arrest during demonstrations in Paris, and a 15-year-old lost a hand when a stun grenade exploded near a protest, according to reports. The Interior Ministry has opened 36 internal investigations into allegations of police violence.

INTERNATIONAL

'Want to Try Your Luck Again?' Iran Answers Trump's Vow to 'Finish the Job,' as Hegseth Meets Netanyahu in Israel

The president's endorsement of the Israeli prime minister ahead of next week's election came with a warning to Tehran; Iran says its offer to reopen the Strait of Hormuz within days is still on the table
By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Iran has dared the United States to resume the war, after President Donald Trump warned that Washington might "soon finish the job" against the Islamic Republic.

"Last time you wanted to 'finish the job,' Iran emerged even stronger," Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, wrote on X on Sunday. "Want to try your luck again? Be our guest. But be careful; we have unfinished jobs too."

The endorsement

Mr Trump's warning came in a post on his Truth Social platform on Sunday in which he gave his "Complete and Total Endorsement" to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, calling him a "Great Warrior Prime Minister," nine days before Israelis vote on October 27.

Iran, he wrote, would be able to make good on its threat unless it was destroyed militarily and

The damage

The retailer Carrefour said 50 of its stores had been damaged, 20 of them looted, and its chief executive, Alexandre Bompard, estimated losses across the retail sector at several hundred million euros, a figure he called provisional.

In Marseille, masked protesters broke into the city hall and toppled a statue of Marianne, the symbol of the Republic. In Lyon the tourist office was set on fire, and in Bordeaux an Apple Store was ransacked and a sporting goods shop set alight. The town hall of Limoges, more than 140 years old, was gutted on Saturday.

Schools and prices

The protests began in September at a high school in a Paris suburb, over teacher shortages and the condition of school buildings, and spread across the country as unions and other groups joined. Anger over prices has added to the discontent. Consumer prices rose 3.1 per cent in September from a year earlier, with energy prices up more than 21 per cent.

About 550,000 people took part in demonstrations on Saturday, according to the Interior Ministry, and 800,000 according to the organisers.

What comes next

The riots showed signs of calming on Monday, but high school students and labour unions plan to continue their protests against the government, demanding better conditions in schools and action on prices, and the authorities remain on guard against a renewed outbreak of violence.

financially, and unless it changed course, "we will soon finish the job." If Israelis chose another leader, he added, "America will have to do this work ourselves."

Mr Netanyahu has said in an interview with Fox News that the only way to deal with Iran is "to get rid of this regime."

Hegseth in Israel

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth visited Israel and met Mr Netanyahu, the news site Axios reported on Monday. The Pentagon had not announced the trip in advance, and the subjects of their talks were not disclosed.

The war so far

The United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran on February 28. The fighting was paused in April, but clashes have flared since, and the United States has maintained a naval blockade of Iranian ports. Iran, for its part, has kept up what amounts to a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, through which much of the world's oil has passed, although American forces say ships other than Iran's can get through.

The offer

Mr Araghchi said in Baghdad on Sunday that Iran's proposal to reopen the strait within seven days was "still on the table." Talks have stalled over Iran's conditions, among them when its nuclear program

should be discussed. Washington insists that negotiations address the nuclear program from the outset, and Vice President JD Vance has said Tehran must make a "meaningful" reduction in its uranium enrichment capacity.

Wider threats

Iranian officials have also warned that undersea cables, data centres and artificial intelligence facilities in the Gulf could come within range if war resumes. Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, was expected in Tehran on Monday.

Why it matters to Japan

More than 90 per cent of Japan's crude oil imports come from the Middle East, and the closure of Hormuz has already forced the government to release oil from its national stockpiles this year and to subsidise fuel prices.

INTERNATIONAL

Who Are the Houthis? The Yemeni Movement That Seized a Japanese-Chartered Ship and Now Fires Missiles at Saudi Arabia

The Iran-aligned group controls Yemen's capital and much of its north; its attacks on Red Sea shipping since 2023 have rerouted world trade
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The Houthis, who call their movement Ansar Allah, or Supporters of God, are an armed political and religious movement from the mountains of northern Yemen. They take their name from the family of their founder, Hussein al-Houthi, and draw support from the Zaydi branch of Shiite Islam.

Their leader since 2004 has been Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, a younger brother of the founder, who was killed fighting government forces that year.

Their slogan, chanted at rallies, is "God is great, death to America, death to Israel, curse on the Jews, victory to Islam."

Taking the capital

In September 2014 they seized Sanaa, Yemen's capital, and drove out the internationally recognised government. In March 2015 a coalition led by Saudi Arabia intervened to restore that government, beginning a war that caused one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Iran's partner

The Houthis are aligned with Iran, which has supplied them with missiles and drones, and they form part of the network of armed groups across the region that Tehran calls the axis of resistance.

The Red Sea

From November 2023, citing the war in Gaza, the Houthis attacked merchant ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. One of their first targets was the car carrier Galaxy Leader, which was operated by the Japanese shipping company NYK Line under a charter when it was seized by Houthi fighters landing by helicopter. Its 25 crew members were held for more than a year, until January 2025.

The attacks forced many shipping companies, including Japanese ones, to send their vessels around the Cape of Good Hope instead of through the Suez Canal, adding weeks to voyages between Asia and Europe and raising costs.

Under fire

The United States and Britain began striking Houthi targets in January 2024. In March 2025 the Trump administration launched a heavier air campaign, which ended in May with a truce, brokered by Oman, under which the Houthis agreed to stop attacking American ships. Washington has designated the group a foreign terrorist organisation.

The new war with Saudi Arabia

This autumn the Houthis have turned their missiles on Saudi Arabia again, repeatedly targeting Riyadh and its airport and, they claim, an Aramco facility at Yanbu on the Red Sea coast, a port that matters because it lets Saudi oil avoid the Strait of Hormuz.

Why Japan watches

The Maritime Self-Defense Force's counter-piracy and information-gathering missions in the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea, extended this week for another year, operate in waters within reach of Houthi weapons.

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INTERNATIONAL

Myanmar's Military-Backed Government Says Suu Kyi Received Books and Letters From King Charles, and Releases a Recent Photograph

The move is seen as an attempt to show better treatment of the detained democracy leader as the government seeks a way out of international isolation
By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Myanmar's military-backed government said on Monday that Aung San Suu Kyi, the detained democracy leader, had received two books and two letters from King Charles of Britain, and released a photograph that appeared to show her recently.

The image shows a woman believed to be Ms Suu Kyi, looking calm, talking with officials. The contents of the letters were not disclosed.

A message abroad

The government appears to want to show that it is improving Ms Suu Kyi's treatment, as part of efforts to escape international isolation, Kyodo News reported from Yangon.

Detained since the coup

The military seized power in a coup in February 2021, detaining Ms Suu Kyi, then the state counsellor and foreign minister, and overthrowing her elected government. Min Aung Hlaing, the former commander-in-chief who led the coup, became president in April this year.

Ms Suu Kyi has been moved from prison to house arrest at a residence, but she is still not allowed to meet her lawyers.

British ties

Ms Suu Kyi, now 81, studied at Oxford and married a British academic, Michael Aris, who died in 1999. Her younger son, Kim Aris, lives in London and campaigns internationally for her release.

The wider picture

Myanmar's civil war, between the military and armed resistance groups and ethnic armies, has displaced millions of people since the coup.

INTERNATIONAL

Two Years In, Indonesia's Prabowo Sees His Approval Fall to About 45 Per Cent as Households Struggle Despite 5 Per Cent Growth

Support has slid from about 81 per cent last November; the flagship free school meals program is straining the budget
By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

President Prabowo Subianto of Indonesia marks two years in office on Tuesday with his popularity sharply down, as many people say they have seen little benefit from steady economic growth.

A survey by a private polling organisation this month put his approval rating at about 45 per cent, down from about 81 per cent in November last year, Kyodo News reported from Jakarta.

Growth without gains

Indonesia's economy has been growing at about 5 per cent a year, but rising prices have squeezed household budgets. About 60 per cent of workers are in non-regular jobs, and real median wages fell every year from 2018 to 2025. The World Bank has said the country is not creating enough well-paid jobs to expand its middle class.

Unemployment has improved, to about 4.7 per cent in May, and inflation was about 3.3 per cent in September.

A restaurant owner's view

Aria, 61, who runs a restaurant on the outskirts of Jakarta, said her sales had nearly halved over the two years. Her ingredients cost more, but she cannot raise prices for fear of losing customers. "Life is hard and everyone is cutting back," she said.

The meals program

Mr Prabowo's flagship policy, free meals for schoolchildren and pregnant women, is straining the national finances, and public dissatisfaction with the program has grown.

Why Japan watches

Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country and South-East Asia's largest economy, is an important partner for Japan in energy, investment and maritime security.

INTERNATIONAL



President Emmanuel Macron of France delivers a televised address from the Elysee Palace, in a file image. He has ruled out an immediate state of emergency and kept his interior minister, blaming insurrectionist elements for the violence. (File photo: WPM Productions)

INTERNATIONAL

Macron Rules Out a State of Emergency for Now and Keeps His Interior Minister, Blaming 'Insurrectionist Elements' for the Violence

The president says looters will pay for the damage, but accepts that peaceful marchers have legitimate grievances; his government must also find 54 billion euros in savings and tax measures for next year

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

President Emmanuel Macron has ruled out declaring an immediate state of emergency over the riots that have swept France, choosing instead to let local officials ban demonstrations and impose curfews where public buildings and businesses need protection.

In a televised address on Sunday, Mr Macron condemned the destruction and said those responsible would be held to account. "Those who looted will have to pay back for the damage," he said, and "those who sought to bring down the Republic will be held accountable."

He blamed "unrestrained violence" by "insurrectionist elements from radical far-left groups, joined by numerous criminals," but said peaceful demonstrators had legitimate grievances, and promised that the government would respond to the concerns of businesses.

The minister stays

Mr Macron rejected the resignation of the interior minister, Laurent Nunez, according to reports, and told him instead to "take all necessary steps to ensure transparency over the failures in planning and intelligence."

Mr Nunez had said by Sunday morning that more than 2,000 people had been taken into custody and that the material damage was considerable, particularly for several hundred business owners.

INTERNATIONAL

Houthi Missile Kills More Than 50 at a Yemeni Government Security Centre, as the Group Claims Strikes on an Aramco Site and Riyadh Airport

Saudi Arabia and Yemen's interim government are exchanging attacks with the pro-Iran rebels; the Saudis have postponed an investment conference, and oil in New York climbs to a one-month high

By the International Desk

A ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck a security facility of the country's interim government on Monday, killing more than 50 people and injuring more than 200, according to local government authorities, Kyodo News reported from Cairo.

The interim government, which is backed by Saudi Arabia, said the missile hit a security-related facility, and local authorities said a training centre had been attacked. The figures could not be independently confirmed.

Strikes on Saudi Arabia

The Houthis, an armed group aligned with Iran, also claimed on Monday to have attacked a facility linked to the state oil company Saudi Aramco in Yanbu, a port on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast, and the airport of the capital, Riyadh. The group has repeatedly targeted Riyadh and its airport this month.

Yanbu receives crude piped across the kingdom from its eastern oilfields, part of the route Saudi Arabia uses to send oil to market without passing through the

The door left open

Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu has left open the possibility of a state of emergency if the violence resumes. Roland Lescure, the economy minister, said that "those who break things will pay, repair the damage and be held accountable for their intention to sow chaos."

The government has blamed far-left groups and criminals, while Jean-Luc Melenchon, leader of the left-wing France Unbowed, has criticised the authorities' handling of the protests.

The money problem

The unrest comes as the government tries to pass a budget that would tighten the public finances. It has proposed a fiscal adjustment of 54 billion euros for 2027, including 43 billion euros of measures, aiming to cut the deficit to 5 per cent of economic output from a projected 5.4 per cent this year, Reuters reported.

Austerity on that scale is hard to sell to people angry about the cost of living, and the protests began with complaints that schools are short of teachers and money.

Six months to go

The violence comes six months before the presidential election due next April, in which Mr Macron, having served two terms, cannot stand again. How his government handles the coming weeks will shape the field his successors inherit.

Strait of Hormuz.

Saudi raids

Saudi Arabia and the interim government are attacking the Houthis together. The Houthis claimed that Saudi forces had carried out more than 200 strikes on targets in Yemen, including the capital, Sanaa, in the 48 hours to Monday.

A truce brokered by the United Nations in April 2022 brought a long period of relative calm in cross-border fighting between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia, even after it formally expired that October.

Events cancelled

Saudi Arabia has postponed an investment conference that had been scheduled for October until next year, with a new date to be announced, according to Reuters. International conferences and sporting events in the kingdom have recently been postponed or cancelled.

Iran's hand

The Wall Street Journal reported last week that Iran had given the Houthis intelligence to help them choose targets. Iran's Foreign Ministry has denied interfering in Yemen.

The oil market

The fighting has added to fears for Middle Eastern supplies. On the New York Mercantile Exchange, West Texas Intermediate crude for November delivery rose 2.25 dollars on Monday to 103.66 dollars a barrel, its highest close since mid-September and its eighth straight daily gain.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump Says a Summit With Putin and Xi Would Discuss Nuclear Weapons and Denuclearisation; Ukraine Calls the Idea Counterproductive

The president welcomes the Russian proposal for a three-way meeting; Kyiv's foreign minister says it would only encourage Putin to keep fighting

By Laura Bennett | North America Correspondent

President Donald Trump said on Monday that he was willing to hold a summit with President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Xi Jinping of China, and that if it took place the three leaders would discuss "nuclear weapons and denuclearisation."

Speaking to reporters at the White House, Mr Trump showed interest in moving three-way talks on nuclear arms reductions forward, Kyodo News reported from Washington.

The Russian proposal

Mr Putin proposed the meeting during a telephone call with Mr Trump on October 9, according to reports, suggesting that it address the situation in Ukraine. The Wall Street Journal reported that the Russian leader had in mind a meeting next month, around the leaders' meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Shenzhen, China, without Ukraine's president.

How such a summit would be arranged remains unclear, and no date, venue or format has been announced. Beijing has long refused to join arms control talks, arguing that its arsenal is far smaller than those of the United States and Russia.

Kyiv objects

Ukraine's foreign minister, Andrii Sybiha, said on Monday that the proposal was "counterproductive" and would encourage President Putin to continue the war.

Keeping Moscow close

In a post on Sunday, Mr Trump said immediate action against Moscow could "drive, foolishly, Russia away from the bargaining table," and that Russia was doing little to help Iran. "I want to keep it that way, and will," he wrote.

The arms control gap

The last treaty limiting the American and Russian nuclear arsenals, New START, was due to expire in February 2026, and China's arsenal has been growing rapidly, according to the Pentagon's estimates. Any three-way process would be the first of its kind.

Japan's interest

Japan, the only country to have suffered atomic bombings, has long called for nuclear disarmament, while relying on the American nuclear umbrella for its security against China, North Korea and Russia, all of which possess nuclear weapons.

INTERNATIONAL

Zelensky Says Patriot Interceptors Are 'Nearly Exhausted' and Accuses the Pentagon of Delaying Missiles Bought by NATO Allies

The Ukrainian leader will meet Trump's envoys in Norway within days; Kyiv also says it received no warning of a Russian ballistic missile attack, and its army reports a first evacuation of wounded soldiers by drone

By the International Desk

President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine said on Monday that the United States Department of Defense was delaying the delivery of interceptor missiles that NATO members had bought from the United States to supply to Ukraine.

Speaking from Kyiv in an online meeting with a delegation of American lawmakers, Mr Zelensky said Ukraine's stock of interceptors for the American-made Patriot air defence system, which it needs to stop Russian ballistic missiles, was "nearly exhausted."

Talks in Norway

He said he expected to meet Steve Witkoff, President Donald Trump's special envoy for peace negotiations, and Jared Kushner, Mr Trump's son-in-law, in Norway within days, and that he wanted to discuss the supply of weapons as well.

No warning

Mr Zelensky also said on Monday that Ukraine had not received early warning from friendly countries of a Russian ballistic missile attack. Kyodo News

reported that the United States, which is able to obtain such information, may have stopped sharing it again.

Drones to the rescue

Ukraine's army said on Monday that it had used unmanned aircraft to lift wounded soldiers off the front line and carry them to safety, which it called a world first. Small ground robots have been used for such rescues before.

The army did not say when or where the evacuation took place. Drones operated by both sides over the front in eastern and southern Ukraine have created what soldiers call a kill zone, making it extremely dangerous to recover the wounded.

The diplomatic backdrop

The complaints come as Mr Trump weighs a three-way summit with Mr Putin and China's Xi Jinping, an idea Kyiv has rejected, and as European governments worry that a settlement could be reached over Ukraine's head.

Air defence

Patriot interceptors are among the most sought-after weapons in Ukraine's arsenal, because few other systems can bring down ballistic missiles, and production has struggled to keep up with demand from Ukraine and from countries in the Middle East.

INTERNATIONAL

Pope Leo Discusses an Isolated Occupied Town With Zelensky After Asking Putin for a Ceasefire to Let Aid In

About 2,000 residents of Oleshky, in the Kherson region, have been cut off from food and medicine behind Russian lines and mine fields

By the International Desk

Pope Leo XIV spoke by telephone with President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine on Monday about Oleshky, a town in the southern Kherson region that has been cut off under Russian occupation and faces a humanitarian crisis, the Vatican said.

The Pope expressed the hope that Russia and Ukraine would cooperate to deliver food and medical aid and to allow civilians to evacuate.

The call to Putin

He told Mr Zelensky about a request he had made to President Vladimir Putin of Russia in a telephone call on October 16, in which he expressed serious concern about the humanitarian situation in the town and asked for a ceasefire to allow aid deliveries and the evacuation of civilians.

Zelensky's reply

Writing on X, Mr Zelensky said he was working on helping the people there, suggesting that a solution was being prepared, but gave no details.

The town

Russian forces occupied Oleshky, on the left bank of the Dnipro River opposite the city of Kherson, early in the full-scale invasion that began in February 2022. Mines have been laid around it over the past year, and about 2,000 residents are isolated, with food and medicine no longer reaching them.

The Pope's health

The Pope, the first American to lead the Roman Catholic Church, is recovering from surgery for lung cancer, and made his first public appearance since the operation on Sunday, when he led the Angelus prayer.

Vatican diplomacy

The Holy See has tried to act as a humanitarian intermediary in the war, helping to arrange exchanges of prisoners and the return of Ukrainian children taken to Russia.

INTERNATIONAL

Kim Yo Jong Says North Korea Will Consider Stronger Attack Means Near the Border in Answer to South Korean Warning Shots

Pyongyang may also resume loudspeaker broadcasts, she says; a mine blast injured South Korean soldiers last month, and Kim Jong Un tours a clothing show with his daughter

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, said on Monday that North Korea was considering strengthening its means of attack near the military demarcation line with South Korea, in response to warning broadcasts and warning shots by the South Korean military.

INTERNATIONAL

In a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency, Ms Kim, who heads a department of the ruling Workers' Party, said North Korean troops crossing the line had been used by the South as a pretext for repeated warning broadcasts and shots.

Loudspeakers

She said the North was also considering resuming propaganda broadcasts by loudspeaker, a form of psychological warfare that both sides have used at the border in the past. She did not say what the strengthened means of attack would be.

The mine

In late September, a landmine exploded near the demarcation line, injuring South Korean soldiers. The South Korean military holds the North responsible, which Pyongyang denies.

Since 2024, North Korea has unilaterally called the demarcation line a "border" and has laid mines on its side of the Demilitarized Zone.

Fashion parade

State media also reported that Kim Jong Un visited an exhibition of domestically made clothing, shoes and bags in Pyongyang on Monday, accompanied by his daughter. He called for more attention to design, which he said would raise economic returns and productivity, and encouraged putting the national flag on clothing to foster patriotism.

The exhibition included products from new factories built in the regions, part of a drive by Mr Kim to develop industry outside the capital.

For Japan

North Korea's missile and nuclear programs remain the most immediate military threat to Japan, and tensions on the Korean Peninsula bear directly on the security of Japanese territory and of the American forces based in Japan.

INTERNATIONAL

Two Weeks Before the Midterms, Republicans Struggle Even in Their Strongholds as Trump Promises Voters 5,000 Dollars

Rising prices weigh on the governing party, which could lose the House and possibly the Senate; Vice President Vance admits he is swimming against the current
By Laura Bennett | North America Correspondent

With the midterm elections on November 3 about two weeks away, President Donald Trump's Republican Party is struggling even in states it has traditionally held, as rising prices erode its support, Kyodo News reported from Washington.

The Democrats could win back the House of Representatives and possibly the Senate, according to the report.

On the road

Mr Trump and Vice President JD Vance have been touring the country almost daily, holding rallies to try to recover ground.

At a rally in Georgia on October 16, Mr Trump again raised the idea of cash payments, telling supporters that a Republican victory would put 5,000 dollars in their pockets. He urged them to back the party's candidate for the Senate.

Georgia

Georgia has long leaned Republican, but the party's challenger has trailed the Democratic incumbent senator by a wide margin since early in the race.

Since mid-October, Mr Trump and Mr Vance have also visited Ohio, Alaska and Texas, promoting tough immigration policies. All three are Republican strongholds, yet the party faces difficult Senate races in each.

'Against the current'

Mr Vance told reporters on October 13 that he knew he was swimming against the current. Mr Trump's approval rating is low, and making him the face of the campaign may be backfiring, the report said.

What is at stake

All 435 seats in the House and about a third of the Senate are up for election. If the Democrats take either chamber, they could block Mr Trump's legislation and launch investigations of his administration for the rest of his term.

For Japan

The result will shape American trade and security policy toward Asia, including the tariffs that have weighed on Japanese exporters.

INTERNATIONAL

Greece Caps New Hotels on Santorini at 100 Beds and Bans Most Coastal Building as It Tries to Tame Overtourism

The tourism minister tells Kyodo News the aim is 'orderly' development after a record 43 million foreign visitors last year
By the International Desk

Greece is drawing up new guidelines to curb overtourism and will regulate development in its most popular resorts, the tourism minister, Olga Kefalogianni, said in a written interview with Kyodo News published on Monday.

The aim was "orderly tourism development" that respected the natural environment and the lives of residents, she said.

A record year

About 43 million foreign tourists visited Greece in 2025, a record. The Aegean island of Santorini, one of the world's best-known destinations, struggles with crowds every summer.

The plan

The Greek government drew up a spatial plan for tourism this year that divides regions according to the impact of tourism. In areas such as Santorini, new hotels are limited to a maximum of 100 beds, and construction near the coastline is in principle prohibited.

Cruise passengers arriving at places such as Santorini already pay a tax of up to 20 euros, about 3,600 yen, per person.

Spreading the crowds

Ms Kefalogianni said she wanted to keep protecting the inherent appeal of the country's tourist sites, and stressed the need for policies to spread visitors more widely.

Lessons for Japan

Japan faces similar strains. Record numbers of foreign visitors have crowded Kyoto, Mount Fuji and other popular spots, and local governments have introduced or raised accommodation taxes and entry fees to manage the flow.

INTERNATIONAL

G7 Farm Ministers Meet in Paris on Fertiliser and Resilience; UN Biodiversity Conference Opens in Armenia

The agriculture ministers' first in-person meeting since an emergency video conference on fertiliser prices in June; COP17 reviews progress on restoring nature
By the International Desk

Agriculture ministers of the Group of Seven nations met in Paris on Monday and agreed to strengthen the sustainability and resilience of agriculture and food systems, Kyodo News reported.

It was their first in-person meeting since an extraordinary online session in June that discussed the rise in fertiliser prices caused by the worsening situation in the Middle East. France, which holds the G7 presidency this year, chaired the talks.

The agenda

The ministers discussed how to secure stable supplies of fertiliser and how to develop medium- to long-term measures that respond to climate change and shifts in the international situation, including the efficient use of fertiliser, the management of nutrient cycles and the maintenance of soil health. They also discussed ways to help farmers cope with crises.

Japan was represented by Hiroo Kotera, a vice-minister of agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

Why fertiliser matters

The Gulf is a major exporter of nitrogen fertilisers made from natural gas, and disruption to shipping in the region has pushed up prices for farmers worldwide. Japan imports almost all the raw materials for its chemical fertilisers.

COP17

Separately, the 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity opened on Monday in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. The meeting is reviewing progress toward the goals agreed in 2022 to halt and reverse the loss of nature, including the protection of 30 per cent of the world's land and seas by 2030.

Countries submitted national reports on their progress ahead of the meeting, and the conference is the first

to take stock of them collectively, four years before the 2030 deadline.

INTERNATIONAL

Around the World

By the International Desk

CNN: Christiane Amanpour, 68, the network's chief international anchor, said on Monday that she would leave CNN in June next year. She joined in 1983 as an assistant and became known for pressing world leaders with tough questions.

AMANPOUR'S CAREER: She reported on the Gulf War and from Iraq, Iran and Ukraine, and covered the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011.

HER MESSAGE: In a statement, she urged her colleagues and audience to remember that journalism should convey the truth rather than simply remain neutral.

FRANCE: A rare edition of the Apocalypse of St John with a bronze cover designed by Salvador Dali, weighing about 210 kilograms, was stolen from a museum in central France earlier this month, French media reported. It is valued at more than 1 million euros.

THE BOOK: Made between 1958 and 1961, it includes contributions from artists and writers including Leonard Foujita, Jean Cocteau and Jean Giono, and passed through the hands of Japanese collectors before reaching France.

UKRAINE: The army says it used drones to carry wounded soldiers from the front line for the first time.

UNITED STATES: Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth met Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during an unannounced visit to Israel, Axios reported.

NORTH KOREA: Kim Jong Un toured a clothing exhibition in Pyongyang with his daughter and called for more attention to design.

INDONESIA: President Prabowo Subianto marks two years in office on Tuesday.

ARMENIA: The UN biodiversity conference, COP17, opened in Yerevan.

ECONOMY

Markets at a Glance

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

NIKKEI 225 (MON CLOSE): 64,916.70, down 407.59. It fell more than 1,400 yen at one point, below 64,000 for the first time in about a month.

TOPIX (MON CLOSE): 4,067.48, up 1.48.

TOKYO VOLUME: About 2.06 billion shares on the prime market.

DOW JONES (MON, NEW YORK): 51,966.03, down 36.38, a second straight fall.

NASDAQ (MON): 26,430.89, up 290.86, as investors bought back artificial intelligence stocks.

WTI CRUDE (MON): 103.66 dollars a barrel, up 2.25, an eighth straight rise and the highest close since mid-September.

YEN (TOKYO, 5 P.M. MON): 158.16-158.18 to the dollar, 16 sen weaker than Friday; 176.96-177.00 to the euro, 61 sen stronger.

YEN (NEW YORK, LATE MON): 158.47-158.57 to the dollar.

COMING UP: U.S. Federal Reserve, October 27-28; Bank of Japan, October 29-30.

SOURCE: Kyodo News.

ECONOMY

Industry Ministry Seeks Another 400 Billion Yen for Rapidus Over Three Years, Taking State Investment in the Chipmaker to 650 Billion

The money would come as equity through government-linked institutions; the ministry says Rapidus needs a solid capital base to borrow from banks, and that the expected returns have improved
By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry will seek an additional 400 billion yen in government investment in Rapidus, the company trying to mass-produce Japan's most advanced semiconductors, over the three years from fiscal 2027, it emerged on Monday.

The plan was disclosed by the Ministry of Finance at a meeting of a subcommittee of the Fiscal System Council, the finance minister's advisory body.

The numbers

The industry ministry's budget request for fiscal 2027 already includes a capital injection of 150 billion yen into Rapidus. The ministry is seeking a further 250 billion yen in fiscal 2028 and 2029 combined, bringing the total to 400 billion yen.

The government has already invested 250 billion yen in the company. If the new request is approved, total government investment will reach 650 billion yen.

How it works

The money would be provided as so-called industrial investment, channelled through government-affiliated financial institutions, public-private funds and similar bodies, rather than as grants.

The ministry's case

The industry ministry said Rapidus needed to maintain a certain equity ratio, the share of its assets financed by shareholders' capital, in order to obtain loans from private banks. It also said the returns expected from the investment had become relatively higher.

The company

Rapidus was founded in 2022 with backing from Toyota Motor, Sony Group, NTT and other leading Japanese companies, and is building a factory in Chitose, Hokkaido, to make chips with circuit widths of 2 nanometres, a generation that only the world's most advanced manufacturers have reached. It aims to begin mass production in 2027.

Beyond the investment, the government has provided large subsidies for the company's research and development.

The debate

Supporters see Rapidus as essential to Japan's economic security, giving the country a domestic source of the chips that power artificial intelligence, defence systems and cars. Critics have questioned whether a newcomer can win customers against established giants and have warned about the scale of public money at risk.

The Yomiuri Shimbun reported the plan as an additional 250 billion yen, a figure that matches the fiscal 2028 and 2029 portion on top of the 150 billion yen already in next year's request. Both reports put total government investment at 650 billion yen.

BUSINESS

Uniqlo Raises Prices by About 4 Per Cent on Average and Ends Its Four-Pairs-for-990-Yen Sock Deal

The popular 'Kando' jacket rises to 7,990 yen on November 10; the company blames higher materials and shipping costs and the weak yen
By the Business Desk

Uniqlo, Japan's largest clothing chain, is raising the average selling price of its products by about 4 per cent, the company has announced, in a further sign that rising costs are reaching the shelves of even the most price-conscious retailers.

The popular "Kando" jacket, a lightweight stretch blazer, will rise from 6,990 yen to 7,990 yen on November 10. Eleven items will go up in November, including the matching "Kando" trousers and the "50 Colour Socks" range.

Goodbye to the sock deal

The chain is also ending its bulk-buy offer on colour socks, which sold four pairs for 990 yen. Socks will instead cost 390 yen a pair.

The reasons

Uniqlo cited higher prices for raw materials and logistics and the weakness of the yen. In September it had already raised prices on some items, along with its shipping charges and the fees for hemming trousers and adjusting shirt sleeves.

Why it matters

Uniqlo built its business on keeping basic clothing affordable, and its prices are watched as a barometer of what Japanese consumers will accept. A price rise across the range signals how far cost pressures have spread.

Its parent, Fast Retailing, makes most of its products in Asian countries and buys them in dollars, so a weak yen raises its costs.

The consumer mood

Shoppers have grown more cautious as prices for food and energy have risen faster than wages. The government's plan to cut the consumption tax on food from April 2027 will not apply to clothing.

ECONOMY



The Tokyo Stock Exchange at Kabutocho. The Nikkei average ended Monday 407.59 yen lower at 64,916.70 after falling more than 1,400 yen at one point, as worries about the debts of the American AI data-centre operator CoreWeave hit chip and AI stocks. (Photo: TG2 (CC))

ECONOMY

Nikkei Ends 407 Yen Lower After Diving More Than 1,400 Yen, as Worries Over CoreWeave's Debt Hit AI and Chip Stocks

The benchmark recovers half its losses in the afternoon while domestic-demand shares attract buyers; the broader Topix ends almost unchanged, and Wall Street's tech rebound overnight offers some relief

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Tokyo stocks fell sharply on Monday, with the Nikkei Stock Average at one point down more than 1,400 yen, before buyers of companies that depend on the domestic economy helped the market claw back about half of the loss by the close.

The Nikkei 225 ended at 64,916.70, down 407.59 yen from Friday, reversing the previous session's gain. In the morning it had dropped below 64,000 for the first time in about a month.

The broader Topix index, which covers more companies and gives less weight to a handful of technology heavyweights, rose 1.48 points to 4,067.48, almost unchanged. Volume on the prime market was about 2.06 billion shares.

The trigger

The selling followed a slide in American technology shares on Friday, driven by concern about the debts piling up behind the boom in artificial intelligence.

At the centre of that concern is CoreWeave, an American company that rents out computing power for AI from data centres packed with Nvidia chips. Its shares and bonds fell steeply last week as investors questioned whether it could keep borrowing to fund its expansion amid fears of higher interest rates, and the worry spread to other companies tied to AI spending.

Concern about CoreWeave persisted on Monday, the Nikkei newspaper reported, and AI-related and semiconductor stocks, which have led the Tokyo market higher this year, were sold heavily.

ECONOMY

Keidanren Marks 80 Years and Pledges a Vision for Japan in 2050, Putting the Falling Birthrate and Education at the Top

Chairman Tsutsui says business owes future generations a picture of the society Japan should aim for; the federation plans to finish the vision in 2027 and present it to the government

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Keidanren, the Japan Business Federation, will draw up a medium-term vision setting out the economy and society Japan should aim for by 2050, its chairman, Yoshinobu Tsutsui, said on Monday at a symposium in Tokyo marking the federation's 80th anniversary.

"To fulfil our responsibility to future generations, we will draw a picture of the economy and society our country should aim for," Mr Tsutsui said.

The pillars

The vision will focus on measures against the falling birthrate and on education, and will also address social security and the role of companies.

It will take a comprehensive look at regional revitalisation and policy toward foreign residents, and consider what Japanese society should look like as its population declines rapidly, taking into account technological progress, including artificial intelligence.

The timetable

Keidanren aims to complete the vision within 2027 and to submit it to the government as a proposal.

Two markets

The gap between the two indexes told the story. The Nikkei average is weighted by share price, giving great influence to a few expensive technology and chip-related stocks. The Topix is weighted by market value across hundreds of companies, and was held up by buying in shares of companies that depend on domestic demand.

By the morning close the Nikkei had been down 790 yen, so the afternoon brought a substantial recovery.

Overnight

In New York on Monday, the Nasdaq Composite, heavy with technology companies, rebounded by 290.86 points to 26,430.89 as investors bought back AI stocks that had fallen recently. The Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped 36.38 points to 51,966.03, weighed down by financial and consumer stocks and by rising oil prices.

The yen and rates

The yen was little changed against the dollar, at 158.16 to 158.18 at 5 p.m. in Tokyo. Investors are waiting for monetary policy decisions by the U.S. Federal Reserve and the Bank of Japan next week.

The bigger picture

The Nikkei has risen strongly over the past year on hopes for AI demand, and on October 6 it closed above 70,000 for the first time since July 1. The losing run since then has shown how sensitive the market has become to news from Silicon Valley and Wall Street.

Out of stagnation

Mr Tsutsui, a former chairman of Nippon Life Insurance who became Keidanren's chairman in 2025, has said he sees signs that the Japanese economy is emerging from its long stagnation, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported, and has called on companies to attract the talent needed for technological innovation.

Eighty years

Keidanren traces its origins to 1946, when business leaders formed a federation of economic organisations amid the ruins of the war. It merged with the employers' federation Nikkeiren in 2002 and today represents more than 1,500 of Japan's largest companies along with industry associations and regional groups.

For decades its chairman was known as the "prime minister of the business world," and its proposals carried great weight with governments of the Liberal Democratic Party.

A changed role

Its influence has been questioned in recent years, as business has grown more diverse and politics more fragmented, the Yomiuri noted, and the anniversary vision is in part an attempt to show that the federation can still set the agenda.

The federation has pressed governments in recent years on wage increases, energy policy, including the restart of nuclear power plants, and the reform of social security.

ECONOMY

Yen Holds Around 158 to the Dollar as Markets Wait for Next Week's Fed and BOJ Decisions; Takaichi Denies a 'Takaichi Weak Yen'

Early buying after Governor Ueda signalled further rate rises gave way to dollar purchases by importers; the yen firmed 61 sen against the euro

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

The yen was little changed against the dollar on Monday, trading in a narrow range as investors waited for monetary policy decisions by the U.S. Federal Reserve and the Bank of Japan next week.

At 5 p.m. in Tokyo the dollar stood at 158.16 to 158.18 yen, up 16 sen from Friday. The euro was at 176.96 to 177.00 yen, down 61 sen.

Ueda's signal

The yen was bought early in the day after Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda signalled at a news conference on Friday that the central bank would continue to raise interest rates. Later, dollar buying by importers and other companies settling real transactions kept the market in a narrow band.

In New York late on Monday the dollar was at 158.47 to 158.57 yen.

The meetings

The Federal Reserve's policy committee meets on October 27 and 28, and the Bank of Japan's board on October 29 and 30. The gap between interest rates in the two countries has been a major force behind the yen's weakness.

The prime minister's view

In the House of Councillors on Monday, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi rejected criticism that her policies had caused a "Takaichi weak yen" or "Takaichi high interest rates," saying she clearly denied it. Building a strong economy, she said, would raise confidence in the yen.

The phrase echoes the "Takaichi trade" of last October, when her election as president of the Liberal Democratic Party sent share prices up and the yen down on expectations of looser fiscal and monetary policy.

Who gains, who pays

A weak yen inflates the overseas profits of exporters when converted into yen and makes Japan cheaper for foreign tourists, but it raises the cost of imported energy, food and raw materials. With oil above 100 dollars a barrel, households and small businesses have felt the squeeze.

The government's plan to cut the consumption tax on food from April 2027 is meant in part to ease that burden.

ECONOMY

Why the Strait of Hormuz Matters So Much to Japan, and How Long the Country's Oil Reserves Would Last

More than 90 per cent of Japan's crude comes from the Middle East; the stockpiles built after the 1973 oil shock have already been tapped this year

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The Strait of Hormuz, between Iran and the Musandam peninsula of Oman, is the only sea route out of the Persian Gulf. Before this year's war, about a fifth of the oil consumed in the world passed through it, along with large volumes of liquefied natural gas from Qatar.

Japan's dependence

More than 90 per cent of the crude oil Japan imports comes from the Middle East, according to the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, mainly from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar, and much of it has travelled through Hormuz.

Japan's supplies of liquefied natural gas, used to generate electricity and for city gas, are far more diversified, with only about a tenth coming from the Middle East. Australia, Malaysia, the United States and Russia are among the other suppliers.

The stockpiles

Japan holds oil in three forms: national stockpiles owned by the state, private stockpiles that refiners and importers must keep under the Petroleum Stockpiling Act, and joint stockpiles held in Japan by producer countries, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Together they amounted to about

eight months of consumption in February this year, before the war.

Drawn down

When Iran closed the strait in the spring, the government lowered the amount private companies had to hold and released crude from national stockpile bases from Hokkaido to Okinawa in two rounds, of about 8.5 million and about 5.8 million kilolitres.

Fuel subsidies

The government has also subsidised the price of petrol, diesel, kerosene and heavy oil, setting support at 33.3 yen a litre from June, to cushion households and businesses from the jump in prices.

Other routes

Some Gulf oil can avoid Hormuz. Saudi Arabia can pipe crude across the kingdom to Yanbu on the Red Sea, and the United Arab Emirates can pipe it to Fujairah on the Gulf of Oman. But those routes have limited capacity, and Yemen's Houthis claim to have attacked an Aramco facility at Yanbu itself.

The lesson of the 1970s

Japan built its national reserves after the oil shocks of the 1970s, when supply cuts by Middle Eastern producers caused panic buying and ended the country's post-war era of rapid growth. The reserves were designed for exactly this kind of crisis.

BUSINESS

Mitsubishi Electric and Foxconn Aim for 1 Trillion Yen in Car Equipment Sales by Fiscal 2030 Through Their Joint Venture

The Taiwanese manufacturer is taking a 50 per cent stake in Mitsubishi Electric Mobility to build electric vehicle software and self-driving technology faster

By the Business Desk

Mitsubishi Electric and Taiwan's Hon Hai Precision Industry, known as Foxconn, said on Monday that they aimed to raise sales of their jointly run automotive equipment business to 1 trillion yen in fiscal 2030.

The target is 22 per cent above the 820 billion yen expected in the current fiscal year, the companies said at a news conference in Tokyo.

The deal

Mitsubishi Electric Mobility, a wholly owned subsidiary of Mitsubishi Electric based in Tokyo, will receive a 50 per cent equity investment from Foxconn, the two companies announced on October 16.

Mitsubishi Electric moved its car equipment operations into the subsidiary in April 2024. Its products include electric power steering and engine control systems, as well as motors and inverters for electrified vehicles.

They will work together on electric vehicles, autonomous driving and related fields, combining Mitsubishi Electric's technical strength with Foxconn's speed of development to strengthen the software that controls electric cars.

'Abundant software'

Jun Seki, chief strategy officer of Foxconn's electric vehicle business, said the most attractive part of Mitsubishi Electric's automotive operations was its electronic control technology. "Its software technology is also abundant," he said.

Mr Seki, a former vice chief operating officer of Nissan Motor who later served as president of the motor maker Nidec, joined Foxconn in 2023 and has led its push into the car industry.

Foxconn's ambitions

Foxconn, best known as the main assembler of Apple's iPhones, has been trying to become a major supplier to the car industry as vehicles depend increasingly on electronics and software. It has sought partnerships with Japanese carmakers and parts suppliers.

The industry's challenge

Japanese suppliers face pressure to cut costs and invest heavily in software as carmakers race to build software-defined vehicles, whose functions can be updated after sale, and compete with fast-moving Chinese rivals.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

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BUSINESS

BUSINESS

The Pajero Is Back: Orders Top 4,000 in Two Weeks as Mitsubishi Motors' President Says the SUV Must Lift the Whole Brand

Keisuke Kishiura says the response has exceeded his expectations; sales begin in December, seven years after Japanese production of the model ended

By the Business Desk

Mitsubishi Motors' new Pajero, the revival of its famous off-road vehicle, has drawn more than 4,000 advance orders in two weeks, beating the company's sales target for the whole fiscal year, its president said.

"I want the Pajero to lead the Mitsubishi brand and raise the level of the whole company," Keisuke Kishiura, 57, said in an interview with Kyodo News published on Monday. He described the model as a catalyst for recovering the company's business performance.

Beyond expectations

"The response has been beyond what I imagined," he said. "I also want to emphasise its sense of quality."

The return

Production of the Pajero in Japan ended in 2019. Mitsubishi decided to revive the model in response to requests from customers. Reservations began this month, and sales are scheduled to start in December. The company plans to sell it in 100 countries.

A rally legend

The Pajero, sold in some markets as the Montero or Shogun, made its name in the Paris-Dakar Rally, which Mitsubishi won a record number of times, and became one of the defining Japanese four-wheel-drive vehicles of the 1980s and 1990s.

Partners

Mr Kishiura said cooperation with other carmakers, including Nissan Motor, Honda Motor and Taiwan's Foxconn, should be pursued business by business, and that the key was "how far we can build businesses that benefit both sides."

The plan

Mitsubishi Motors plans to launch 13 new models by fiscal 2031 to expand its global sales.

BUSINESS

Narita's New Runway Pushed Back to the Early 2030s, With Completion Now Set for the End of 2034 and Compulsory Purchase Looming

The airport operator has filed a new date with the transport minister; about 51 hectares of land, 4.7 per cent of the total, still lack owners' agreement

By the Business Desk

Narita International Airport Corporation said on Monday that it aimed to open its planned third runway in the first half of the 2030s, and that it had filed a new completion date of the end of December 2034 with the minister of land, infrastructure, transport and tourism.

The original target for the runway, known as Runway C, was the end of March 2029. The company announced a delay in April this year, and Monday's filing is the first time it has given a specific new date.

The land

The company will combine voluntary purchases with compulsory acquisition under the Land Expropriation Act. About 4.7 per cent of the land needed, roughly 51 hectares, still lacks the agreement of its owners.

Under the act, the company must first hold briefings for landowners. It has scheduled them in the city of Narita on October 28, the town of Tako on November 5 and the town of Shibayama, where construction is under way at the runway site, on November 11.

A painful history

Land acquisition is a sensitive subject at Narita, where farmers and radical activists resisted the airport's construction in the 1960s and 1970s in sometimes violent clashes. The struggle left a lasting legacy of caution about expropriation.

Why it matters

The new runway, together with an extension of an existing one, is meant to raise Narita's annual capacity for takeoffs and landings substantially, to cope with the growth in international travel and to compete with other Asian hub airports.

Tourism and cargo

The government aims to attract 60 million foreign visitors a year by 2030, and Narita, the main international gateway to the Tokyo region along with Haneda, will need the extra capacity to handle them as well as air cargo.

BUSINESS

Seibu Launches 'Villa Prince' for Wealthy Travellers, Starting With Whole Cottages in Karuizawa at About 165,000 Yen a Night

Every unit has a garden-view hot spring bath and dogs are welcome; the first area opens in July 2027

By the Business Desk

Seibu Prince Hotels Worldwide, a subsidiary of Seibu Holdings, announced on Monday a new hotel brand, Villa Prince, aimed at wealthy travellers, offering whole buildings for rent in places rich in nature.

The first property will be Villa Prince Karuizawa in the resort town of Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture. Part of it will open in July 2027.

The cottages

It will be created by renovating the cottage area of the Prince Grand Resort Karuizawa. Every unit will have a hot spring bath with a view of the garden. Guests may bring dogs, and a dog run will be built.

A cottage for four will cost from about 165,000 yen a night. Further areas will be added in stages.

The market

Japanese hotel operators have been building more luxury accommodation as wealthy foreign visitors flock to Japan and spend more per trip, and as domestic demand for private, high-end stays has grown.

Karuizawa, about an hour from Tokyo by Shinkansen, has long been a summer retreat for the capital's elite and has become a year-round destination with outlet shopping, golf and winter sports.

Seibu's strategy

Seibu Holdings, whose businesses range from railways to hotels and leisure, has been reorganising its hotel assets in recent years, selling some properties while focusing on higher-margin operations.

BUSINESS

Niigata Gives Struggling Toki Air Five More Months Before Its First Loan Repayment of 290 Million Yen

The prefecture, which lent the regional airline about 1.1 billion yen, says it could not confirm the company's business plans or funding

By the Business Desk

Niigata Prefecture will defer the first repayment of its loans to Toki Air, the regional airline based at Niigata Airport, by five months, according to people familiar with the decision.

The repayment of 290 million yen, due on October 30, will be postponed to March 2027 as a provisional measure. The prefecture has lent the airline about 1.1 billion yen.

The new date still falls within the current fiscal year, which ends on March 31, so the repayment remains part of this year's accounts.

No confirmation

A senior prefectural official said the prefecture had not been able to confirm, as of now, the business plans or the cash-flow arrangements that Toki Air had explained to it. The airline's path to profitability and its ability to raise money remain uncertain.

On October 7, the prefecture had said it would not demand repayment for the time being, and officials had been looking for a realistic time for repayments to begin.

Restructuring

Toki Air is undergoing a financial restructuring. The prefecture will watch how its business plan progresses, including results from the winter flight schedule, before deciding what to do next.

The airline

Toki Air, named after the crested ibis, Niigata's prefectural bird, began scheduled flights in 2024 with turboprop aircraft, linking Niigata with other regional cities. Small regional airlines have struggled with high costs and thin demand, and local governments have often stepped in to keep them flying.

BUSINESS

Flea Market Apps Ban Listings of New Pokemon Cards to Stop Scalpers From Cornering Popular Products

Mercari bars new releases from sale for a period after launch, and LINE Yahoo follows; operators say advance bans are easier than chasing suspicious accounts

By the Business Desk

Japan's online flea markets are increasingly banning sellers from listing popular new products for a period after their release, in an effort to stop resellers from buying up stock and selling it at inflated prices, Kyodo News reported on Monday.

Mercari announced on September 15 that new Pokemon card products released on September 16 could not be listed from their release date for a period it judged necessary to keep trading safe. It said the measure had helped reduce trouble involving buyers being deceived.

In October, LINE Yahoo introduced a measure on its Yahoo! Flea Market service banning mass listings of new Pokemon products for a set period.

Why advance bans

Monitoring suspicious accounts takes time, because it requires interviews and other checks, and operators have faced criticism from users that they are acting irresponsibly. Announcing bans in advance makes it easier to delete or restrict listings.

The makers' view

The companies that make the products hope the flea markets will cooperate, because disorder around a launch can damage a brand's image.

Tenbaiya

Resellers who buy up limited goods to sell at a profit, known in Japanese slang as "tenbaiya," have long frustrated fans of trading cards, games consoles and concert tickets. Some sellers queue overnight or use automated programs to buy stock online the moment it goes on sale.

The law

Japan banned the resale of concert and sports tickets above face value in 2019, but there is no general ban on reselling other goods at a profit, leaving platforms and makers to set their own rules.

BUSINESS

Fisheries Agency Hands Out Bluefin Tuna Quotas in Two Stages for the First Time, So Fishers Can Plan Before Talks Finish

Large-fish quotas start at about 8,500 tonnes and small-fish quotas at about 2,200 tonnes; more will be added by April once Japan's total is settled with South Korea and Taiwan

By the Business Desk

The Fisheries Agency will allocate Japan's catch quotas for Pacific bluefin tuna in fiscal 2027 in two stages, giving each region a provisional share now and adding to it once international negotiations are complete, according to a plan that emerged on Monday.

The provisional stage

Each prefecture's provisional share will be the same as its initial share in fiscal 2026. For large fish, about 8,500 tonnes, the fiscal 2026 initial level, will be allocated. For small fish, about 2,200 tonnes, half the fiscal 2026 initial level, will be handed out.

Japan's overall quota for large fish is expected to rise, while its quota for small fish is expected to fall.

The second stage

Once Japan's total quota is fixed in international talks, the regions' catch limits will be raised by additional amounts by April 2027. How much can be added depends on negotiations with South Korea and Taiwan. Japan is seeking a 25 per cent increase in its quota for large fish, and the expected increase could shrink depending on the talks.

Why two stages

Domestic quotas are normally set after Japan's national quota has been finalised. The unusual two-stage approach is meant to let fishers prepare their operations sooner. The agency plans to explain it at a meeting with the industry on November 4.

The background

In August, a joint working group of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Northern Committee and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission agreed on a new method for managing

the stock.

A recovering fish

Pacific bluefin stocks fell to dangerously low levels early in the 2010s, and strict catch limits have since helped them recover, allowing quotas to be raised. Japan, the world's largest consumer of bluefin, is both the main fishing nation and the main market.

BUSINESS

Business in Brief

By the Business Desk

AI COMPUTING: Anthropic, the American developer of the Claude artificial intelligence models, is close to a deal worth about 45 billion dollars, about 7.1 trillion yen, to secure computing capacity from Nscale, a British data centre operator backed by Nvidia, Bloomberg News reported. It would cover a second Nscale data centre planned in West Virginia.

ANTHROPIC JAPAN: Hidetoshi Tojo, president of the company's Japanese unit, told a Kyodo News forum in Tokyo that the number of Japanese companies using Claude was more than ten times that of a year earlier. "Whether a company can connect its internal databases to AI will decide the contest," he said.

INSURANCE: Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance launches a map on Tuesday showing the risk of flooding during heavy rain on 4,577 road sections that the government lists as liable to flood, to help drivers avoid underpasses and other danger spots.

AIRLINES: A Japan Air Commuter flight from Fukuoka to Kagoshima was cancelled on Monday after a small animal was found in the cabin, affecting about 40 passengers.

UNIVERSITIES: The University of Tokyo and Taisei Corporation are opening a joint research centre on the deep sea and ageing urban infrastructure, funded by a 1 billion yen donation from the builder.

SEMICONDUCTORS: Eight chipmakers, including Mitsubishi Electric, Kioxia and Rohm, held a joint careers event at Kobe University to attract students to an industry short of designers.

NEWSPAPERS: Tuesday is Newspaper Advertising Day. The grand prize at this year's Newspaper Advertising Awards went to Aniplex's nationwide campaign for the 10th anniversary of the game Fate/Grand Order.

CONSUMER PRICES: Uniqlo is raising average prices by about 4 per cent.

AVIATION: Narita airport's new runway is now due for completion at the end of 2034.

CARS: Mitsubishi Motors' revived Pajero has more than 4,000 advance orders.

TECHNOLOGY

If Your Data May Have Leaked

By the Technology Desk

CHECK NOTICES: Read the company's announcement to learn what information was involved, and use only its official website or phone number, not links in emails.

PASSWORDS: Change the password for the affected service, and for any other service where you used the same one.

DON'T REUSE: Use a different password for each service; a password manager can help.

TWO-STEP LOGIN: Turn on two-factor authentication wherever it is offered.

WATCH FOR PHISHING: Expect emails and text messages that mention the leak or your order history and ask you to click a link or enter card details. Legitimate companies do not ask for passwords by email.

CARDS: Check card statements for unfamiliar charges and contact the card issuer at once if you find any.

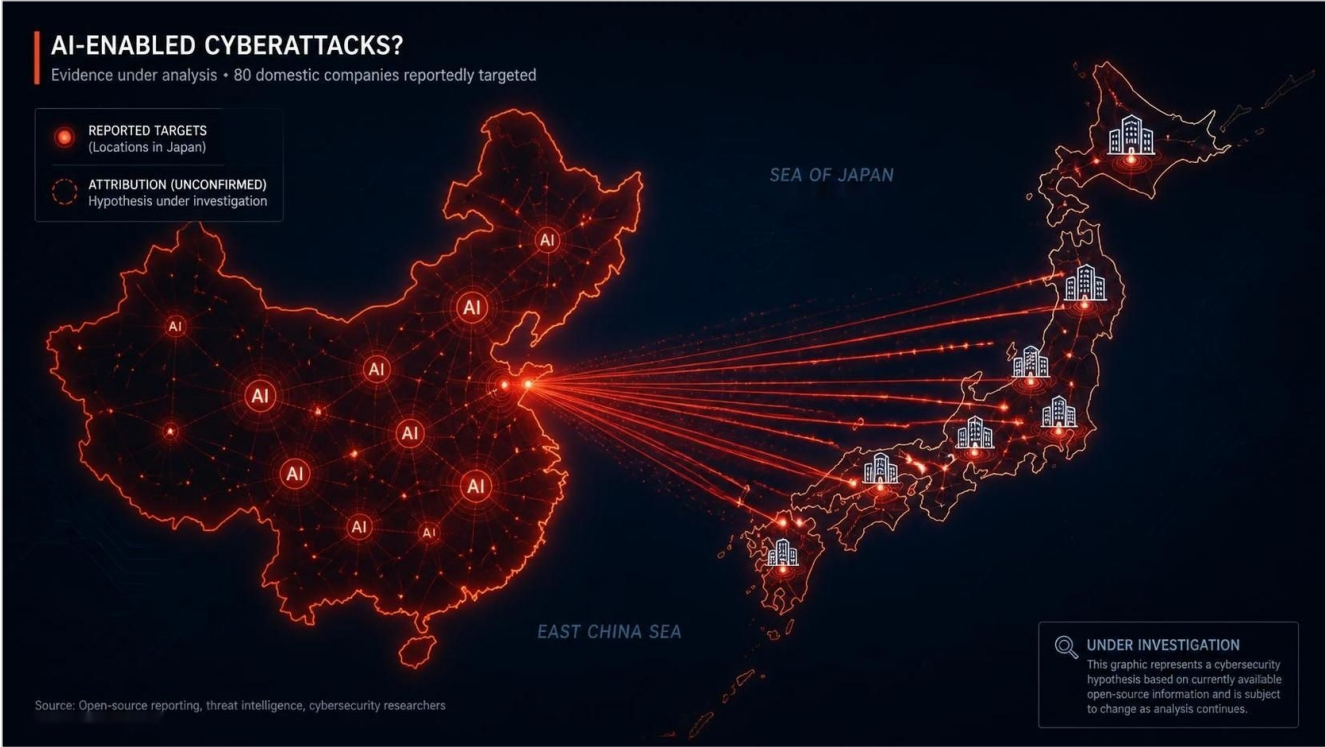
CALLS: Be wary of calls claiming to be from the company, the police or a bank and asking for money or personal details.

REPORT: Fraud can be reported to the police consultation line, #9110.

ADVICE: The consumer hotline, 188, can direct you to a local consumer affairs centre.

SOURCE: General guidance from Japanese consumer and police authorities.

TECHNOLOGY



An illustration of suspected AI-enabled cyberattacks on Japanese companies. The Yomiuri Shimbun reports traces of a Chinese-language AI agent in attacks on about 80 domestic firms, and a GMO Internet Group security unit says it has confirmed the use of a Chinese-made AI tool. (File image: WPM Productions)

TECHNOLOGY

Traces of a Chinese-Language AI Agent Found in Attacks on Japanese Companies, as Security Firms Link the Wave of Breaches to Automated Hacking

The Yomiuri Shimbun reports evidence tied to attacks on about 80 domestic firms; a GMO group security unit says it has confirmed the use of a Chinese-made AI tool, the same one blamed for a string of attacks on South Korean banks

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Traces suggesting that an artificial intelligence agent working in Chinese was misused have been found in cyberattacks on Japanese companies, according to analyses by private security firms, adding to evidence that automated, AI-driven hacking lies behind the wave of data breaches that has swept the country this autumn.

The Yomiuri Shimbun reported on Tuesday that such traces had been found in connection with attacks on about 80 domestic companies, based on an analysis by a private company, and that the attacks had led to leaks of information.

An information security subsidiary of the GMO Internet Group said separately that it had confirmed the use of Chinese-made AI in some of the unauthorised access cases. "When we investigated, we confirmed that a Chinese AI had been used," an employee of the company said, according to NHK.

ARTEX

The business news site Business+IT reported that the GMO unit had found an AI tool called ARTEX on the infrastructure from which the attacks were launched, and that about 20 companies had been targeted from it.

ARTEX is an AI agent tool developed in China and released as open-source software on GitHub earlier this year, designed to automate penetration testing, the probing of computer systems for weaknesses that companies commission to test their own defences. It is not itself a language model but connects to external AI models to plan and carry out its work, Reuters reported.

The Korean precedent

The same tool has been linked to attacks on South Korean banks. At least nine banks in South Korea have been targeted by cyberattacks since late September, Reuters reported. The American security company CrowdStrike said on October 7 that an attack on one bank, aimed at stealing customers' personal information, had probably been carried out by a 26-year-old based in China using ARTEX together with a commercial AI coding assistant.

On October 8 the developer of ARTEX, posting under the name Autumn-27, announced that because the tool had been misused, its source code would be made private and updates would end, while saying the developer opposed any illegal use. China's Foreign Ministry said it was not aware of the case

TECHNOLOGY

H2O Leaks 1.26 Million Customer Records, Nifty and an Email Firm Report Breaches, and Furusato Choice Shuts Down: A Day of Data Alarms

At least a dozen organisations disclosed unauthorised access or exposed data on Monday alone, from a department store group and a telecoms giant's customer site to Saitama's police

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The list of Japanese companies and organisations hit by cyberattacks grew longer on Monday, as one after another disclosed unauthorised access to their

and that China consistently opposes and cracks down on hacking.

Fast and many

A security company told NHK on October 13 that the attacks it was observing used several different methods in a short period, at a level that would be difficult for humans, pointing to possible misuse of AI agents.

Reuters also reported on Monday that a Chinese-speaking hacker had used AI agents to probe more than 100 websites of well-known companies around the world, including a Japanese online shopping site, giving the agents instructions of fewer than 100 characters in Chinese.

'More attacks are coming'

Eva Chen, chief executive of the security company Trend Micro, told a news conference in Tokyo on Monday that the wave of leaks would feed further attacks. "Criminals misuse stolen personal information to break into companies' systems. Many more attacks are coming," she said.

She warned that stolen data is traded among fraud groups and can be used in phishing emails or as a foothold for new intrusions, and that AI makes it easier both to organise leaked information and to write convincing fraudulent messages.

The government's response

Provisions of Japan's active cyber defence law allowing the authorities to neutralise servers used in serious attacks took effect on October 1, and the monitoring of communications under the law is due to begin next autumn. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' new panel of experts on strengthening security at telecoms carriers, which will consider attacks using cutting-edge AI and possible amendments to the Telecommunications Business Act, meets for the first time on Thursday.

Who is behind the Japanese attacks has not been established. The use of a Chinese-made tool, or of instructions written in Chinese, does not by itself show who the attackers are or whether any state is involved.

systems or leaks of personal information.

Department stores

H2O Retailing, the parent of the Hankyu and Hanshin department stores, said about 1.26 million records of personal information, including names, addresses and telephone numbers, had leaked after unauthorised access to the customer management system behind its H2O ID, through a reservation website run by the department stores.

In a separate intrusion, through Remo Order, a service for ordering goods from home, order histories and partial credit card numbers may have been exposed. The company said it does not hold full card numbers or security codes, and that no misuse had

been confirmed.

Internet and email

Nifty, the Tokyo-based internet service provider, said the names, addresses and telephone numbers of up to 540,000 customers may have leaked after unauthorised access to its system for handling applications for internet lines.

Yumilink, which provides an email delivery service used by businesses, said personal information including email addresses, about 9 million records in total, may have leaked after an outside attack.

Hometown tax

TrustBank, operator of Furusato Choice, one of the largest portals for the hometown tax donation system, suspended the service from about 3:50 p.m. on Monday after detecting suspected unauthorised access to its servers during an inspection that morning. It said it was still investigating whether personal information had leaked.

Telecoms and points

SoftBank said it had suspended My SoftBank, the website for its mobile and internet customers, on Saturday after detecting attempted unauthorised access. Japan Post Holdings said unauthorised logins had been confirmed on 249 accounts of its Yu-Yu Point loyalty site, and that names and other details may have been exposed.

Retail and medicine

Joshin, the electronics retailer, said its network had been accessed without authorisation and that a leak of personal information could not be ruled out. Second Retailing, which runs the Geo and 2nd Street second-hand chains, has suspended its apps and online stores since Saturday after confirming unauthorised access on October 15.

Toho Holdings, a pharmaceutical wholesaler, said the names, workplaces and email addresses of medical professionals using a service run by its subsidiary Entouch had leaked.

Exposed by mistake

Not every case was an attack. Skymark Airlines said the personal information of 488 people who had made recruitment inquiries between 2016 and 2020 had been viewable from outside because no password had been set on an administration screen, a fault it found while checking its systems in the light of other companies' breaches.

Police and trade

Saitama Prefectural Police said the names, units and private email addresses of about 13,000 officers and staff registered on a disaster safety-confirmation system may have leaked after an attack on Arcadia, the Osaka company that runs it. The Japan External Trade Organization confirmed that 743 records, including company names and contact email addresses, had leaked.

TECHNOLOGY

Monday's Breach Disclosures

By the Technology Desk

H2O RETAILING: About 1.26 million customer records leaked (names, addresses, phone numbers).

YUMILINK: About 9 million records, including email addresses, may have leaked.

NIFTY: Up to 540,000 customer records may have leaked.

SAITAMA POLICE: About 13,000 officers' and staff members' details may have leaked through contractor Arcadia.

JETRO: 743 records confirmed leaked; website suspended since October 17.

SKYMARK: 488 people's recruitment inquiries were viewable because an admin screen had no password.

JAPAN POST: Unauthorised logins on 249 Yu-Yu Point accounts.

SUSPENDED: Furusato Choice (TrustBank); My SoftBank; Geo and 2nd Street apps and online stores; some Joshin services.

UNDER INVESTIGATION: Toho Holdings unit Entouch, medical professionals' data.

SOURCE: Company and police announcements reported by Kyodo News.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Nikkei ends 407 yen down, Page 11.

Bears at the polls, Page 18.

Sato to the majors, Page 21.

TECHNOLOGY

One in Six Japanese Companies Has Suffered a Data Leak, and Almost as Many Cannot Tell Whether They Have, a Survey Finds

Teikoku Databank finds 30 per cent of large firms have experienced leaks; small businesses say they lack the money and people to meet partners' security demands

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

About one in six Japanese companies has experienced a leak of information, or a suspected leak, caused by human error or a cyberattack, and almost as many cannot say whether they have, according to a survey published on Monday by the credit research firm Teikoku Databank.

Of the 1,328 companies that responded to the online survey, conducted from October 9 to 14, 16.2 per cent said they had experienced a leak or a possible leak. Of those, 5.5 per cent said it had happened within the past year and 10.7 per cent more than a year ago.

Some 69.1 per cent said they had never had one, while 14.8 per cent said they did not know.

Larger firms, more leaks

Among large companies, 30.2 per cent reported a leak, 14 percentage points above the overall figure, and 8.8 per cent had had one in the past year, compared with 5.0 per cent of small and medium-sized companies.

Teikoku Databank attributed the gap to the larger volume of information handled by big companies, their greater number of systems, employees and business partners, and also to their better systems for detecting leaks, which mean more incidents are noticed.

How it happens

Respondents described leaks caused by emails sent to the wrong address, documents from another company attached by mistake, and errors in fax and postal work. One company said an employee had sent information after receiving an email impersonating a staff member of a business partner, without confirming by telephone. Others reported traces of attacks from outside.

'Don't know'

Some companies said they lacked experts who could determine whether a leak had taken place, which Teikoku Databank said pointed to gaps in detection, internal information sharing and management.

The small-business squeeze

Small and medium-sized companies said they were under pressure from large business partners to strengthen their security but lacked the budget and staff to do so, and one asked for financial and human support, not just guidance.

Teikoku Databank called for technical measures combined with staff training, information sharing, early detection of warning signs and rapid response, and for an environment in which smaller companies can keep improving their security.

TECHNOLOGY

What an AI Agent Is, How Hackers Are Using Them, and What Companies Can Do to Defend Themselves

Tools built to test defences can be turned to attack them, working through targets at a speed no human team can match; experts urge companies to find and close their exposed doors first

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

An AI agent is a program built on a large language model, the kind of artificial intelligence behind chatbots, that can carry out a series of tasks on its own: searching for information, running software tools, reading the results and deciding what to do next, with little or no human direction.

From testing to attacking

Companies have long hired security specialists to attack their own systems, with permission, to find weaknesses before criminals do. AI agents promise to automate much of that work. The same capability, in the wrong hands, can be used to attack systems without permission.

Tools such as ARTEX, released in China this year as open-source software, connect to commercially available AI models and can be instructed to scan a target for exposed services, look up known vulnerabilities, try to exploit them and report back.

TECHNOLOGY

Speed and scale

The danger lies less in brilliance than in volume. An agent can work through hundreds of targets in the time it would take a person to examine one, and can try many methods in quick succession. CrowdStrike, which investigated one of the South Korean bank attacks, said the attacker's skills were not especially sophisticated, but the results were effective.

The weak points

Japan's computer emergency response team, JPCERT/CC, warned in an advisory on October 8 that attackers were exploiting known vulnerabilities, misconfigured systems and the manipulation of the interfaces that connect one system to another, known as APIs. The targets included consumer-facing services, employee management systems and data analysis tools.

What to do

The research firm Gartner Japan urged companies on October 13 to carry out urgent inspections. Its recommendations included taking stock of every system reachable from the internet, including forgotten administration pages and systems run by contractors; checking that software is up to date and that authentication, access rights and settings are sound; and analysing logs across systems to spot suspicious access or large downloads of data.

It also advised companies to limit how far an intruder could move inside their networks and how many people hold administrator privileges, to delete personal data they no longer need, to confirm emergency contacts with contractors, and to be ready to restrict or suspend services quickly if serious weaknesses are found.

The other side

Defenders are using AI too, to sift alerts, find vulnerabilities before attackers do and respond faster. Security experts say the contest will increasingly be one of machine against machine, with people deciding the priorities.

TECHNOLOGY

Cars Will Have to Watch Their Drivers: Systems That Detect Distraction and Drowsiness Become Mandatory From 2031

New models sold in Japan, imports included, must carry camera-based monitors from September 2031 and existing models from 2033; only about one in nine new cars has one now

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

New cars sold in Japan will have to carry systems that watch the driver and sound a warning when he or she looks away from the road for too long or begins to nod off, under revised vehicle safety standards drawn up by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

The requirement will apply to new models from September 2031 and to models already on sale from September 2033, and will cover imported vehicles as well as Japanese ones, the ministry has said. The safety standards under the Road Transport Vehicle Act were to be revised in September.

How it works

A driver monitoring system uses a camera, typically mounted near the instrument panel, to track the driver's gaze and the movement of the eyelids. When it judges that the driver is not paying attention, it warns with an alarm and, in some designs, vibration of the steering wheel.

Under the standard, the system must react if the driver's gaze stays off the road, for example on a phone in the hands, for 6 seconds at speeds between 20 and 50 kilometres an hour, or for 3.5 seconds above 50 kilometres an hour. It must also warn when it detects signs of drowsiness at higher speeds.

Why now

Accidents caused by drivers using smartphones while driving, known in Japan as "nagara unten," or driving while doing something else, have remained a serious problem despite tougher penalties introduced in 2019.

An international standard for driver monitoring was adopted in March at the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations, a United Nations body in which Japan takes part, and the Japanese rules follow it.

How many cars have one

The ministry issued technical guidelines on such systems in 2020, and Japanese carmakers have been fitting them to some models. In 2024, about 380,000

of the roughly 3.4 million passenger cars produced for the domestic market, about 11 per cent, had one.

TECHNOLOGY

University of Tokyo and Taisei Open a Research Centre for 'Extreme Environments,' From the Deep Sea to Crumbling City Infrastructure

The builder donates 1 billion yen; the director wants '4D' monitoring of ageing roads and pipes to prevent disasters like last year's sinkhole in Saitama

By the Science Desk

The University of Tokyo and the construction company Taisei Corporation announced on Monday that they are opening a joint research centre to study places that are hard to observe and hard to reach, from the deep sea to the ageing infrastructure beneath Japan's cities.

The Planet Frontier Innovation Research Center was set up this month, the two said at a news conference in Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo. Taisei has donated 1 billion yen, which the centre will invest over the long term to fund its work.

Two divisions

The centre has an infrastructure and space creation division and a frontier resources and energy division. It treats both the deep sea and deteriorating urban infrastructure as extreme environments that people find difficult to reach, and aims to pursue the exploration of the unknown and the safe maintenance of infrastructure as a single effort.

Seeing inside

Its director, Tetsuya Ishida, a professor at the university's Graduate School of Engineering, pointed to the road collapse in Saitama Prefecture last year and stressed the importance of technology that makes the deterioration of infrastructure visible.

He proposed using what he called "four-dimensional see-through" technology, which tracks the condition of infrastructure in three dimensions over time, to prevent serious accidents.

Deep underground

The centre will also work on developing deep-sea resources and the so-called deep underground, space more than 40 metres below the surface that can be used for tunnels and other infrastructure in Japan's crowded cities.

'New fields'

Teruo Fujii, president of the University of Tokyo, said the centre would open up new academic fields.

The Yashio sinkhole

In January 2025, a road in Yashio, Saitama Prefecture, collapsed into a sinkhole caused by a corroded sewer pipe, swallowing a truck and killing its driver, and forcing about 1.2 million residents to limit their use of water. The accident prompted nationwide inspections of ageing sewers.

TECHNOLOGY

Insurer's New Map Warns Drivers of Roads Likely to Flood, After Hundreds of Cars Were Stranded in Chiba's August Downpours

Aioli Nissay Dowa combines the government's list of 4,577 flood-prone road sections with the weather agency's rain-cloud forecasts to rate the danger in three levels

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Aioli Nissay Dowa Insurance will begin publishing a map on Tuesday that shows drivers which roads are likely to flood during heavy rain, in an effort to reduce the damage to vehicles from sudden downpours.

The map, called the Sonaeru Kansui Map, or Be Prepared Flooding Map, will be available on the insurer's information site, hints!, and its app, cmap.

How it works

The map covers 4,577 road sections that the national government has identified as at risk of flooding, such as underpasses where roads dip below railway lines. Aioli analyses them using a system from the Japan Meteorological Agency that forecasts the movement of rain clouds, and rates each section at one of three levels: emergency, warning or caution.

The lesson of August

During the heavy rain in Chiba Prefecture in August, a large number of vehicles were stranded by floodwater. The insurer said one reason was that danger spots such as underpasses had not been

adequately communicated to drivers.

Why underpasses are dangerous

The weather agency says downpours of 50 millimetres or more an hour now happen about one and a half times as often as they did in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Water collects quickly in roads that dip below their surroundings, and its depth is hard to judge from the driver's seat. Even water that looks shallow can stall a car or make its doors hard to open, and safety authorities advise drivers never to enter a flooded underpass.

An insurer's interest

Insurers pay out large sums for flood damage to cars after torrential rain, and have been looking for ways to prevent losses rather than only pay for them.

TECHNOLOGY

1632: Christopher Wren Is Born; the Astronomer Who Rebuilt London After the Great Fire Gave the City St Paul's Cathedral

A founder of the Royal Society and a professor of astronomy, he turned mathematics into architecture on a scale England had never seen

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Christopher Wren was born on October 20, 1632, by the calendar then used in England, in the village of East Knoyle in Wiltshire, the son of a clergyman.

He was first a scientist. At Oxford he studied anatomy, made instruments and experimented with astronomy, and in 1657 he became professor of astronomy at Gresham College in London, moving to the Savilian chair of astronomy at Oxford a few years later.

The Royal Society

In 1660 Wren was among the group of natural philosophers who founded what became the Royal Society, one of the oldest scientific academies in the world, and he later served as its president.

The fire

His career changed with the Great Fire of London in September 1666, which destroyed much of the medieval city, including the old St Paul's Cathedral and scores of parish churches.

Wren drew up a plan for a new city of broad, straight streets. It was never adopted, but he was made responsible for rebuilding the city's churches, designing more than 50 of them, each fitted to its cramped and irregular site.

St Paul's

His masterpiece, the new St Paul's Cathedral, took more than three decades to build and was declared complete in 1711. Its great dome, with an inner shell, a hidden brick cone and an outer timber-framed dome, is a feat of structural engineering as much as of design.

The engineer-architect

With his friend Robert Hooke he also designed the Monument to the Great Fire, which doubled as a scientific instrument, and he designed the Royal Observatory at Greenwich.

Wren died in 1723 at the age of 90 and is buried in St Paul's. His epitaph reads, in Latin, "Reader, if you seek his monument, look around you."

TECHNOLOGY

1891: James Chadwick Is Born; His Discovery of the Neutron Four Decades Later Unlocked the Atomic Nucleus

The Nobel laureate found the uncharged particle in 1932 and later led Britain's scientists in the Manhattan Project

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

James Chadwick was born on October 20, 1891, in Bollington, Cheshire, in the north-west of England, the son of a cotton spinner.

He won a scholarship to the University of Manchester, where he studied under Ernest Rutherford, the pioneer of nuclear physics, and followed him to the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge.

Interned

In 1914 Chadwick went to Berlin to work with Hans Geiger and was interned as an enemy civilian when the First World War broke out. He spent the war in a camp at a racecourse near the city, where he and other prisoners kept up a little science with whatever

materials they could find.

The neutron

Back in Cambridge, he searched for a neutral particle in the nucleus that Rutherford had predicted. In February 1932, after experiments in Germany and France had produced puzzling radiation from beryllium, Chadwick showed that it consisted of particles with no electric charge and almost the same mass as the proton. He called them neutrons.

The discovery explained why atoms of the same element could have different weights, and gave physicists a particle that could penetrate the nucleus without being repelled by its charge.

The Nobel Prize

He received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1935.

Fission and the bomb

Within a few years, bombarding uranium with neutrons revealed nuclear fission, the process behind both nuclear power and the atomic bomb. During the Second World War Chadwick headed the British mission to the Manhattan Project in the United States, the effort that produced the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

Legacy

He was knighted in 1945 and died in Cambridge in 1974. Every nuclear reactor, including those Japan is restarting, runs on the chain reaction of neutrons that he first identified.

TECHNOLOGY

1910: RMS Olympic, the Largest Ship in the World, Is Launched in Belfast; Her Ill-Fated Sister Titanic Followed

The White Star liner served for a quarter of a century, carried troops in the First World War and earned the nickname 'Old Reliable'

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The RMS Olympic, the first of three giant liners built for the White Star Line, slid into the water at the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast on October 20, 1910. When she entered service the following June, she was the largest ship in the world.

A class of three

The Olympic was designed to carry passengers across the North Atlantic in comfort rather than to set speed records, competing with the faster liners of the rival Cunard Line. Her sisters were Titanic, launched in 1911, and Britannic, launched in 1914.

The sisters' fate

Titanic sank on her maiden voyage in April 1912 after striking an iceberg, with the loss of more than 1,500 lives. Britannic, serving as a hospital ship, sank in the Aegean in 1916 after striking a mine. Only the Olympic had a long career.

Lessons applied

After the Titanic disaster, the Olympic was taken out of service and refitted with a double hull along much of her length, raised watertight bulkheads and enough lifeboats for everyone aboard, changes that reflected new international rules on safety at sea.

Old Reliable

During the First World War she carried troops across the Atlantic and to the Mediterranean, earning the nickname "Old Reliable." In 1918 she rammed and sank a German submarine that had tried to attack her.

The end

She returned to passenger service after the war and sailed until 1935, when, after the merger of White Star and Cunard, she was retired and broken up. Some of her fittings survive in a hotel in northern England.

TECHNOLOGY

1944: A Liquefied Natural Gas Tank Fails in Cleveland, Killing 130 People and Shaping Safety Rules for an Industry Japan Now Depends On

Gas pouring into streets and sewers ignited and destroyed about a square mile of homes; the steel had grown brittle in the extreme cold

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On the afternoon of October 20, 1944, a storage tank holding liquefied natural gas at the East Ohio Gas Company's plant in Cleveland, Ohio, split open, releasing its contents into the surrounding neighbourhood.

The liquid, stored at about minus 160 degrees

TECHNOLOGY

Celsius, flowed into streets and storm drains, turned to gas and found a source of ignition. Fire and explosions tore through the area, and a second tank later failed.

The toll

The disaster killed 130 people and destroyed homes and businesses across about a square mile on Cleveland's east side.

What went wrong

Investigators found that the tank had been built of steel with a low nickel content that became brittle at extremely low temperatures, and that there were no adequate walls or dikes to contain a spill.

The rules that followed

The disaster set back the use of liquefied natural gas in the United States for years. When the industry revived, it adopted lessons from Cleveland: tanks of special steels or concrete designed for extreme cold, containment dikes around storage tanks, and sites set apart from homes.

Japan's link

Japan began importing liquefied natural gas in 1969 and became one of the world's largest buyers, relying on it for a large share of its electricity. The safety engineering of its import terminals, built on the coast and ringed by containment, owes much to the hard lessons of 1944.

Remembered

It remains among the deadliest industrial disasters in Ohio's history, and is still studied by engineers who design storage for cryogenic fuels.

TECHNOLOGY

1964: Herbert Hoover Dies; the Mining Engineer Who Became President Also Helped Organise American Radio and Industrial Standards

Remembered for the Depression, he was first a globe-trotting engineer and a translator of a Renaissance mining classic
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Herbert Hoover, the 31st president of the United States, died in New York on October 20, 1964, at the age of 90.

He is chiefly remembered as the president who was in office when the Great Depression began. But before he entered politics he was one of the best-known engineers in the world.

The engineer

Hoover studied geology in the first class of Stanford University, graduating in 1895, and went on to manage gold mines in Western Australia and to work as a mining engineer in China, where he and his wife were caught in the siege of Tianjin during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900.

He became a wealthy mining consultant and financier, with interests on several continents.

Feeding Europe

During the First World War he organised the Commission for Relief in Belgium, which shipped food to millions of civilians in occupied Belgium and northern France.

A Latin classic

With his wife, Lou Henry Hoover, also a Stanford geology graduate, he translated from Latin Georgius Agricola's De Re Metallica, the 16th-century treatise on mining and metallurgy, publishing it in 1912. Their translation is still used.

Secretary of Commerce

As commerce secretary in the 1920s, Hoover pushed for the standardisation of everything from bricks to screw threads to reduce waste, and he oversaw the early regulation of radio broadcasting, as the airwaves filled with competing stations.

He won the presidency in a landslide in 1928 and lost to Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932.

The dam

The great dam on the Colorado River, whose planning he championed, bears his name.

Legacy

After his presidency he led food relief efforts after the Second World War and two commissions on reorganising the federal government.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

France imposes curfews, Page 8.

TECHNOLOGY

1973: Queen Elizabeth II Opens the Sydney Opera House, Whose Shell Roofs Defeated Engineers Until They Found a Geometric Solution

Joern Utzon's design won a competition in 1957 but took 16 years to build; computers helped analyse its structure
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The Sydney Opera House was formally opened by Queen Elizabeth II on October 20, 1973, sixteen years after the Danish architect Joern Utzon won an international competition to design it.

The problem of the shells

Utzon's competition entry showed a cluster of soaring white shells above Sydney Harbour, but it gave no clear way to build them. For years he and the engineers of Ove Arup and Partners struggled to find a geometry that could be constructed.

The answer, reached in the early 1960s, was to derive every shell from the surface of a single sphere, so that the curved ribs could be made from standard precast concrete sections. The roofs were then clad in more than a million glazed tiles made in Sweden.

Early computers

The structural analysis of the shells was among the earliest uses of electronic computers in building design, as engineers calculated the forces on forms that could not be worked out by hand in any reasonable time.

A bitter parting

Costs and delays mounted, and in 1966, after a dispute with the New South Wales government, Utzon resigned and left Australia. He never returned to see the finished building. The interiors were completed by others to a different design.

Recognition

The Opera House became the symbol of Sydney and of Australia, and was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2007, while Utzon was still alive. He received architecture's highest award, the Pritzker Prize, in 2003, and died in 2008.

The lesson

The building is still cited both as a triumph of engineering imagination and as a warning about starting construction before a design is fully worked out.

TECHNOLOGY

2004: The First Ubuntu Is Released, Bringing a Friendlier Linux to Desktop Computers on a Six-Month Rhythm

Version 4.10, nicknamed Warty Warthog, came from a company founded by the South African entrepreneur Mark Shuttleworth
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The first version of Ubuntu, a free operating system based on Linux, was released on October 20, 2004. Its number, 4.10, reflected its date, the tenth month of 2004, and its nickname was Warty Warthog.

The founder

Ubuntu was created by Canonical, a company founded by Mark Shuttleworth, a South African who had made his fortune selling an internet security business and had flown to the International Space Station as a paying visitor in 2002.

The aim

Linux was already powerful and widely used on servers, but it had a reputation for being hard to install and use on personal computers. Ubuntu, built on the long-established Debian distribution, set out to offer a complete, easy-to-use desktop system, free of charge.

The name

The name comes from a southern African word often translated as "humanity towards others," reflecting the project's community ideals.

A regular rhythm

Ubuntu promised new versions every six months, in April and October, with long-term support releases every two years for users who wanted stability. That predictable schedule was unusual at the time and helped businesses plan around it.

Where it went

Ubuntu became one of the most popular Linux distributions, especially on servers and in cloud computing, where it runs a large share of the world's virtual machines, and in research and education.

In Japan

A Japanese community has produced localised versions with Japanese input methods for years, and the system is widely used in universities and by developers.

TECHNOLOGY

2010: Apple's 'Back to the Mac' Event Unveils a Thinner MacBook Air and Announces the Mac App Store

Steve Jobs brought ideas from the iPhone and iPad to the Mac, from flash storage and instant waking to an online store for software
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 20, 2010, Apple held an event in Cupertino, California, that it called "Back to the Mac," at which Steve Jobs set out how ideas from the iPhone and the iPad would be brought to the company's personal computers.

The new Air

The star was a redesigned MacBook Air, in 11-inch and 13-inch versions, which used flash memory instead of a hard disk. That made it thinner and lighter, and let it wake instantly from sleep, as a phone does.

The store

Jobs also announced the Mac App Store, an online store for Mac software modelled on the store for iPhone apps. It opened in January 2011 and changed how many people bought and updated programs for their computers.

Lion and FaceTime

Apple previewed the next version of its operating system, Mac OS X Lion, which borrowed gestures and full-screen apps from the iPad, and released a test version of FaceTime video calling for the Mac.

The direction

The event signalled a long-term convergence of Apple's computers and mobile devices that continued for more than a decade, culminating in Macs powered by Apple's own chips, designed in the same family as those in the iPhone.

The thin laptop

The new Air set the pattern for thin, light laptops with solid-state storage, which rivals soon followed and which became the norm.

TECHNOLOGY

2020: NASA's OSIRIS-REx Touches the Asteroid Bennu and Grabs So Much Material That Its Sample Container Jams Open

The spacecraft brought back about 121.6 grams in 2023, the largest asteroid sample ever returned, building on the trail blazed by Japan's Hayabusa missions
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 20, 2020, American time, NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft reached down to the surface of the asteroid Bennu for a few seconds, fired a burst of nitrogen gas to stir up the surface, and captured the loose rock and dust in a collector at the end of its arm.

Too much of a good thing

The touch went better than planned. The collector picked up so much material that rocks wedged its lid open and particles began drifting into space, and engineers hurried to stow the sample in its return capsule ahead of schedule.

A surprising surface

Bennu, a carbon-rich asteroid about 500 metres across, turned out to be strewn with boulders and so loosely packed that the spacecraft would have sunk into it had it not fired its thrusters to back away.

Home

The capsule landed in the Utah desert on September 24, 2023, with about 121.6 grams of material, the largest sample ever brought back from an asteroid. Analysis has found water-bearing minerals and organic compounds, including amino acids.

Japan's role

The mission followed Japan's Hayabusa and Hayabusa2, and the American and Japanese teams exchanged portions of their samples from Bennu and Ryugu, allowing scientists to compare two carbon-rich asteroids.

Six years on

On the same date this year, Japan launched MMX, aiming to bring back the first samples from a moon of Mars.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology and Science on October 20

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1632: Christopher Wren, astronomer and architect of St Paul's Cathedral, is born in Wiltshire.

1891: James Chadwick, discoverer of the neutron, is born in Cheshire.

1910: RMS Olympic, sister of Titanic and then the world's largest ship, is launched in Belfast.

1944: A liquefied natural gas tank fails in Cleveland, Ohio, killing 130 people.

1964: Herbert Hoover, mining engineer and 31st president of the United States, dies in New York.

1973: Queen Elizabeth II opens the Sydney Opera House.

2004: The first Ubuntu Linux, version 4.10, is released.

2010: Apple's "Back to the Mac" event introduces a new MacBook Air and the Mac App Store.

2020: NASA's OSIRIS-REx collects a sample from the asteroid Bennu.

2026: Japan's H3 rocket launches MMX toward the moons of Mars.

SOCIETY

Children Conceived Through Fertility Treatment Have a Higher Risk of Kawasaki Disease by Age 5, an Osaka Study of 100,000 Finds

The researchers stress that the disease is treatable and urge parents not to worry unduly, but to see a doctor if a child has fever or a rash
By the Science Desk

Children born after fertility treatment such as in vitro fertilisation or artificial insemination are more likely to develop Kawasaki disease by the age of 5 than those conceived naturally, according to a study by researchers at the Osaka Women's and Children's Hospital and Osaka University.

The study

The team analysed data on about 100,000 children from a national study of children's health and the environment run by the Ministry of the Environment, comparing how the children were conceived with whether they had been diagnosed with Kawasaki disease by age 5.

After adjusting for factors such as the mother's age and the child's sex, they found that the risk for children born after fertility treatment was 1.42 times that of children conceived naturally. The findings were published in an international journal.

The disease

Kawasaki disease, first described by the Japanese paediatrician Tomisaku Kawasaki in 1967, causes inflammation of blood vessels throughout the body, mainly in young children. Its symptoms include high fever, rash, red eyes and swollen hands, and it can damage the arteries of the heart if not treated. Its cause is still unknown, and Japan has one of the highest rates in the world.

Why the link

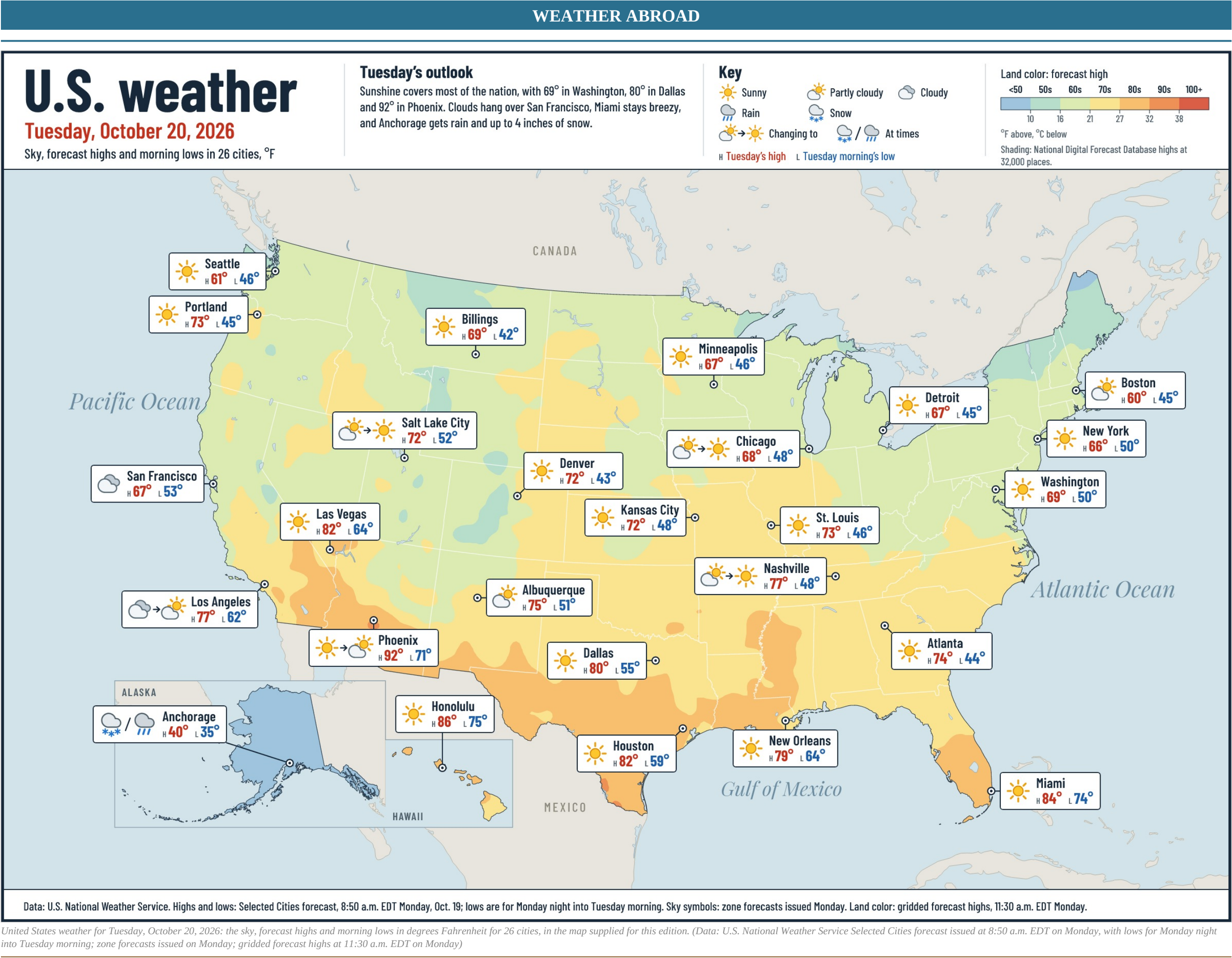
How fertility treatment might affect the onset of the disease is not known. The team said there was no basis for thinking that conditions that cause infertility, such as endometriosis, were involved, and suggested that drugs or procedures used in treatment might affect children's immune systems, a possibility that needs further study.

'Don't worry unduly'

Sachiko Baba, a section chief at the hospital, said that treatment for Kawasaki disease is well established. She advised parents who had undergone fertility treatment not to be overly anxious, but to have a child examined at hospital if the child develops a fever or rash.

Many births

About one in ten babies born in Japan is now conceived through in vitro fertilisation, which has been covered by public health insurance since 2022.



SOCIETY



A sign warning of bears, in Japanese and English, in a file image. Koriyama will keep firecrackers at 47 polling stations for Sunday's Fukushima governor election, and hunters and police in Okutama, western Tokyo, rehearsed an emergency shooting on Monday. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SOCIETY

Firecrackers at the Polls and a Stuffed Bear in the Sights: Fukushima and Tokyo Prepare for Bears as They Feed Before Winter

Koriyama will keep firecrackers at 47 polling stations for Sunday's governor election and Fukushima City will close voting early; in Okutama, hunters and police rehearse an emergency shooting

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Polling stations in Fukushima Prefecture will be equipped with firecrackers and bear bells for Sunday's governor election, and in the mountains west of Tokyo hunters and police rehearsed on Monday how to shoot a bear that wanders into a hotel's grounds, as communities prepare for bears foraging before their winter sleep.

At the ballot box

Several people have been attacked by bears in Fukushima this year, and sightings are being reported frequently.

The election commission of Koriyama will place firecrackers and bear bells at polling stations for the first time. Firecrackers will go to 47 of the city's 144 polling stations, in areas where bears have been seen. Staff will carry bells while watching the surroundings, and if a bear appears they will consult the official in charge and set off firecrackers to drive it away.

In Fukushima City, every polling station will close two hours early, at 6 p.m., and voters are being urged to avoid the early morning and evening and to vote in daylight. Each station will have one more member of staff than usual.

Bears become more active after dark, raising the chance of encounters, an election official said. "We put the safety of voters first," the official said.

A drill in Okutama

In the town of Okutama, in the mountains of western Tokyo, the metropolitan government held a drill on Monday afternoon with the town, the local hunters' association and the Metropolitan Police Department, to check the steps leading up to killing a bear.

The scenario was an Asian black bear that had stayed

in the grounds of a lodging facility. The participants first confirmed the conditions under which an emergency shooting could be carried out. Then a hunter aimed a mock gun at a stuffed toy bear and called out, "Fire!"

A town official in charge of tourism and industry said the lessons would be used to revise the town's manual for emergency shootings.

Bears in the capital

Bears have caused incidents in Tokyo too. Last month a bear was killed in the capital under the emergency shooting system, and in August last year a man fishing in a mountain stream in Okutama was attacked and injured. Bears have also been seen in the mountains around Mount Takao, one of the most popular hiking spots near Tokyo.

The emergency system

Under rules that took effect in September last year, municipalities can authorise hunters to shoot bears that enter residential areas, when certain conditions are met, including that there is no other way to deal with the animal quickly and that the shooting will not endanger residents. Before the change, shooting in populated areas was generally prohibited.

This year's toll

As of September, bears had killed or injured 68 people across Japan this year, six of whom died, according to Environment Ministry figures. Autumn, when bears eat heavily before hibernating, is the season of greatest danger.

cancelled this year because of the record heat and concern for her health.

Following the news

She lives at the Sento Imperial Palace in Motoakasaka, Tokyo, and keeps up with events through newspapers and television, with explanations from a chamberlain. Recently she has followed earthquakes, damage from heavy rain, and the effects of climate change on agriculture and fisheries.

Music

Playing the piano is one of her pleasures, and musician friends have performed for her at the palace. A foreign musician with whom she once played at a music festival in Kusatsu, Gunma Prefecture, sent her a letter, which brought back fond memories.

A life of firsts

Born Michiko Shoda in 1934, the daughter of a flour company executive, she married the then Crown Prince Akihito in 1959, the first commoner to marry an heir to the throne, and was Empress from 1989 until his abdication in 2019.

The Emperor Emeritus turns 93 in December.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Nikkei ends 407 yen down, Page 11.

AI tool in cyberattacks, Page 13.

SOCIETY

'Wow, It's Amazing': Princess Aiko Sees the Tottori Sand Dunes for the First Time, and Meets Residents Who Helped After a Typhoon

The daughter of the Emperor and Empress also visits an observatory with one of Japan's largest telescopes during her stay in Tottori

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Princess Aiko, the only child of the Emperor and Empress, visited the Tottori Sand Dunes for the first time on Monday, the third day of her visit to Tottori Prefecture.

Standing at the entrance to the dunes, she exclaimed, "Wow, it's amazing." A guide from the visitor centre explained the scenery, the plants that grow on the sand and the work being done to preserve the landscape, and the princess said she was glad she had come.

The dunes

The Tottori Sand Dunes, stretching about 16 kilometres along the Sea of Japan coast, are among the largest in Japan and a designated natural monument. Their ridges and wind-sculpted ripples draw visitors from across the country.

Saji

Earlier in the day she visited Saji, a district of Tottori City that was cut off by flooding from a typhoon in August 2023. She met residents who had helped with relief work, including distributing hot meals, and asked them what had been hardest.

Stars

She also visited Saji Astro Park, a municipal observatory with one of the largest telescopes in Japan open to the public. The area is known for its dark night skies.

A working royal

Princess Aiko, 24, works at the Japanese Red Cross Society, and has taken on a growing number of official duties, including trips to the regions on her own.

Why she came

The princess is in Tottori for Bosai Kokutai 2026, a national event on disaster preparedness. On Saturday she heard women's views on running evacuation shelters, and on Sunday she visited Kurayoshi, which was damaged by an earthquake in 2016.

SOCIETY

Kusatsu Closes the Yugama Crater Lake Again One Week After Reopening It for the First Time in Eight Years, Overwhelmed by Traffic

Cars queued on National Route 292 and parked along the road before dawn; the town says the jams could block ambulances

By the Society Desk

The town of Kusatsu in Gunma Prefecture closed access to the Yugama crater lake on the volcano Kusatsu-Shirane again on Monday, just a week after lifting restrictions for the first time in eight years, because far more tourists arrived than expected.

The town had reopened the area on October 13. Visitors poured in, causing traffic jams on National Route 292, which links Gunma and Nagano prefectures over the mountains.

Before dawn

At car parks at the foot of the summit area, vehicles were parked along the roadside even before the car parks opened in the early morning. The town deployed more than three times as many staff as planned to guide visitors and control traffic.

The town said the congestion could prevent emergency vehicles from getting through and that it could no longer guarantee safety.

A short season

Access had been planned until November 8, the day before the road closes for the winter.

The lake

Yugama is a crater lake of striking emerald-green, highly acidic water near the summit of Kusatsu-Shirane, which straddles the border of Gunma and Nagano. It was one of the most popular sights of the Kusatsu hot spring area until volcanic activity led to restrictions.

The eruption of 2018

In January 2018, Motoshirane, another peak of the Kusatsu-Shirane volcano, erupted without warning near a ski resort, killing a member of the Ground Self-Defense Force who was training there and injuring others. Access around the volcano was restricted afterwards.

What next

It was not immediately clear whether the lake would reopen before the winter closure.

SOCIETY

Doctors in Shizuoka Widen the Aorta of a Baby Weighing 356 Grams, Probably the Smallest Patient in the World to Survive the Procedure

Born at 25 weeks and small enough to fit in one hand, the girl is now 11 months old and weighs 4.9 kilograms

By the Science Desk

Shizuoka Children's Hospital said on Monday that it had successfully performed a heart catheter procedure on a baby girl who weighed just 356 grams when her treatment began, probably the smallest case in the world in which such treatment has succeeded.

Born early

The girl was delivered by emergency caesarean section in October last year at 25 weeks and 3 days of pregnancy. She was small enough to fit in the palm of a hand.

The problem

She was diagnosed with coarctation of the aorta, a narrowing of part of the main artery that carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body.

The procedure

Doctors inserted a catheter about one millimetre in diameter through the carotid artery in her neck and used it to widen the aorta.

Today

Now 11 months old, the girl weighs 4.9 kilograms. The hospital will continue to monitor her.

'Hope'

Akane Shibuya, deputy head of the hospital's cardiology department, told a news conference that the case showed that even very small babies could be saved. "Knowing that even the small can be helped has become a source of hope," she said.

The parents said they hoped their daughter's case would become a precedent that helps medical care.

Tiny patients

Advances in neonatal intensive care have made Japan one of the safest places in the world for very premature babies, but heart procedures on infants of a few hundred grams remain extremely difficult, because their blood vessels are so small and fragile.

SOCIETY

Children Hit by Their Own Bicycle Handlebars Can Suffer Hidden Internal Injuries, Consumer Centre Warns After 39 Cases

Eight children suffered damage to internal organs; doctors say any child who falls on the handlebar should be checked even if the pain seems mild

By the Society Desk

The National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan has warned that children who fall off bicycles can suffer serious internal injuries by striking their abdomen on the end of the handlebar, injuries that may not seem serious at first.

The cases

From April 2021 to July 2026, the centre received 39 reports of children aged 15 or under injured by bicycle handlebars or similar, through a network of medical institutions it runs with the Consumer Affairs Agency. Eight involved injuries to internal organs, one a fracture, and ten required hospital treatment.

The children most often hurt were 7, 9 and 11 years old, with six cases each.

Hidden danger

In one case, a child suffered liver damage that required emergency surgery. In September 2022, a 9-year-old boy fell while failing to take a bend. No one saw him fall, and he stayed at home, but his pain grew worse, and when he was taken to a doctor he was found to have an injured pancreas.

SOCIETY

Why children

Because children's ribs are not fully developed, a blow to the abdomen is more likely to injure the organs beneath, the centre said.

What to do

Doctors advise parents to have a child examined promptly if anything seems wrong after a fall, such as stomach pain that does not go away.

Safer bikes

Parents can also check that handlebar grips are intact, since a worn or missing grip leaves the hard end of the bar exposed.

SOCIETY

Police Agency Panel Begins Studying GPS Tags and Mandatory Treatment for Stalkers, With a Murdered Woman's Family Among Its Members

The government is considering an early revision of the anti-stalking law; officials call the situation 'severe'
By the Society Desk

The National Police Agency held the first meeting on Monday of a panel of experts that will consider new measures against stalkers, including requiring them to wear satellite tracking devices and to receive treatment or counselling.

The issues

The panel will need to decide who should be made to wear tracking devices, how the system would work in detail, and what legislation would be needed to run it properly. The government is considering an early revision of the Anti-Stalking Law.

The members

The members include psychiatrists and legal scholars, as well as relatives of a woman who was killed by her former boyfriend in Zushi, Kanagawa Prefecture.

'Severe'

Opening the meeting, the director-general of the agency's community safety bureau said the stalking situation was "severe" and asked the members to discuss it from many perspectives.

Why tracking

Restraining orders under the current law tell stalkers to stay away, but police often learn that an order has been broken only when the offender has already approached the victim. Tracking devices, used in several other countries for stalking and domestic violence cases, could alert police or victims when an offender comes near.

The Zushi case

In 2012, a woman in Zushi was stabbed to death by a former boyfriend who had obtained her new address, a case that exposed gaps in the protection of victims and led to revisions of the law.

The balance

Any system will have to weigh the protection of victims against the rights of people who have not necessarily been convicted of a crime, and the cost of monitoring.

SOCIETY

Transport Ministry Panel Starts Work on Stopping Bid-Rigging in Condominium Repairs After the Fair Trade Watchdog Found 171 Rigged Jobs

Two design consultancies and 40 contractors colluded on large-scale repairs in Tokyo and six Kanto prefectures; measures are due by the end of March
By the Society Desk

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism held the first meeting on Monday of a panel of experts on preventing bid-rigging in large-scale repairs of condominium buildings, and confirmed that it would compile measures by the end of the fiscal year in March.

The case

In September the Japan Fair Trade Commission found that two design consultancies and 40 construction contractors had colluded on 171 large-scale repair projects in Tokyo and six Kanto prefectures, in violation of the Antimonopoly Act's ban on unreasonable restraint of trade.

The victims

Large-scale repairs, which typically include repainting exterior walls and replacing waterproofing,

are carried out every 12 to 15 years or so and paid for from the reserve funds that condominium owners build up through monthly contributions. Rigged bids mean owners pay more than they should.

The focus

The panel will consider how owners' management associations, which commission the work, can choose suitable contractors.

'Must not happen'

Shunichi Sasaki, director-general of the ministry's housing bureau, opened the meeting by saying that collusion that betrayed the trust of management associations and harmed their interests must not happen, and stressed the need for action.

The consultants' role

Many associations rely on design consultants to draw up specifications and select contractors, because their members, ordinary residents, lack the expertise. In the cases found by the commission, consultants who were meant to act for the owners were part of the collusion.

Millions of homes

Condominiums house millions of people in Japan's cities, and many buildings are ageing, so the market for large-scale repairs is growing.

SOCIETY

Antarctic Expedition's Advance Team Leaves Haneda With a Mission to Drill for Ice More Than a Million Years Old

The 15 members fly via South Africa to Syowa Station; an inland party will drive about 1,000 kilometres by snow vehicle to the Dome Fuji area
By the Science Desk

The 15-member advance team of Japan's 68th Antarctic Research Expedition left Haneda Airport on Monday for Syowa Station, flying by way of South Africa.

The team includes researchers, engineers and cooks. Family members and members of the main expedition saw them off, wishing them a safe return and promising to meet again at Syowa.

The oldest ice

Among them is Shun Tsutaki, 45, who will take part in an attempt to retrieve ice more than a million years old. "I want to stay alert and act carefully so that I can bring back good results," he said.

After arriving at Syowa Station in late October, an inland party will travel about 1,000 kilometres by snow vehicle to the Dome Fuji Station 2 area, a journey of about three weeks. Other members will remain at Syowa to run the base. Members of the wintering party stay at the station for more than a year.

Dome Fuji, about 3,800 metres above sea level on the ice sheet, has an average annual temperature of about minus 54C.

Why old ice matters

Ice cores drilled from deep in the Antarctic ice sheet preserve tiny bubbles of ancient air, allowing scientists to measure the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and the temperature of the past. A European project, Beyond EPICA, announced in January 2025 that it had reached ice at least 1.2 million years old, about 2,800 metres down at a site called Little Dome C, and Japan aims to obtain its own record from the same era.

Ice more than a million years old could shed light on a change in the rhythm of the ice ages about a million years ago, when glacial cycles lengthened from about 41,000 years to about 100,000 years for reasons scientists still debate.

A long tradition

Japan has run Antarctic research expeditions since 1956, and Syowa Station, on East Ongul Island about 14,000 kilometres from Japan, opened in 1957. Japanese teams previously drilled deep ice cores at Dome Fuji, recovering ice about 720,000 years old.

The main party

The main body of the expedition is due to travel south later in the year aboard the icebreaker Shirase.

Japan's expeditions have relied on four icebreakers since 1956: the Soya, the Fuji, the first Shirase and the current Shirase, in service since 2009.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

PM's Koizumi slip, Page 5.

SOCIETY

Tokachidake, Hokkaido-Komagatake, Azumayama and Aso Chosen for Closer Study by the Government's Volcano Committee

Tokachidake had three small eruptions in July and August; the committee will gather more data before its next meeting and assess how large an eruption could be
By the Science Desk

The government's Volcano Research Committee selected four volcanoes on Monday for priority assessment: Tokachidake and Hokkaido-Komagatake in Hokkaido, Azumayama on the border of Yamagata and Fukushima prefectures, and Aso in Kumamoto Prefecture.

The committee, which compiles assessments of the current state of Japan's 111 active volcanoes, made the selection at a regular meeting in Tokyo.

Why these four

Volcanoes qualify for priority assessment if they have erupted in the past year or show activity whose trend needs examination. Tokachidake had three small eruptions in July and August, and the committee said the other three also showed changes in activity.

What happens next

The committee will collect more data on the four volcanoes before its next meeting, evaluate the possible scale of eruptions and examine how their activity is likely to develop.

Last year the targets were Meakandake in Hokkaido and four other volcanoes.

The committee

The committee was created in 2024 under a revised law on volcanic disaster preparedness, to strengthen the scientific assessment of volcanoes in a country that has about 7 per cent of the world's active volcanoes.

Tourists and volcanoes

Several of the four are popular with tourists and hikers. Aso's crater is one of Kyushu's best-known sights, and Azumayama and Tokachidake are on busy hiking routes, so changes in activity can quickly affect local economies.

SOCIETY

Chiba Will Pay Its Own Support to Households Whose Homes Were Half Destroyed by August's Rain and Typhoon No. 25

The national system covers only more serious damage; Governor Kumagai pledges to back recovery 'with all our might'
By the Society Desk

Chiba Prefecture will pay support money to households whose homes were half destroyed by heavy rain in August and Typhoon No. 25 in September, Governor Toshihito Kumagai announced on Monday.

The payments will help cover repairs and related costs, and the money will be included in a supplementary budget in December.

The gap

Under the Act on Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of Disaster Victims, damaged homes are classed by the share of damage, and the national support payments apply only to homes judged medium-scale half destroyed or worse. The prefecture aims to help households that fall outside that framework to rebuild their lives.

A visit to Shisui

The same day, Mr Kumagai visited residential areas in the town of Shisui, where floodwater lingered for a long time after the rain.

Wider help

He also announced a supplementary budget that will support tourism businesses and farmers hit by the disasters. "We will back the rebuilding of residents' lives and the recovery of the region with all our might," he said.

The details

The amount of the payments and the conditions for receiving them were not immediately announced.

The August rain

The downpours in August stranded many vehicles in flooded roads in the prefecture and left homes in low-lying areas under water.

SOCIETY

Woman Found Dead in a Hotel Room Near Mount Fuji; a Taiwanese Woman Is Arrested for Carrying a Blade

Police in Yamanashi are investigating whether the arrest is linked to the death of the guest, who was in her 30s
By the Society Desk

A woman in her 30s was found dead in a room at a hotel in Fujikawaguchiko, Yamanashi Prefecture, on Monday morning, and police arrested a 27-year-old Taiwanese woman on suspicion of possessing a blade at the hotel.

The discovery

At about 8:05 a.m., a hotel employee called the emergency number to report that a woman was unresponsive. Police said the woman, a guest at the hotel, was lying on a bed in her room with blood on her body, and was confirmed dead at the scene.

The arrest

Yamanashi Prefectural Police arrested the Taiwanese woman, whose occupation is unknown, on suspicion of violating the Firearms and Swords Control Law by carrying a blade at the hotel. Police are investigating whether she was involved in the death.

The area

The hotel is about 2 kilometres north of Kawaguchiko Station on the Fuji Kyuko line, in an area of hotels and inns near the Fuji-Q Highland amusement park, popular with tourists visiting Mount Fuji.

Unanswered

Police did not disclose the identity of the dead woman, the cause of death or any motive.

The law

The Firearms and Swords Control Law prohibits carrying a knife with a blade longer than 6 centimetres without a legitimate reason.

SOCIETY

After-School Care Worker Arrested in Tsu Over a Rocket Firework That Burned a Boy's Neck at a Summer Event

The boy was hospitalised for four days; the 56-year-old suspect denies the charge and says he does not know if he caused the burn
By the Society Desk

Police in Mie Prefecture arrested a 56-year-old after-school care worker in Tsu on Monday on suspicion of injuring a boy who attended the program by hitting him with a rocket firework.

The incident

According to the Tsu Minami police station, at about 8:50 p.m. on July 18, at an event run by the after-school program in the grounds of an elementary school in the city, the man allegedly hit the back of the boy's neck with a rocket firework, burning him.

About 25 children and several adults were at the event.

The injury

The boy was hospitalised for four days, and the burns were expected to take two to three months to heal.

The complaint

The boy's guardian consulted police on July 21.

The denial

The man denies the charge, saying he does not know whether he was the one who caused the burns. Police are investigating the circumstances.

Summer fireworks

Hand-held fireworks are a popular part of summer in Japan, and local authorities and manufacturers warn that rockets and other projectile fireworks should never be pointed at people.

SOCIETY

Nagoya Loses a Cash Card It Was Keeping for a Person Who Died Without Relatives, Suspects It May Have Been Taken

The card disappeared from a ward office safe; no money has been withdrawn, and the city has reported the loss to police
By the Society Desk

The city of Nagoya said on Monday that it had lost a cash card it was holding for a person who had died with no one to claim the body or belongings, and that the card may have been taken.

SOCIETY

The custody

When no relatives come forward, the city takes custody of the body and belongings and arranges the funeral, paying the costs from the deceased person's assets.

In November 2024 the city received a body from the Aichi Prefectural Police and kept three passbooks and three cash cards in a safe at the Kita Ward Office.

The discovery

When staff checked the items on October 15, one cash card was missing. The city filed a lost property report with the police on Monday.

No loss

No suspicious withdrawals have been made from the account, and no financial damage has occurred, the city said. The card may have been removed during the process of using the assets to pay for the funeral.

A growing task

As the number of elderly people living and dying alone rises, Japanese municipalities are handling more cases in which no relative claims the body, and the handling of the deceased's money and property has become a growing administrative burden.

SOCIETY

Aichi's Lawyers Enlist Goku: Bar Association Posters Use 'Dragon Ball' to Tell People Where to Turn When They Are in Trouble

Akira Toriyama, the manga's late creator, was from Aichi; the posters will hang at legal consultation offices and events

By the Society Desk

The Aichi Bar Association has produced posters featuring characters from the manga "Dragon Ball," including its hero Son Goku, to make people aware of what lawyers do and to encourage them to seek legal help, the association announced on Monday.

Two slogans

The posters come in two versions, each showing the main characters with a slogan. One reads, "The power of lawyers, for you," and the other, "Consult a lawyer."

The message

The association's message is that the skills lawyers develop are used to protect important people and peaceful everyday life, which it says connects the themes of the manga with the legal profession. It also asks people to turn to lawyers when they are in trouble.

Why Dragon Ball

Besides the overlap in themes, the association said it chose the series because it has stayed popular across generations.

The creator

Akira Toriyama, who created "Dragon Ball," was from Aichi Prefecture and died in 2024. The manga, first serialised in 1984, became one of the best-selling series in history and spawned animated series and films watched around the world.

Where to see them

The posters will be displayed at legal consultation centres and at events.

SOCIETY

Around the Nation

By the Society Desk

GUNMA: The 30-year-old man rearrested on suspicion of murdering his former mother-in-law in Ota last month is suspected of stealing shoes while fleeing; he left her home barefoot and was found wearing shoes that did not fit, investigative sources said. A bicycle he rode was found in Takasaki with clothing in its basket.

FUKUOKA: A Japan Air Commuter flight to Kagoshima was cancelled on Monday after a small animal was found in the cabin while the ATR 42 prepared to depart Fukuoka Airport, affecting about 40 passengers.

KYOTO: The Jidai Matsuri, the Festival of the Ages, parades through the city on Thursday.

TOKYO: The Empress Emerita turns 92 on Tuesday.

TOTTORI: Princess Aiko visited the Tottori Sand Dunes for the first time.

SHIZUOKA: A 356-gram baby girl's successful heart catheter treatment was announced.

AOMORI: The National Sports Festival continued in Aomori, with Ko Ochiai of Shiga winning the men's

800 metres.

NIIGATA: The prefecture deferred the first loan repayment by Toki Air to March.

CHIBA: The prefecture will pay support to households whose homes were half destroyed in this year's disasters.

GUNMA: The Yugama crater lake on Kusatsu-Shirane was closed again after a week of traffic jams.

SPORTS

Japan Wins Eight Golds on the Second Day of the Asian Para Games, Including a Sweep of the 200 Metres, as the Emperor Watches Table Tennis

Kengo Oshima leads a Japanese one-two-three in the T64 sprint; Paralympic medallists Takayuki Suzuki and Kenya Karasawa add titles

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Japan won eight gold medals on the second day of the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games on Monday, led by a clean sweep of the men's 200 metres for athletes with lower-limb prostheses.

Kengo Oshima of the Nagoya Gakuin University athletics club won the T64 race, with Shunsuke Itani of SMBC Nikko Securities second and Yuma Tamaki of Asics third.

In the pool

Takayuki Suzuki of Goldwin, the silver medallist in the event at the Paris Paralympics, won the men's 50 metres freestyle in the S4 class for swimmers with physical impairments. Ayano Tsujiuchi of Mitsubishi Corporation won the women's 100 metres freestyle in the S13 class for the visually impaired, and Aira Kinoshita won the 200 metres freestyle for swimmers with intellectual impairments.

On the mat and the track

Shizuka Hangai of Toyota Loops, the silver medallist at 48 kilograms in Paris, won the women's 52-kilogram class for visually impaired judoka. Kenya Karasawa of Subaru, also a Paris silver medallist, won the men's 5,000 metres for the visually impaired, and Tomomi Usagizawa of Fujitsu won the women's long jump for athletes with prosthetic legs.

On the boards

In cycling, Shota Kawamoto of Daiwa Sangyo won the men's 3,000 metres individual pursuit for riders with physical impairments.

The Emperor courtside

The Emperor watched table tennis at Sky Hall Toyota in Toyota City on Monday morning, applauding as athletes from each country entered the hall and following the matches with explanations from staff. Players from Japan, South Korea and North Korea were competing as he watched.

"The players' rackets have all been adapted in different ways, haven't they," he remarked. The Emperor, who arrived in Aichi on Sunday, declared the Games open at the ceremony that evening.

The Games

The fifth Asian Para Games run until Saturday at venues across Aichi Prefecture, following the Asian Games held in the prefecture earlier this autumn.

SPORTS

Japanese Record Holder Ko Ochiai Wins the 800 Metres at the National Sports Festival, and Ayano Shiomi Sets a Meet Record

The Komazawa University student, running for Shiga, clocks 1 minute 45.21 seconds on the festival's tenth day in Aomori

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Ko Ochiai, the Japanese record holder in the 800 metres, won the men's senior race at the National Sports Festival in Aomori on Monday, clocking 1 minute 45.21 seconds at the athletics stadium in Aomori City.

Running for Shiga Prefecture, the Komazawa University student, who won the Asian Games title over the distance in Aichi earlier this autumn, won the final after qualifying on Sunday.

Shiomi's record

In the women's senior 800 metres, Ayano Shiomi of Iwatani Corporation, representing Kyoto and a member of Japan's Asian Games team, won in 2 minutes 1.50 seconds, a record for the meet.

The young runners

In the girls' race for high school students, Hitomi Imaeda of Chukyo University Chukyo High School, representing Aichi and the national high school champion, won in 2:08.30. A runner from Sapporo Nihon University High School, representing Hokkaido, won the boys' race in 1:49.65.

The festival

The National Sports Festival, known until 2023 as the National Athletic Meet, rotates among the prefectures each year. Tokyo clinched the overall men's and women's titles on Sunday.

A rising star

Ochiai first drew national attention as a high school student in Shiga, when he broke the Japanese record, and has since become the country's leading middle-distance runner. No Japanese man has yet reached an Olympic final over the distance.

Next

The festival closes this week, and the National Sports Festival for People with Disabilities follows in the same prefecture.

SPORTS

Hontama Goes Out in the First Round of the Japan Open in Osaka, as Kobori and Shimizu Win Their Doubles Opener

Switzerland's Viktorija Golubic beats the Japanese 6-3, 6-1 at Utsubo; Hontama and Uchijima also fall in doubles

By the Sports Desk

Mayu Hontama lost in the first round of the Kinoshita Group Japan Open women's tennis tournament, which began on Monday at the Utsubo Tennis Centre in Osaka, beaten 6-3, 6-1 by Viktorija Golubic of Switzerland.

Doubles

In the doubles, Momoko Kobori and Ayano Shimizu beat Makoto Ninomiya of Japan and Lyudmyla Kichenok of Ukraine in the first round.

Hontama and Moeka Uchijima lost their first-round doubles match to a pair from Taiwan.

The tournament

The Japan Open, held in Osaka, is one of the leading women's events in Asia's autumn swing, and gives Japanese players a rare chance to compete on home courts against international opposition.

Golubic

Golubic, an experienced Swiss player known for her single-handed backhand, reached the quarter-finals at Wimbledon in 2021.

Next for Japan

The tournament runs through the week.

SPORTS

Men's Volleyball Coach Tillie 'Very Proud' of an Early Ticket to Los Angeles, but Says Japan Must Learn How to Beat the Best

The men won the Asian Championship to qualify for 2028; the women, third in Asia, are still waiting for their Olympic place

By the Sports Desk

The coaches of Japan's men's and women's volleyball teams looked back on the year at an online news conference held by the Japan Volleyball Association after a board meeting on Monday.

The men

The men won the Asian Championship in September, securing a place at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028.

"We can be very proud of that," said Laurent Tillie, the men's coach. "Qualifying for the Olympics early means we can prepare more calmly."

In the Nations League, the men won 13 straight matches from the preliminary round through the quarter-finals, but lost the semi-final and the match for third place to finish without a medal.

"We need to learn how to beat the strongest teams," Tillie said of the two years ahead of the Olympics.

Tillie, a Frenchman who coached France to the Olympic title at the Tokyo Games, was named in November 2024 to succeed his compatriot Philippe Blain after the Paris Olympics.

The women

The women, under Ferhat Akbas, finished third at the Asian Championship and have yet to secure their place at the Olympics.

"We have to improve mental control at the key moments," Akbas said.

At last year's world championship in Thailand, the women reached the semi-finals, losing to Turkey, and then lost the bronze medal match to Brazil in five sets after winning the first two.

The road to LA

Japan's men, who reached the quarter-finals at the Paris Olympics in 2024, have become one of the world's leading teams and one of the most popular sports teams in Japan, filling arenas and drawing large television audiences.

SPORTS

Kansai University's Championship Left-Hander Yonezawa Admits Nerves Before Thursday's Draft: 'My Heart Is Pounding'

The MVP of June's national university championship hopes to follow Chunichi's Yumeto Kanamaru as a first-round pick

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Yonezawa, the Kansai University left-hander expected to be chosen high in Thursday's professional baseball draft, spoke to reporters on Monday at the university in Suita, Osaka Prefecture, about the approaching day that will decide where his career begins.

"I think I'll definitely be nervous," he said. "I'm very excited too, and of course my heart is pounding."

A breakout year

The pitcher broke through in his final year, leading Kansai University to victory in the All-Japan University Baseball Championship in June, where he was named most valuable player.

His strengths are a fastball that reaches the high 140s in kilometres an hour, a range of breaking and off-speed pitches, and composure under pressure.

A model

Yumeto Kanamaru, a Kansai University pitcher two years ahead of him, was a first-round pick of the Chunichi Dragons, and Yonezawa hopes to be chosen in the first round too.

In the 2024 draft, four clubs named Kanamaru as their first choice, and Chunichi won the lottery for the right to negotiate with him.

The goal

He said he wants to become a mainstay of his team's starting rotation from his first year and to be a left-hander who represents Japan.

The draft

Each of the 12 clubs names its first-round choice at the same time, and lotteries decide when more than one club picks the same player.

Clubs that lose a lottery name another player, and the process is repeated until every club has its first-round pick. From the second round, the clubs take turns in an order based on this season's standings.

University and high school players must formally declare that they want to turn professional before they can be drafted.

SPORTS

Sports in Brief

By the Sports Desk

BASEBALL: Hanshin will post Teruaki Sato to the major leagues; NPB lists 104 players eligible for free agency.

DRAFT: The professional baseball draft is on Thursday.

JAPAN SERIES: SoftBank v DeNA opens on Saturday at Yokohama Stadium.

PARA SPORTS: Japan won eight gold medals on the second day of the Asian Para Games.

ATHLETICS: Ko Ochiai won the 800 metres at the National Sports Festival.

TENNIS: Shingo Kunieda is a candidate for the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

VOLLEYBALL: The men's national team has qualified for the 2028 Olympics.

SOCCER: Zico backed Go Oiwa, who takes over the national team in March.

BASKETBALL: The Hiroshima Dragonflies are 8-0 in the B.League Premier.

SHOGI: Tomoka Nishiyama will hold a news conference on Monday, October 26, on whether to become the first woman professional shogi player.

SPORTS



Hanshin's Teruaki Sato, right, with Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts, in a file photo taken at the Tokyo Dome in March 2025, when the Tigers played the Dodgers in an exhibition game. Hanshin will post the Triple Crown winner to the major leagues this off-season. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

Triple Crown Winner Teruaki Sato Heads for the Major Leagues as Hanshin Agree to Post Him, and American Media Call Him the Market's Most Attractive Hitter

The 27-year-old hit .306 with 39 home runs and 106 runs batted in to become the ninth Triple Crown winner in Japanese baseball and the first Tiger since Randy Bass; several clubs are expected to bid

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Teruaki Sato, the Hanshin Tigers slugger who won the Central League's Triple Crown this season, will try to move to Major League Baseball this off-season after the club agreed to post him, Hanshin announced on Monday.

The 27-year-old infielder had long wanted to play in the majors. The club told him on Sunday that it would respect his wish. "I am grateful to the club for respecting my wishes," Sato said in a statement issued through the Tigers.

A season for the record books

Sato led the Central League this season with a batting average of .306, 39 home runs and 106 runs batted in, becoming the ninth player in the history of Japanese professional baseball to win the Triple Crown. His on-base plus slugging percentage was .991.

He is only the second Hanshin player to achieve the feat, and the first in 40 years, since Randy Bass won the second of his two Triple Crowns in 1986.

He was the central figure as the Tigers won the Central League pennant for the second year running, the first time the club had done so, although they were knocked out of the Climax Series by DeNA.

Last year's MVP

In 2025 Sato hit 40 home runs, won the home run and runs batted in titles and was named the Central League's Most Valuable Player. He has stolen 10 or more bases in a season twice and can play the outfield as well as third base, adding to his appeal.

In his six seasons with the Tigers, the club has won three league titles, including the Japan Series championship in 2023, and a senior club official said Sato had contributed to all of them, singling out his performance this year. The decision had been made "comprehensively," the official said.

The Murakami effect

Hanshin pointed to the success this season of Japanese position players who moved to the majors through the posting system, Munetaka Murakami of the Chicago White Sox and Kazuma Okamoto of the Toronto Blue Jays, as having raised the reputation of Japanese hitters.

What America is saying

American media reacted quickly. MLB.com, the league's official website, said that given his record and his age, Sato would be one of the most attractive hitters on the market this off-season, and noted that he could move to first base, as Murakami did with the White Sox.

The Athletic said the performances of Murakami and Okamoto this year would further raise teams' interest, and the New York Post described him as one of Japan's baseball stars, expected to be one of the winter's top attractions.

The road ahead

Once Sato is formally posted, all 30 major league clubs will have 45 days to negotiate with him. Several are expected to compete for his signature. Hanshin will receive a release fee based on the value of the contract he signs.

Because he is older than 25, he is not subject to the limits on signing bonuses that applied to younger players such as Roki Sasaki, and can sign a contract of any size. If no agreement is reached within the 45 days, he returns to the Tigers for 2027.

Fans' farewell

For Hanshin's fervent supporters, the news brings pride and sadness in equal measure. Sato was the Tigers' first-round draft pick out of Kindai University in Osaka in 2020 and has become one of the most popular players in Japan.

INTERNATIONAL: Played for Japan at the World Baseball Classic in March.

NEXT: A 45-day negotiating window with all 30 major league clubs once he is posted.

SPORTS

How the Posting System Works: A 45-Day Window, a Fee for the Japanese Club, and No Second Chance Until Next Winter

The system lets Japanese teams release players who have not yet earned free agency; the fee depends on the size of the major league contract

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The posting system is the route by which a Japanese professional player who has not yet earned the right to become an international free agent can move to Major League Baseball, with his club's permission.

Why it exists

A Japanese player needs nine full seasons of service to become an overseas free agent. Players who want to move earlier must persuade their clubs to post

them, and in return the clubs receive compensation.

The window

Once the Japanese club posts a player, Major League Baseball notifies its 30 clubs, and the player is free to negotiate with any of them for 45 days. If he signs, he goes. If he does not, he returns to his Japanese club and cannot be posted again until the following off-season.

The fee

The Japanese club receives a release fee calculated as a percentage of the total value of the major league contract, on a sliding scale that gives the club a larger share of smaller contracts. The bigger the contract, the bigger the fee.

Age matters

Players under 25, or with fewer than six years of professional experience, are treated as international amateurs under Major League Baseball's rules and can sign only minor league contracts with limited bonuses. Roki Sasaki moved to the Los Angeles Dodgers on such terms in 2025.

Sato, at 27 and with six seasons behind him, faces no such limit.

Famous moves

Ichiro Suzuki, Daisuke Matsuzaka, Yu Darvish, Masahiro Tanaka, Shohei Ohtani and Yoshinobu Yamamoto all went to the majors through the posting system, as did Murakami and Okamoto before this season.

The clubs' calculation

Japanese clubs weigh the loss of a star against the fee and against the risk that a frustrated player will leave anyway as a free agent later, with no compensation.

SPORTS

Scoreboard

By the Sports Desk

BASEBALL: Big Six, week 6, game 3: Meiji 5, Keio 0 (Meiji take the series 2-1). Meiji and Keio lead on 3 points each.

ASIAN PARA GAMES, DAY 2 GOLDS FOR JAPAN: Shizuka Hangai (judo, women's 52 kg, visually impaired); Takayuki Suzuki (swimming, 50 m freestyle S4); Ayano Tsujiuchi (100 m freestyle S13); Aira Kinoshita (200 m freestyle, intellectual impairment); Kengo Oshima (athletics, men's 200 m T64); Kenya Karasawa (5,000 m T11); Tomomi Usagizawa (women's long jump); Shota Kawamoto (cycling, 3,000 m individual pursuit).

NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL (AOMORI): Men's 800 m: Ko Ochiai (Shiga) 1:45.21. Women's 800 m: Ayano Shiomi (Kyoto) 2:01.50, a meet record.

TENNIS: Japan Open (Osaka), women's singles first round: Viktorija Golubic (Switzerland) beat Mayu Hontama 6-3, 6-1.

BASKETBALL: B.League Premier: Hiroshima 77, San-en 75 (Hiroshima 8-0); Alvark Tokyo 90, Akita 74 (Tokyo 8-1).

SOCCER: Premier League: Tottenham 3, Coventry 1 (Tatsuhiko Sakamoto started). Serie A: Monza 4, Cagliari 0 (Yukinari Sugawara came on in the second half).

NPB: 104 players eligible for free agency, including 21 newly qualified for domestic free agency.

MLB: American League Championship Series, Game 6, Guardians at Rays, Monday night U.S. time (Rays lead 3-2).

COMING UP: Professional baseball draft, Thursday. Japan Series, Game 1, Saturday at Yokohama Stadium.

POSTING: Hanshin will post Triple Crown winner Teruaki Sato to the major leagues this off-season.

SPORTS

Meiji Shut Out Keio 5-0 to Take the Series and Pull Level at the Top of the Big Six, Denying the Spring Champions the Title

Keio needed one win to clinch; a Meiji pitcher making his first league start allows one hit in seven innings, and Rikkyo can still win

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Meiji University beat Keio University 5-0 at Jingu Stadium on Monday to win their week-six series two games to one, pulling level with Keio at the top of the Tokyo Big Six University Baseball League and keeping the autumn title race open.

Keio needed only a win to clinch the championship outright, but its batters could do little against a Meiji pitcher making his first start in the league, who allowed one hit over seven innings.

The table

Meiji and Keio now have 3 points each, with identical records of seven wins and three losses. A team earns a point for winning a series.

Each series goes to the first team to win two games, and drawn games are replayed.

What remains

Rikkyo, with 2 points, can still win the title. Meiji have a series against Rikkyo still to play, and Keio, chasing a spring and autumn double, face Waseda in the traditional final series of the season, the Soukeisen. The rivalry dates back to the first game between the two universities in 1903.

The league

The Big Six, founded in 1925, is the oldest university baseball league in Japan, with Waseda, Keio, Meiji, Hosei, Rikkyo and the University of Tokyo playing at Jingu Stadium in the heart of Tokyo every spring and autumn. Its alumni include Shigeo Nagashima and many of Japan's professional stars.

The University of Tokyo, the only national university in the league, has never won the title. Jingu Stadium, which opened in 1926, is also the home of the Tokyo Yakult Swallows.

Draft day

Several Big Six players are expected to be chosen in the professional draft on Thursday.

CULTURE

Will Nishiyama Become the First Woman Professional Shogi Player? The Hakurei Champion Will Announce Her Decision Next Monday

Her fifth Hakurei title this month gave her the right to professional status under a rule adopted last year; she has kept her intentions to herself

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Tomoka Nishiyama, the holder of the women's Hakurei title, will hold a news conference on October 26 to explain whether she will exercise her right to become a professional shogi player, the Japan Shogi Association announced on Monday.

If she accepts, the 31-year-old would become the first woman ever to hold the status of kishi, or professional shogi player, in the game's history.

How she qualified

Under a rule adopted by a majority vote at the association's general meeting in 2025, a woman who wins the Hakurei title five times gains the qualification to become a professional.

On October 10, Nishiyama won the fifth game of the sixth Hakurei title match, a best-of-seven contest, defending her title four games to one and taking the Hakurei for the fifth time. She has since held off on announcing her decision.

Two worlds

Shogi has two separate professional systems. Women can compete as joryu kishi, women professionals, in their own tournaments, which is the system in which Nishiyama has won her titles. The status of kishi, which carries the right to play in the main professional tournaments, has until now been reached only through the association's training system, the Shoreikai, or by passing an entrance examination. No woman had reached it by either route.

Close before

Nishiyama came closer than any other woman through the traditional routes. She reached the third dan, the final stage of the Shoreikai, before leaving it, and later sat the entrance examination without passing.

A choice

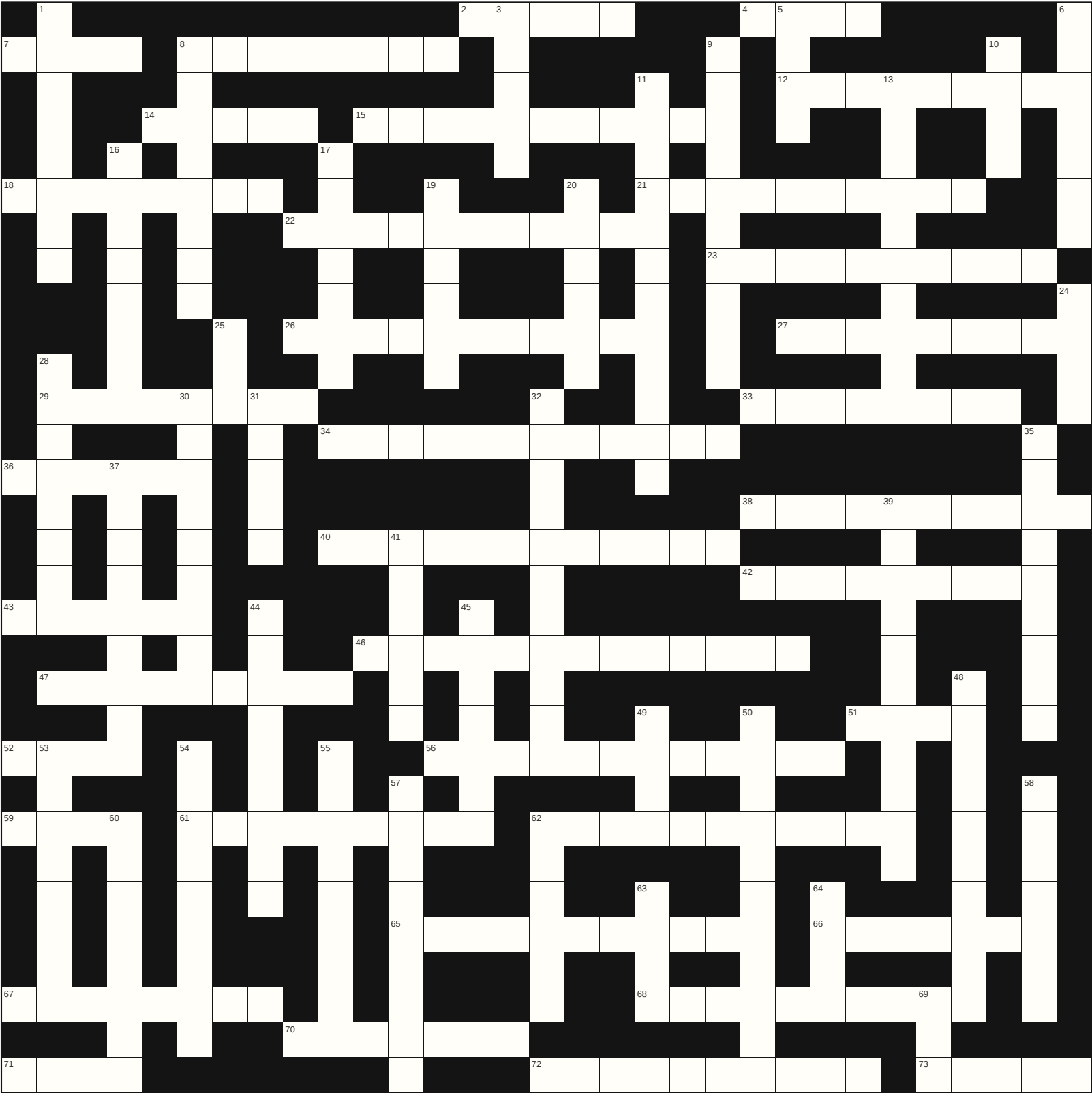
Becoming a kishi would mean competing in the main professional tournaments, a far tougher field than the women's circuit, against players who have come through the Shoreikai.

The wider game

Shogi's popularity has soared in recent years, driven by the record-breaking career of Sota Fujii, and a woman joining the professional ranks would be one of the biggest stories in the game's modern history.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 75 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional.

ACROSS

2. Rally where the Pajero made its name (5)
4. Triple Crown winner to be posted (4)
7. Randy ____, the last Tiger to win a Triple Crown (4)
8. Slang for resellers (8)
12. Resort of the first Villa Prince (9)
14. Women's volleyball coach (5)
15. Kind of tax being cut on food (11)
18. Chunichi pitcher from Kansai University (8)
21. Uranium process at the heart of the dispute (10)
22. Hiroshima basketball team, unbeaten in eight (11)
23. What power must not be used to do, says Tochigi's governor (10)
26. Security firm that tracked a Korean bank attacker (11)
27. Island where new hotels are capped at 100 beds (9)
29. Author of De Re Metallica (8)
33. Club Sakamoto started for (8)
34. Founder of Canonical (12)
36. Award Michael J. Fox received in September (6)
38. What new cars must detect from 2031 (10)
40. Kept at 47 polling stations to scare bears (12)
42. Training system for shogi professionals (9)
43. Seaside imperial villa (6)
46. Food and beverage ____, the new home for hospital catering (13)
47. Retailer with 50 damaged stores (9)
51. Son ____, hero on lawyers' posters (4)
52. Gulf patrolled against pirates (4)
56. NASA rover that has collected Martian samples (12)
59. Japan manager from March (4)
61. Town at the new runway site (9)
62. Hokkaido volcano with three small eruptions (11)
65. Broadcast method the North may resume (11)
66. Country hosting the UN biodiversity talks (7)
67. Hospital ____, where foreign workers will return (8)
68. Hospital patients who depend on the kitchens (10)
70. Strait along which Malaysia lies (7)
71. Education minister told to straighten up (4)
72. Subject of the stolen Dali book (10)
73. Architect of the Sydney Opera House (5)

DOWN

1. Sugawara's club (8)
3. Partnership giving Australia nuclear submarines (5)
5. Princess who saw the Tottori dunes (4)
6. Books the Uzbek aid project was meant to produce (7)
8. Food that will be taxed at 1 per cent (8)
9. Party held in breach of lower house rules (10)
10. Agency that declared the launch a success (4)
11. Ships Japan sent to the Gulf in 1991 (12)
13. Where braille equipment never made books (10)
16. What the slip drew in the chamber (8)
17. App that barred new Pokemon card listings (7)
19. Hiroshima pitcher eligible for free agency (6)
20. Men's volleyball coach (6)
24. Mac OS X version previewed in 2010 (4)
25. Kumamoto volcano chosen for closer study (3)
28. Hiroshima catcher eligible for free agency (8)
30. AI cloud firm whose debts rattled markets (9)
31. Northern French city with a curfew for minors (5)
32. Businesses still frozen out (11)
35. Ishin leader and Osaka governor (9)
37. Business lobby marking 80 years (9)
39. Machine in today's cartoon (11)
41. Saudi capital whose airport was targeted (6)
44. Reserves drawn down in the spring (9)
45. Wheelchair tennis great nominated for the Hall of Fame (7)
48. Nuclear-powered vessels debated in the Diet (10)
49. BOJ governor who signalled more rate rises (4)
50. What the coalition marks on Wednesday (11)
53. Base for Japan's anti-piracy mission (8)
54. One of these stays in the Middle East (9)
55. Long jump champion on day two (9)
57. Bicycle part that can injure a child (9)
58. Asteroid visited by the first Hayabusa (7)
60. Iranian minister who dared Trump to try his luck (8)
62. Builder that gave the University of Tokyo 1 billion yen (6)
63. Tottori district cut off by a 2023 typhoon (4)
64. Artist who designed a stolen book cover (4)
69. Mie capital where a care worker was arrested (3)

SPORTS

SoftBank Train for the Japan Series With 2024's Collapse Against DeNA in Mind: 'We Must Build on That Bitter Experience'

Manager Hiroki Kokubo plans to start Kondo and Yanagita in the field in Yokohama, where there is no designated hitter
By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

The Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks worked out at their home, Mizuho PayPay Dome, on Monday, preparing for a Japan Series against the Yokohama DeNA BayStars that opens on Saturday, a repeat of the 2024 series that the Hawks lost after leading.

SoftBank won the Pacific League for the third season in a row and are aiming for a second straight Japan Series title, having beaten Hanshin last year.

Lessons from 2024

Two years ago the Hawks won the first two games, then lost four straight to DeNA. "We had a really bitter experience," manager Hiroki Kokubo said. "I want to go in having taken that firmly to heart."

The opponent

DeNA finished third in the Central League this season but swept through the Climax Series without losing a game, beating Hanshin four straight in the final stage. Kokubo said DeNA's batting order looked as strong as it had two years ago.

No designated hitter

The first two games are at Yokohama Stadium, where Central League rules mean there is no designated hitter. Kokubo plans to put Kensuke Kondo and Yuki Yanagita, who often served as designated hitters this season, in the field for the opener.

Yanagita took batting practice at the dome on Monday.

The schedule

The series moves to Fukuoka for the middle games, with any games six and seven back in Yokohama.

A rivalry

The two clubs have met twice before in the Japan Series, in 2017, when SoftBank won, and in 2024, when DeNA took the title for the first time in 26 years.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Champi turns violent, Page 3.

Tax cut debate opens, Page 5.

PM's Koizumi slip, Page 5.

SPORTS

Sakakura, Tokoda and Morishita Head 104 Players Eligible for Free Agency, With Kenta Maeda and Mitsunari Takahashi on the List

Hiroshima could lose three key players; SoftBank's Ukyo Shuto is newly eligible but tied to a multi-year contract
By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Nippon Professional Baseball announced on Monday that 104 players are eligible for free agency this off-season, including 21 who have newly qualified for domestic free agency and 17 who have newly met the conditions for overseas free agency.

Hiroshima's worry

The Hiroshima Carp have the most to lose among the notable names, with catcher Shogo Sakakura and pitchers Hiroki Tokoda and Masato Morishita all on the list.

Others

Orix infielder Yuma Mune is eligible, as is Chiba Lotte pitcher Kazuya Ojima, who is newly eligible for domestic free agency. SoftBank outfielder Ukyo Shuto, who is under a multi-year contract, also newly qualifies for domestic free agency.

Kenta Maeda, the former major league pitcher who returned to Japan with Rakuten, is newly eligible for domestic free agency.

Takahashi again

Seibu's Mitsunari Takahashi, who tried and failed to move to the majors through the posting system last off-season, now qualifies as an overseas free agent, which would allow him to go without his club's permission.

The deadline

Players must notify their clubs if they intend to exercise their free agent rights within seven days, counting only weekdays, from the day after the Japan Series ends.

Why it matters

Free agency in Japan has traditionally produced fewer moves than in America, because players often value loyalty and clubs offer multi-year deals to keep them, but a star's decision to leave can reshape a team.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

France imposes curfews, Page 8.

Iran dares Trump, Page 8.

SPORTS

Shingo Kunieda Is Nominated for the International Tennis Hall of Fame After a Career of 28 Grand Slam Singles Titles

The wheelchair great, who completed a career Golden Slam and received the People's Honour Award, retired in 2023
By the Sports Desk

Shingo Kunieda, the most successful wheelchair tennis player of all time, was named on Monday as a candidate for induction into the International Tennis Hall of Fame next year, in the wheelchair category.

The record

Kunieda won 28 Grand Slam singles titles and completed a career Golden Slam, winning all four Grand Slam tournaments and the Paralympic gold medal. He won three Paralympic singles golds and one in doubles.

He also won 22 Grand Slam doubles titles, for a total of 50. Wimbledon, which added a wheelchair singles event only in 2016, was the last of the four to fall to him, in 2022.

Honours

He retired from competition in January 2023, at 38 and still ranked No 1 in the world, and that year became the first para-athlete to receive the People's Honour Award, Japan's highest honour for those who have given the public hope.

A pioneer

Kunieda helped turn wheelchair tennis into a professional sport followed around the world, and his rivalry with players from Europe raised the profile of the game at the Grand Slams, which now include wheelchair events as a standard part of their programs.

His famous words

He became known for his motto, written on his racket, "Ore wa saikyo da," roughly "I am the strongest," which he used to steel himself in tight matches.

The vote

The Hall of Fame, in Newport, Rhode Island, announces its inductees after a vote by an international panel and fans. Ceremonies are usually held in the summer.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

AI tool in cyberattacks, Page 13.

SPORTS

Zico Gives Go Oiwa His Blessing as Japan's Next Manager: 'He Talks to Everyone, Then Makes the Decisions a Coach Must Make'

Kashima's former technical director says he has no worries about his old colleague, who takes charge of the national team in March
By the Sports Desk

Zico, the Brazilian great who managed Japan's national team and is now an adviser to Kashima Antlers, gave a ringing endorsement on Monday to Go Oiwa, who will take charge of the national team in March 2027.

"His strength is that he talks with all kinds of people," Zico, 73, told reporters in Kashima, Ibaraki Prefecture. "After communicating, he can make the decisions a manager needs to make."

No worries

Zico said he was not worried about Oiwa taking on such heavy responsibility. Oiwa will lead the senior team while continuing to manage the under-21 side.

Oiwa, a former J.League defender, also coached Japan's under-23 side at the Paris Olympics in 2024, where it lost to Spain in the quarter-finals.

Building on Moriyasu

"It is important to keep developing what Mr Moriyasu has built up, so that Japan continues to be seen as a strong team," Zico said, referring to Hajime Moriyasu, who has led the national team since 2018.

Old colleagues

The two worked together at Kashima, where Oiwa was manager while Zico served as technical director from the summer of 2018 into 2019. Under Oiwa, Kashima won the AFC Champions League in 2018 and went on to reach the semi-finals of the Club World Cup that December.

Zico and Japan

Zico came to Japan in 1991 to play for Sumitomo Metal Industries, the company team that became Kashima Antlers, and scored a hat-trick in the club's first J.League match in 1993.

He managed Japan from 2002 to 2006, leading the team to the Asian Cup title in 2004 and to the 2006 World Cup.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Editorial: the rat and the steamroller, Page 24.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 16.

SPORTS

SPORTS

Sakamoto Makes His First Premier League Start of the Season as Coventry Lose at Tottenham; Sugawara's Cagliari Crushed at Monza

The winger plays until the 78th minute in a 3-1 defeat; Sugawara comes off the bench in a 4-0 loss in Serie A

By the Sports Desk

Tatsuhiko Sakamoto made his first Premier League start of the season for Coventry City on Monday, playing until the 78th minute of a 3-1 defeat away to Tottenham Hotspur in London.

It was his first start in the league this season for the club, which won promotion to the Premier League last season.

Tottenham scored in the 14th minute. Coventry drew level four minutes after half-time, but Tottenham went ahead again in the 58th minute and added a third in the 90th.

The home side had about two-thirds of the ball and 15 shots to Coventry's six. It was Tottenham's first league win of the season, at the seventh attempt, and it lifted them to 16th, level on six points with Coventry, who are 17th.

Serie A

In Italy, Yukinari Sugawara came on in the 67th minute for Cagliari, who were beaten 4-0 away at Monza.

Monza scored in the 39th and 47th minutes and got their third a minute before Sugawara went on, adding a fourth in the 79th. Cagliari, who had lost only once in their first six games, are seventh with 13 points and play Bologna at home on Saturday.

The weekend's Japanese

The two matches closed a weekend in which Takefusa Kubo scored his first goal of the season for Real Sociedad and Daizen Maeda scored his first Premier League goal.

Maeda's Ipswich Town are 10th in the Premier League with nine points from seven games.

The national team

Japan's players in Europe will be watched closely by the national team staff, with a change of manager due in March.

SPORTS

Hiroshima Dragonflies Edge San-en NeoPhoenix 77-75 to Stay Perfect After Eight Games of the New B.League Premier

The 2024 champions lead the new top flight; Alvark Tokyo beat Akita for their eighth win

By the Sports Desk

The Hiroshima Dragonflies beat the San-en NeoPhoenix 77-75 at the Hiroshima Prefectural General Gymnasium on Monday to win their first eight games of the season in the B.League Premier, the new top division of Japanese professional basketball.

San-en, who had won their first five games, fell to 5-1.

Elsewhere

Alvark Tokyo beat Akita Northern Happinets 90-74 for their eighth win against one defeat. Akita fell to 3-5.

Nine Premier games were played on Monday.

The new league

The B.League Premier began this season as the top tier of a reorganised professional league, with clubs required to meet strict standards for arenas, finances and attendance. Several new arenas have opened to host its games.

Places in the Premier are decided by clubs' ability to meet those business standards rather than by promotion and relegation on results, a break with the usual pattern in Japanese sport.

To hold a Premier licence, a club must meet standards that include annual sales of at least 1.2 billion yen, as well as requirements for attendance and arenas.

Hiroshima's run

The Dragonflies won the B.League championship in 2024, and are the only unbeaten team in the new competition.

SPORTS

Rays One Win From the World Series as the ALCS Returns to Tampa Bay for Game 6; the Brewers Wait

Tampa Bay lead the Guardians three games to two; Game 6 is on Monday night U.S. time, Tuesday morning in Japan

By the Sports Desk

The Tampa Bay Rays can clinch the American League pennant on Monday night, U.S. time, when they play the Cleveland Guardians at home in Game 6 of the American League Championship Series, holding a lead of three games to two.

The game starts at 8:08 p.m. Eastern time, 9:08 a.m. on Tuesday in Japan. If the Guardians win, a deciding Game 7 will be played on Tuesday night in the United States.

How they got here

The teams split the first two games in Tampa Bay, and Cleveland went ahead by winning Game 3 at Progressive Field 3-2, with Petey Halpin hitting a two-run home run in the fifth inning to turn the game around.

The Rays then won Game 4 7-3 and Game 5 3-1 in Cleveland to take control of the series.

The World Series

The winner will face the Milwaukee Brewers, the National League champions, in the World Series, which opens in Milwaukee on Friday, U.S. time.

The stakes

Tampa Bay have reached the World Series twice, in 2008 and 2020, and lost both times. Cleveland last reached it in 2016 and have not won it since 1948, the longest drought among current major league clubs.

Japanese viewers

The World Series has drawn large audiences in Japan in recent years, when the Los Angeles Dodgers and their Japanese stars took part.

CULTURE

A Game's Characters Tour All 47 Prefectures and Win the Grand Prize at the Newspaper Advertising Awards

Aniplex's 10th-anniversary campaign for Fate/Grand Order ran in papers across Japan; readers asked to buy the pages

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

An advertising campaign for the popular smartphone game Fate/Grand Order, in which the game's characters visit famous places in each prefecture, won the grand prize at the 46th Newspaper Advertising Awards, the Japan Newspaper Association announced at a ceremony in Tokyo on Monday.

The ceremony was timed to coincide with Newspaper Advertising Day, which falls on Tuesday, October 20.

The campaign

The campaign, titled "OVER THE SAME SKY," marked the 10th anniversary of the game's launch by Aniplex and ran in newspapers across the country as a nationwide project.

Why it won

The judges said readers had contacted newspapers asking to buy the pages, boosting sales, and praised the campaign for promoting the attractions of the regions.

Toshiyuki Kanazawa, deputy head of a production group at Aniplex, said that newspaper advertisements remain in people's hands, and described the campaign as "a project linking the characters with the many regions of Japan."

Other winners

In the advertiser category, prizes went to Otsuka Pharmaceutical and Shimane Prefecture. In the category for newspaper companies' planning and marketing, five works won, from the Iwate Nippo, the Akita Sakigake Shimpō, the Fukushima Minpo, the Sanyo Shimbun and a joint entry from the Chugoku Shimbun and the Nagasaki Shimbun.

Print in the digital age

Newspaper advertising has shrunk as spending has moved online, but campaigns that turn the printed page into a collectible, as this one did, show that print can still make an impact.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 16.

CULTURE

Michael J. Fox, Star of 'Back to the Future,' Has Found a Second Life Behind the Scenes as a Champion of Parkinson's Research

Diagnosed at the height of his fame, the 65-year-old actor founded a foundation in 2000 and received America's most prestigious medical award last month

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Michael J. Fox, the actor who became a global star in the "Back to the Future" films, has spent more than 20 years in a second career behind the scenes, supporting research into treatments for Parkinson's disease, which he has himself, Kyodo News reported from Washington.

The diagnosis

One morning in 1990, at the age of 29 and at the height of his film career, Fox noticed a tremor in his little finger, according to the Lasker Foundation. He was later diagnosed with young-onset Parkinson's disease.

He hid the tremors while building his acting career, but the burden of keeping the secret grew, and he made his diagnosis public in 1998.

The foundation

In 2000 he founded a foundation to raise interest in Parkinson's disease across the United States and to develop treatments and carry them through to patients.

Honours

He received a special Academy Award in 2022 for his work, and in September this year the Lasker Award, which Kyodo described as the most prestigious medical award in the United States.

The disease

Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder of the nervous system that causes tremor, stiffness and slowness of movement, and affects millions of people worldwide, including many in ageing Japan. There is no cure, but research has advanced in recent years, including in Japan, where scientists have tested transplants of nerve cells grown from stem cells.

The actor

Fox, now 65, was born in Canada and rose to fame in the 1980s television comedy "Family Ties" before "Back to the Future" made him one of Hollywood's biggest names.

CULTURE

CNN's Christiane Amanpour to Leave the Network Next June After More Than 40 Years Covering Wars and Disasters

The 68-year-old chief international anchor, who joined as an assistant in 1983, urges journalists to be truthful rather than neutral

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Christiane Amanpour, CNN's chief international anchor, said on Monday that she will leave the network in June next year, Kyodo News reported.

Amanpour, 68, said she was looking forward to working on new and interesting projects.

Truthful, not neutral

In her statement she urged journalists always to tell the truth rather than aim for neutrality, a principle she has said she learned covering the war in Bosnia.

A long career

Born in London to an Iranian father and a British mother, she joined CNN in 1983 as an assistant on its foreign desk.

She covered the Gulf War, Iraq, Iran and Ukraine, and reported from Japan after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Hard questions

She was known for pressing leaders with tough questions, and interviewed Libya's Muammar Gaddafi and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak.

In 2022 Iran's president at the time, Ebrahim Raisi, called off an interview with her in New York after she declined to wear a headscarf.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

October 20 in History

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1632: Christopher Wren, architect of St Paul's Cathedral, is born.

1740: Maria Theresa becomes ruler of the Habsburg

lands on the death of her father, Charles VI.

1818: The United States and Britain agree to set much of the border with Canada along the 49th parallel.

1891: The physicist James Chadwick is born.

1910: RMS Olympic, sister ship of Titanic, is launched in Belfast.

1944: American forces land on Leyte in the Philippines; General Douglas MacArthur wades ashore.

1968: Jacqueline Kennedy marries the Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis.

1973: The Sydney Opera House is opened by Queen Elizabeth II.

1991: A firestorm in the hills of Oakland and Berkeley, California, destroys about 3,000 homes.

2011: Libya's former leader Muammar Gaddafi is killed near his home town of Sirte.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Festivals and Events This Week

By the Culture Desk

KYOTO, THURSDAY: Jidai Matsuri, the Festival of the Ages, a procession of some 2,000 people in costumes from the Heian period to the Meiji era, from the Imperial Palace to Heian Shrine.

KYOTO, THURSDAY NIGHT: Kurama Fire Festival, with giant torches carried through the village of Kurama.

AICHI, THROUGH SATURDAY: The Asian Para Games, with competition at venues across the prefecture.

OSAKA, THIS WEEK: The Kinoshita Group Japan Open women's tennis tournament at Utsubo.

YOKOHAMA, SATURDAY: The Japan Series opens at Yokohama Stadium.

NATIONWIDE: Autumn leaves are turning in the mountains of Hokkaido and northern Tohoku.

TUESDAY: Newspaper Advertising Day.

THROUGH THE MONTH: Autumn festivals at shrines across the country celebrate the harvest.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26: Tomoka Nishiyama's news conference on whether to turn professional in shogi.

AOMORI: The National Sports Festival concludes, followed by the festival for athletes with disabilities.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Quotes of the Day

By the Copy Desk

"Want to try your luck again? Be our guest. But be careful; we have unfinished jobs too." Abbas Araghchi, Iran's foreign minister, answering President Trump.

"I'm sorry. It's still too early for 'prime minister,' isn't it." Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, after calling her defence minister "Prime Minister Koizumi."

"Power must not be used to intimidate those involved." Tochigi Governor Tomikazu Fukuda, on former farm minister Kazuo Yana.

"Criminals misuse stolen personal information to break into companies' systems. Many more attacks are coming." Eva Chen, chief executive of Trend Micro.

"Demonstrating is a right. Setting our cities ablaze is not." Giorgia Meloni, Italy's prime minister.

"Our thinking is to do what can be done, starting where we can." Naoki Hyakuta, leader of the Conservative Party of Japan, on the food tax cut.

"To fulfil our responsibility to future generations, we will draw a picture of the economy and society our country should aim for." Yoshinobu Tsutsui, chairman of Keidanren.

"We had a really bitter experience." SoftBank manager Hiroki Kokubo, recalling the 2024 Japan Series.

"The players' rackets have all been adapted in different ways, haven't they." The Emperor, watching table tennis at the Asian Para Games.

"Knowing that even the small can be helped has become a source of hope." Dr Akane Shibuya of Shizuoka Children's Hospital.

EDITORIAL & OPINION



Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki for The Japan Morning Post.

EDITORIAL

The Rat Warns the Steamroller. Japan, Watching From the Hill, Should Heed the Warning Too

Taro Suzuki's cartoon captures the mismatch between American and Israeli power and a battered Iran. But the weak have ways to make the road expensive, and much of the bill would land on Japan. Our ally deserves our support, and our candour

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki's cartoon on this page needs no explanation, and that is its strength. Across a bare, stony plain rolls a great iron steamroller, smoke pouring from its stack. On its front, in bold capitals, are the words US AND ISRAEL, and above its cab fly the Stars and Stripes and the blue Star of David. In its path, at the left of the frame, a small rat labelled IRAN stands on its hind legs, mouth open in a squeak of defiance, holding up a placard: DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE US.

Far off on the right, on a low rise beneath distant mountains, stands a single flagpole flying the Hinomaru, Japan's national flag. Nobody is near it. It simply watches. The caption reads: THE RAT WARNS THE STEAMROLLER.

The first reaction is a laugh. The gulf in size between the machine and the animal is the joke, and the rat's warning sounds ridiculous. A steamroller does not stop for a rat. The second reaction is more uneasy, and it is the one worth dwelling on. Rats are survivors. They live in the walls and under the floors, they chew through cables, and they carry disease. Nobody has ever been crushed by a rat, but many a house has been ruined by one. And the flag on the hill belongs to us.

The week's words

The cartoon could hardly be more topical. On Sunday, President Donald Trump gave his "Complete and Total Endorsement" to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, nine days before Israelis vote on October 27, and warned that unless Iran changed course, "we will soon finish the job." If Israelis chose another leader, he wrote, America would have to do the work itself.

Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, answered within hours. "Last time you wanted to 'finish the job,' Iran emerged even stronger," he wrote. "Want to try your luck again? Be our guest. But be careful; we have unfinished jobs too." That is the rat's placard, almost word for word.

The same weekend, the American defence secretary, Pete Hegseth, visited Israel without public announcement and met Mr Netanyahu, according to the news site Axios. Mr Netanyahu has said that the only way to deal with Iran is to get rid of its regime.

The steamroller is real

Let us be clear about the balance of power, because sentiment should not cloud it. The steamroller is not a figure of speech. Since the United States and Israel launched their campaign against Iran on February 28, the Islamic Republic has suffered blows that would have been unimaginable a year ago. Its supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, was killed in the first strikes, and his son was installed in his place. Senior security officials have been killed. Its nuclear sites have been bombed. Its oil installations have been hit, its ports are under an American naval blockade, and its economy has been squeezed by sanctions on anyone who trades with it.

When Mr Trump says Iran has been destroyed militarily and financially, he exaggerates, as he often does, but the direction is right. No serious analyst believes that Iran could win a conventional war against the United States, let alone against the United States and Israel together.

Why the rat still matters

And yet the war, which was paused in April, has not ended, and the reason lies in the rat's warning. Iran does not need to stop the steamroller. It needs only to make the road so costly that the driver hesitates, and to make sure that the cost falls on others too.

It has shown how. In the first days of the war, Iranian missiles and drones struck the Saudi refinery at Ras Tanura, and QatarEnergy halted production of liquefied natural gas; later Iran attacked Qatar's gas complex at Ras Laffan itself. Drones hit airports and fuel depots in the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. In April Iran struck data centres run by American technology companies in Bahrain and Dubai.

Above all, it has closed, reopened and closed again

the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow channel through which a fifth of the world's oil passed before the war. Today Iran keeps up what amounts to a blockade of the strait, even as American forces say ships other than Iran's can get through, and it has offered to reopen it within seven days on conditions that Washington has not accepted.

In Yemen, the Houthis, armed and, according to the Wall Street Journal, guided by Iranian intelligence, have been firing missiles at Saudi Arabia, claiming strikes on an Aramco facility on the Red Sea coast and on the airport of Riyadh. On Monday a Houthi missile killed more than 50 people at a government security centre in Yemen, according to local authorities. Saudi Arabia has postponed an investment conference that was meant to showcase its future.

Iranian officials have gone further, warning that undersea cables, data centres and artificial intelligence facilities in the Gulf could be "within range" if fighting resumes. That is the threat of the rat in the walls: not to defeat the machine but to gnaw at the wiring of the modern economy.

The rat has done this before

None of this is new. In the 1980s, during its long war with Iraq, Iran attacked tankers in the Gulf with mines, gunboats and missiles, in what became known as the Tanker War. The United States responded by reflagging Kuwaiti tankers and escorting them with warships. When an American frigate struck an Iranian mine in April 1988, the US Navy sank or crippled a large part of Iran's navy in a single day.

The steamroller won that contest too. But it took years, insurance rates for Gulf shipping soared, and the oil importers of Asia, Japan among them, paid a price for every month of uncertainty. Iran learned then that it did not need to win a naval battle to make the world's most important shipping lane dangerous. It has been refining the lesson ever since, with cheaper drones, more accurate missiles and a network of allied militias stretching from Lebanon to Yemen.

The bill comes to Japan

This is where the flag on the hill comes in. It would be comforting to think that Japan watches from a safe distance, and the cartoonist has placed our flag far from the action, on a quiet rise. But distance is an illusion in an economy wired together by tankers and

cables.

More than nine-tenths of the crude oil Japan imports comes from the Middle East, according to the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, and much of it has passed through Hormuz. When the strait closed this spring, the government lowered the amount of oil that private companies must keep in reserve and released crude from national stockpiles, in two rounds of millions of kilolitres each. It has been subsidising petrol, diesel and kerosene, with support set at 33.3 yen a litre from June. Those are costs that every household carries, through its taxes and its bills.

On Monday the price of crude in New York closed at 103.66 dollars a barrel, its highest in a month and its eighth straight daily rise, on fears for Middle Eastern supply. The yen, at about 158 to the dollar, makes every barrel dearer. Fertiliser prices, too, have risen with the disruption to the Gulf, a problem agriculture ministers of the Group of Seven discussed in Paris on Monday.

The Maritime Self-Defense Force, meanwhile, is being kept in the region for another year, with a destroyer and a patrol aircraft guarding against pirates and gathering information in the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. The Strait of Hormuz itself remains outside its area of operations.

So the rat's warning is addressed to the steamroller, but it is Japan, on its hill, that would pay a large share of the bill if the warning proved true.

Where Japan stands

What, then, should Japan do? Three principles should guide us.

The first is that Japan stands with its ally. The alliance with the United States is the foundation of our security in a region where China, North Korea and Russia all possess nuclear weapons and two of them have shown a readiness to change borders by force or threaten to. Japan has no interest in an Iran armed with nuclear weapons, in a Gulf where shipping lanes are held hostage, or in a Middle East where proxy militias decide which ports may operate. Iran's attacks on its neighbours and on commercial shipping are indefensible, and Tokyo should not pretend otherwise for the sake of old friendships.

Nor should Japan forget why this confrontation

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began. Before the American and Israeli strikes of June last year, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iran had accumulated a stockpile of uranium enriched to 60 per cent, a short technical step from weapons grade and far beyond any credible civilian need. This summer Iran said it would not allow inspectors into its main nuclear sites at Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan. A nuclear-armed Iran would set off a race for the bomb across the region from which Japan buys its energy, and no Japanese government could regard that with equanimity.

That is not a small point. Japan has long prided itself on its good relations with Iran, built on decades of oil trade. In June 2019, Shinzo Abe became the first Japanese prime minister to visit Tehran in four decades, carrying messages between Washington and the Islamic Republic. While he was there, a tanker operated by a Japanese company was attacked in the Gulf of Oman. Goodwill did not protect our ships then, and it will not protect them now.

The second principle is that a loyal ally is a candid one. "Finish the job" is a phrase that sounds decisive and means very little. Does it mean the destruction of Iran's remaining nuclear capability? The collapse of the regime? The permanent reopening of the strait? Each is a different war, with different costs and different risks, and some of those risks would fall on Japan before they fell on America.

The limits of steamrollers

Recent history counsels humility about what overwhelming force can achieve. The United States toppled the Taliban in Afghanistan in weeks in 2001, and Saddam Hussein in Iraq in weeks in 2003. In both countries it then spent years, thousands of lives and enormous sums trying to build something stable in the rubble, and in Afghanistan it left in 2021 with the Taliban back in power.

Iran is a far larger country than Iraq, with a strong sense of nationhood that predates the Islamic Republic by millennia. A regime that collapses under bombardment is not necessarily replaced by one that is friendlier, and a power vacuum on the northern shore of the Gulf could prove more dangerous to shipping than the regime itself. Japan is entitled to ask what follows the steamroller, not only where it is going.

A war that reopens Hormuz and ends Iran's capacity to threaten shipping would serve Japan's interests. A war that closes the strait for months, sets the Gulf's oil and gas plants ablaze and leaves a broken Iran ruled by its most extreme men would not. Tokyo has every right, and a duty to its own people, to ask Washington which of these it is planning for, and to say so plainly in private.

Iran has put an offer on the table to reopen the strait within days, on conditions that include the timing of nuclear talks. Washington insists that negotiations address Iran's nuclear program from the outset, and Vice President JD Vance has said Tehran must make a meaningful reduction in its capacity to enrich uranium. That gap is real, but it is a gap of sequence, not of principle, and Japan should encourage the United States to test the offer before the steamroller moves again.

The third principle is that Japan must prepare for the worst while hoping for the best. That means refilling the oil stockpiles that were drawn down this spring when prices allow, and holding them at a level that buys real time. It means accelerating the diversification of crude supplies away from the Gulf, through long-term contracts with producers in the Americas and elsewhere and through support for routes that bypass Hormuz. It means restarting nuclear reactors that have met safety standards, which would cut our dependence on imported fuel more than any other single step.

The lessons of 1973

Japan has faced this test before. The oil shock of 1973, when Arab producers cut supplies to countries they regarded as friendly to Israel, struck Japan harder than almost any other industrial country. Supermarket shelves were stripped of toilet paper, factories cut output and the long post-war boom came to an end.

Japan responded with a determination that is worth recalling. It built national oil reserves, invested heavily in nuclear power and liquefied natural gas, and turned itself into a world leader in energy efficiency. Those choices are a large part of the reason the country has been able to ride out this year's disruption. The reserves bought time, and the

diversification of gas supplies meant that only about a tenth of Japan's liquefied natural gas comes from the Middle East.

But the job was never finished. Crude oil remains overwhelmingly a Middle Eastern commodity for Japan, and the shutdown of nuclear reactors after the Fukushima disaster of 2011 increased the country's dependence on imported fuel. The current crisis is a reminder, if one were needed, that energy security is national security.

Ships, mines and the law

The question of what Japan's own forces should do is harder. In 1991, after the war to liberate Kuwait, Japan sent Maritime Self-Defense Force minesweepers to the Persian Gulf, the force's first overseas mission, and they cleared mines with a skill that won international respect.

When the security legislation allowing limited collective self-defence was debated in 2015, the government of Shinzo Abe cited minesweeping in the Strait of Hormuz as an example of a situation in which Japan's survival might be threatened and its forces might act. Critics called the example far-fetched. It no longer looks so.

Japan should not rush into a shooting war that its Constitution and its people would not support. But it should be ready, legally and practically, to help clear the strait once the fighting stops, and to protect Japanese ships and crews within the law. The government should prepare those options now, quietly and thoroughly, rather than improvise them under pressure.

It also means taking seriously the warnings about cables and data centres. Japan sits at the hub of trans-Pacific undersea cables, and the wave of cyberattacks on Japanese companies this autumn, some apparently carried out with automated AI tools, shows how exposed our networks are. A conflict in the Gulf will not stay in the Gulf if it moves into cyberspace.

Do not underestimate, do not overestimate

The rat's placard says: do not underestimate us. It is good advice, and it applies to everyone in the picture. The United States and Israel should not underestimate Iran's capacity for disruption, which has survived the loss of its leader, its generals and much of its military. A cornered regime with little left to lose can do great damage to others, even if it cannot save itself.

But we should not overestimate Iran either. Its threats are partly bluff, aimed at frightening Gulf governments and Asian importers into pressing Washington for restraint. Its economy is in ruins, its proxies are stretched, and its allies have done little to help. Mr Trump himself noted on Sunday that Russia was doing little to help Iran. Fear should not be allowed to dictate policy.

And Japan should not underestimate itself. We are not a bystander on a hill. We are one of the world's largest economies, a major buyer of Gulf oil and gas, a significant investor in the region and a close friend of the Gulf states that bear the brunt of Iran's attacks. We have ships and aircraft on station. We have an alliance with the driver of the steamroller and a long-standing channel to the rat. That is influence, if we choose to use it.

The road ahead

The coming weeks will be decisive. Israel votes on October 27, and its next government will shape the war's course. Americans vote in their midterm elections on November 3, and Mr Trump has, by some accounts, held off renewed strikes during the campaign. After that, the pause may end.

Japan should use the time well. The prime minister should speak directly with Mr Trump about the Gulf, not only about trade and defence spending. The foreign ministry should work with Saudi Arabia, the Emirates and Qatar, whose security and stability matter to us as much as to anyone. The government should explain to the public, honestly, why the price of petrol and kerosene is high, how long the stockpiles would last, and what it is doing to keep the lights on and the factories running.

The flag on the hill

The cartoonist's Hinomaru stands alone and unmoving, and there is a quiet dignity in that. But a flag on a hill can also be a target, or a spectator caught in the crossfire. Our task is to make sure that when the steamroller moves, it moves in a direction

that serves the peace on which our prosperity depends, and that the rat's warning, whatever it is worth, does not come true at our expense.

A steamroller flattens what is in front of it. It does not choose where the rubble lands. Japan, of all countries, should know where the rubble lands: in the price of a litre of kerosene in a Hokkaido winter, in the books of a fishing cooperative that cannot afford fuel, in the order books of a chemical plant that cannot get its feedstock. Our support for our ally is not in doubt. Our duty is to see that the job, when it is finished, leaves the road open.

ANALYSIS

One Year On, Takaichi's Coalition Holds Because Both Partners Need It. The Food Tax Cut Will Show Whether It Can Govern

Yoshimura's promise not to threaten a walkout is welcome; his insistence on cutting 45 seats is the price. The real test lies in the upper house, four votes short

By William | Senior Political Analyst

On Wednesday the coalition between the Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Innovation Party turns one year old. It has survived a year in which many predicted it would not, and the reason is simple: each partner needs the other more than either likes to admit.

Hirofumi Yoshimura, the Ishin leader, made the bargain plain in Osaka on Monday. He has no intention, he said, of using the threat of leaving the coalition as leverage, as long as his relationship of trust with Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi holds. In the next breath he told the Liberal Democrats to steel themselves and cut 45 proportional representation seats in this Diet session. Loyalty and a price tag, delivered together.

The seat cut

Ishin calls the cut the "centre pin" of reform, and it has a point. Voters who are asked to accept higher social insurance charges and a leaner state are entitled to see politicians share the pain. But a smaller lower house would cost many Liberal Democrats their seats, and the party has been slow to commit. If it stalls much longer, Ishin's patience, and its value to the government, will be tested.

The real test

The coalition's larger problem is arithmetic. In the House of Councillors the ruling bloc is four votes short of a majority, and every major bill now needs friends. Komeito, which left its 26-year partnership with the Liberal Democrats last October, can no longer be counted on. The food tax cut, which reaches the lower house floor on Tuesday, is the first big test of whether this government can assemble them.

On Monday it found two. Naoki Hyakuta's Conservative Party of Japan, with two upper house seats, will back the bill, while asking for the cut to last longer than two years and to cover eating out. That is welcome, but it is not enough, and the Democratic Party for the People and Komeito have their own alternatives.

A conservative case

From a conservative standpoint, the bill is defensible. Households have been squeezed by prices driven by the weak yen and the war in the Gulf, and relief targeted at food, a necessity, is fairer than a general handout. The prime minister's promise that the money will be found without deficit bonds is the right one. But the government must show its working: which spending will be cut, by how much, and how restaurants and small farmers will be helped. Vague assurances will not win the votes it needs.

Discipline at home

The coalition's second problem is self-inflicted. The resignation of Kazuo Yana, the rebuke to the education minister over a fundraising party, and the slow handling of both have pushed Cabinet support below 50 per cent in Kyodo News's poll. Ms Takaichi's slip in the Diet on Monday, when she called her defence minister "Prime Minister Koizumi," drew laughter, but it also reminded everyone that the party has other leaders in waiting.

Mr Yoshimura is right that the team around the prime minister needs strengthening. A year in, the coalition's survival is no longer the question. Its competence is.

ANALYSIS

MMX Is a Bet on Patience, and Japan Should Make More of Them

A five-year round trip to a small moon will not win votes or quarterly profits. That is exactly why it matters

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The H3 rocket that left Tanegashima before dawn on Tuesday carried a spacecraft that will not return until July 2031, after several national elections and who knows how many reorganisations of the ministries that paid for it. That is the point of the Martian Moons eXploration mission, and the reason it deserves more attention than it will get.

A long game

Japan's space program has learned, sometimes painfully, that patience pays. Hayabusa limped home in 2010 after losing thrusters and contact with Earth. Hayabusa2 succeeded brilliantly a decade later. Both missions made Japan the world's leader in returning samples from small bodies, a niche in which the United States followed and China is now competing.

MMX extends that lead to the Mars system. If it succeeds, Japan will be the first country to bring back material from a moon of Mars, and quite possibly the first to bring grains of Mars itself to Earth, ahead of China's planned Tianwen-3 mission and of America's troubled plans to retrieve the samples its Perseverance rover has collected.

The rocket matters too

The mission also vindicates the H3. The rocket's first flight failed in March 2023, costing MMX two years. Tuesday's launch, the first to send a probe toward another planet, shows that the rocket that will carry Japan's satellites for the next two decades can handle the most demanding jobs.

That matters for national security as much as science. A country that can launch its own reconnaissance, communications and navigation satellites, reliably and on schedule, does not have to ask permission from anyone.

The alliance dimension

The American embassy's cheerful video on the eve of the launch, with its message that the alliance is stronger than ever on Earth and in space, was not mere politeness. NASA's instruments ride aboard MMX, and the cooperation is part of a wider partnership that includes a Japanese astronaut's planned landing on the Moon under the Artemis program.

The lesson

Politics rewards what can be delivered before the next election. Science and security often require the opposite. MMX began development in 2020 and will finish in 2031. The government should take the lesson and fund more projects that pay off over a decade, in space, in semiconductors and in energy, and resist the temptation to judge them by the headlines of a single year.

For now, the hard work is just beginning. The spacecraft must cross more than 200 million kilometres of space, brake into orbit and land on a moon whose surface no one has touched. Japan's engineers have done the improbable before. Let us wish them well.

ANALYSIS

The Hospital Kitchen Fix Is Sensible. It Also Shows That Japan's Foreign Worker Policy Is Being Made One Crisis at a Time

Moving institutional catering into a different category keeps patients fed. It does not answer how many workers Japan needs, or how it will integrate them

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The government's plan to let foreign workers back into the kitchens of hospitals and care homes is common sense. Every meal provider surveyed by the health ministry in August reported vacancies, and patients who need meals prepared to medical specifications cannot be told to wait until the labour market improves. By moving institutional catering out of the frozen food service field and into food manufacturing, the government has found a way to keep the trays coming from April 2027.

A patch, not a plan

But the fix also reveals how policy is being made. The ceiling of 50,000 workers for the food service field was set and, as numbers approached it, enforced, and only when the consequences reached

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the hospital ward did anyone notice that the field had been drawn too broadly. Restaurants, which are just as short of staff, remain frozen with no date for relief.

This is the pattern of recent years. Each industry lobbies for its own field, its own ceiling and its own exception. The result is a patchwork that satisfies no one: employers complain of shortages, while a growing share of the public worries that immigration is rising without a clear national decision on how far it should go.

What a conservative policy looks like

A conservative approach should start from the national interest, not from the demands of individual industries. Japan needs foreign workers in some sectors, and will need more as its population shrinks. But it should decide, openly and in the Diet, how many it wants, in which jobs, for how long, and on what conditions, including language, training and respect for Japanese law and customs.

It should also invest in the alternatives. Hospital kitchens can be partly automated; meal preparation can be centralised; wages in care work can rise to attract Japanese workers who have left. Foreign labour should complement those efforts, not replace them.

Integration

And it should take integration seriously. Workers who come for five years under the first level of the Specified Skilled Worker system, and the growing number who move up to the second level and bring their families, need Japanese lessons, housing and schools. Communities that receive them need support. Neglect breeds the resentment that populist parties are already harvesting.

Next spring

The replacement of the technical intern program by the new Employment for Skill Development system in April 2027 offers a chance to set out that comprehensive policy. The government should take it, rather than wait for the next field to hit its ceiling and the next crisis to force the next patch.

ANALYSIS

The Prime Minister Promises the Food Tax Cut Will Reach the Shelves. She Should Make Sure of It

Seven points off the tax only help households if shops pass them on; the government needs a plan for monitoring prices and explaining the funding

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the upper house on Monday that the cut in the consumption tax on food from 8 per cent to 1 per cent would "basically be reflected" in prices. Even if prices rose for other reasons, she argued, the seven points of tax would still be gone. That is true in arithmetic. Whether it is true at the till is another matter.

The pass-through problem

Tax cuts are not automatically passed on. Retailers facing higher costs for energy, wages and imported ingredients may use the cut to rebuild margins, raising their pre-tax prices just as the tax falls. Households would then see little change on the receipt, and the 10 trillion yen the cut will cost over two years would have flowed to shops and suppliers instead of families.

Experience abroad is mixed. When governments have cut taxes on food, some of the benefit has usually reached consumers, but rarely all, and less where competition is weak.

What the government should do

First, it should monitor prices openly. The Consumer Affairs Agency and the Fair Trade Commission should publish regular comparisons of pre-tax prices for staple foods before and after April 2027, by type of retailer, so that the public can see who passes on the cut.

Second, it should use the rules on price display. The bill already includes special provisions to give shops time to change their labels and tills. In return, retailers should be required to show clearly how much tax a price includes, so that customers can tell.

Third, it should be specific about funding. The bill promises to find the money by reviewing spending and revenue, without deficit bonds. Ms Takaichi listed non-tax revenue, unused money in government funds and higher tax revenue as possible sources. Those are plausible, but they are not a plan. Bond markets, already pushing long-term yields higher, will want to see one.

The restaurants

Finally, the government should settle quickly how it will help restaurants. Meals eaten on the premises stay at 10 per cent, while takeaway food and groceries fall to 1 per cent. The gap of nine points is large enough to change behaviour, and the restaurant industry, already short of foreign workers, does not need another blow.

The tax cut can be a sensible response to a cost-of-living squeeze driven by the weak yen and the war in the Gulf. But its success will be judged in supermarkets, not in the Diet.

ANALYSIS

Automated Hackers Have Found Japan's Weak Spots. Companies Must Treat Security as a Board Matter, Not an IT Expense

A Chinese-made AI tool linked to attacks on dozens of firms shows how cheap attacking has become. Defence must become cheaper and faster too

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

For weeks Japanese companies have been announcing breaches one after another, so many that the list reads like a directory of household names: department stores, internet providers, airlines, retailers, a hometown tax portal, even a prefectural police force. On Monday alone about a dozen organisations disclosed attacks or exposures.

Now security firms have found a likely reason for the flood. A security unit of the GMO Internet Group says it has confirmed that a Chinese-made AI tool was used in some of the attacks, and the Yomiuri Shimbun reports traces of a Chinese-language AI agent in attacks on about 80 Japanese companies.

Cheap attacks

The significance is not who wrote the tool. It is what the tool does. An AI agent can scan thousands of systems for known weaknesses, try exploits and report back, all with a few lines of instruction. One American security company said of the attacker behind a series of raids on South Korean banks that his skills were not especially sophisticated, but the results were effective. Attacking has become cheap.

That changes the economics of defence. A company that once assumed it was too small or too obscure to attract skilled hackers can no longer rely on obscurity. Automated tools do not choose targets for their fame. They choose them for their unlocked doors.

The unlocked doors

The doors are familiar: software left unpatched, administration screens exposed to the internet, interfaces between systems that check too little, data kept long after it is needed. Skymark's admission that a recruitment database had no password is an extreme case, but not an isolated one. A Teikoku Databank survey found that about one in seven Japanese companies could not say whether they had ever suffered a leak.

What must change

Boards must treat security as a core risk, with budgets and authority to match. Basic hygiene, such as an inventory of every system reachable from the internet, prompt patching and two-factor authentication, would stop many of these attacks. Companies should keep less personal data and delete what they do not need.

Companies must also rehearse their response. A breach discovered on a Friday night cannot wait for a Monday meeting. The people who can shut down a system, call the police and tell customers should know who they are before the day comes.

The same technology can work for defenders. Tools that watch networks around the clock and flag unusual behaviour are becoming affordable for smaller firms, and should be part of any plan.

Large companies should help their smaller suppliers rather than simply demanding that they comply. And the government, which has just gained new powers of active cyber defence, should make it easier for victims to share information quickly, so that one company's breach becomes every company's warning.

The bigger picture

Japan cannot afford to be the soft target among advanced economies. Its companies hold vast amounts of data, its supply chains feed the world, and its allies depend on the security of its networks. An adversary does not need an army to do damage. It needs a laptop, an AI model and an open door.

ANALYSIS

France Is Right to Restore Order First. Then It Must Answer the Schoolchildren Who Started This

Curfews and prosecutions are necessary after a weekend of arson and looting; but the grievances over schools and prices are real, and Europe's governments ignore them at their peril

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The scenes from France have been shocking: a 19th-century town hall gutted by fire in Limoges, Marseille's city hall invaded and a statue of Marianne toppled, thousands of shops damaged, more than 2,500 people detained and hundreds of police officers injured. On Monday night, parts of Paris, Lyon, Nice and four northern cities were under curfew.

President Emmanuel Macron is right to insist that order comes first. No grievance justifies burning public buildings or looting shops, and those who did so should be prosecuted and made to pay. The government's choice of targeted curfews rather than a national state of emergency is proportionate, and it should hold that line unless violence spreads.

The grievances

But order is not an answer in itself. The protests began in September at a high school in a Paris suburb, over teacher shortages and crumbling buildings, and grew as unions joined and anger about prices spread. Consumer prices rose 3.1 per cent in September from a year earlier, and energy prices by more than a fifth, as the war in the Gulf pushed up oil. Young people who see schools starved of money and a future of expensive housing and insecure work have reasons to be angry, even if a minority have chosen to vent that anger with petrol bombs.

The same mix of grievances has brought crowds onto the streets in Italy, Belgium and Portugal. In Milan on Sunday police detained 271 young people. Analysts see early movements elsewhere. Europe's governments face a hard combination: budgets that must be tightened, energy that has become expensive, and young voters who feel the bill is being sent to them.

The political danger

For France, the timing is dangerous. The presidential election is six months away, Mr Macron cannot run again, and the government is trying to pass a budget built on a fiscal adjustment of 54 billion euros. Disorder tends to help those who promise strength, and those who promise to tear up the rules.

Lessons for Japan

Japan has been spared scenes like these, and its social cohesion is a national asset. But it should not be complacent. Japanese households are feeling the same squeeze from energy prices and a weak currency, and young people here also worry about wages, housing and the cost of raising children. The difference is that Japanese discontent tends to show up at the ballot box, as it did in Yokohama on Sunday, rather than in the streets.

That is a strength to be protected, by governments that listen before anger hardens. France shows what happens when they do not.

ANALYSIS

Teruaki Sato Deserves His Shot at the Majors. Japanese Baseball Must Make Sure It Is Not Just a Training Ground

Every winter another star leaves; the posting fees help, but the league's long-term health depends on keeping the game at home compelling

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Teruaki Sato has earned his chance. A Triple Crown, a Most Valuable Player award, back-to-back pennants and a reputation as the most feared hitter in Japan: there is nothing left for him to prove in the Central League. Hanshin were right to let him go, and American clubs are right to be excited.

His departure, though, will be felt. Last winter Munetaka Murakami and Kazuma Okamoto left through the posting system. Before them went Yoshinobu Yamamoto, Shota Imanaga, Roki Sasaki and others. Shohei Ohtani has become the most famous athlete in the world while playing for an American team. Each move is a source of national pride. Together they raise a question: is Nippon Professional Baseball becoming a nursery for Major League Baseball?

The money

The posting fees are substantial. Hanshin will receive a share of whatever contract Sato signs, and the amounts paid for Yamamoto and Sasaki show how much clubs can earn. But money does not fill a stadium on a Tuesday night. Stars do.

What keeps fans

So far, the evidence is reassuring. Attendance in Japan has remained strong, the pennant races are passionate, and new players keep emerging. The Japan Series, opening on Saturday between DeNA and SoftBank, will draw huge audiences. The success of Japanese players in America has, if anything, raised the prestige of the league that produced them.

But the league should not take that for granted. It should invest in its product: modern stadiums, better broadcasting, especially online, and international marketing that sells Japanese baseball to fans in Asia and beyond. It should keep developing the young talent that will replace the departed stars, from high school to the minor leagues.

A fair system

The posting system itself could also be reviewed. It gives the Japanese club a fee and the player an early route abroad, which is fair. But clubs might be given more say over timing, so that a team in a title race is not weakened midway through a rebuilding plan.

The national team

Finally, the national team benefits. Japan's victory at the World Baseball Classic in 2023 was built on players from both leagues, at home and abroad. As long as the best Japanese players continue to wear the national uniform, their careers abroad strengthen the game at home.

Sato goes with the good wishes of a nation. The job of those who run Japanese baseball is to make sure that the next Sato is already on his way up.

ANALYSIS

Another 400 Billion Yen for Rapidus Can Be Justified. Only With Clear Milestones and a Plan for Customers

The state's stake in the chipmaker would reach 650 billion yen; taxpayers deserve to know what success looks like and when

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The industry ministry wants another 400 billion yen of public investment in Rapidus over the three years from fiscal 2027, taking the state's equity stake to 650 billion yen, on top of the large subsidies already granted for research and development. It argues that the company needs a strong capital base to borrow from banks, and that the expected returns have improved.

There is a sound case for the bet. Advanced semiconductors are the foundation of artificial intelligence, modern weapons and the cars of the future. Japan, once a leader in chips, lost its edge and now depends on Taiwan, South Korea and the United States for the most advanced ones. In a world where the Taiwan Strait is a potential flashpoint and supply chains can be weaponised, a domestic source of leading-edge chips is a matter of national security as well as industrial policy.

The risks

But the risks are large. Rapidus is a newcomer trying to master 2-nanometre production that only the world's most experienced manufacturers have achieved, and it must win customers who already have reliable suppliers. Its factory in Hokkaido is due to begin mass production in 2027. Every delay costs money, and every year the leading producers move further ahead.

What taxpayers should ask for

Public money on this scale requires public accountability. The government should set and publish clear milestones: yield rates at defined dates, the signing of customers, the share of private investment. Each new tranche of public money should depend on meeting them.

It should also insist that private investors put in more. Toyota, Sony, NTT and the other companies that founded Rapidus have invested modest sums compared with the state. If they believe in the venture, they should share more of the risk.

The customers

Most of all, Rapidus needs customers. The government can help by encouraging Japanese companies, including those that design chips for AI

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and cars, to commit to orders, and by working with allies, particularly the United States, to make Rapidus part of a trusted supply network.

The goal is worth pursuing. But a national champion that depends indefinitely on public money is not a champion. It is a subsidy.

ANALYSIS

Seventy Years After the Joint Declaration, Japan Should Hold Its Ground With Russia and Hold No Illusions

The detention of a Hokkaido Shimbun reporter shows how Moscow treats goodwill; the islands remain Japan's, and the sanctions should stay

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

On October 19, 1956, Japan and the Soviet Union signed the Joint Declaration that ended their state of war, restored diplomatic relations and brought home Japanese prisoners held in Siberia. It also promised that Habomai and Shikotan would be handed to Japan once a peace treaty was signed. Seventy years later there is no treaty, the islands remain occupied, and a Japanese journalist sits in a Moscow cell accused of spying.

The reporter, who works for the Hokkaido Shimbun, was detained in Sakhalin and moved to Moscow. Japanese diplomats have been unable to see him. Russia says he gathered information on soldiers mobilised for the war in Ukraine. If that is a crime, then so is journalism.

The pattern

This is not an isolated case. Russia has detained foreign journalists before, most notably the Wall Street Journal's Evan Gershkovich, who was convicted of espionage and freed in a prisoner exchange in 2024. Detentions of this kind serve as bargaining chips. Japan should insist on consular access and the reporter's release, and should make clear that his treatment will shape relations.

The territory

The Northern Territories are Japanese, and no amount of fatigue should weaken that position. President Vladimir Putin's visit to Etorofu in August was meant to show that Moscow considers the matter closed. Japan should keep saying, calmly and consistently, that it is not.

The sanctions

Some in Tokyo argue that Japan should ease its sanctions to restart dialogue, for the sake of fishing rights, energy projects or the former islanders who can no longer visit their families' graves. Their concerns are real, especially for the elderly former residents. But easing sanctions while Russia wages war on Ukraine would reward aggression, and would send exactly the wrong message to China, watching how democracies respond to changes of borders by force.

The long view

The Joint Declaration remains, as Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi has said, the starting point for any future peace treaty talks. Japan should keep it on the table. A Russia after Mr Putin, or a Russia that has failed in Ukraine, may one day want better relations with its eastern neighbour. When that day comes, Japan should be ready, with its claims intact and its alliances strong.

Until then, the right policy is patience without illusions. Seventy years of history teach that Moscow respects firmness more than goodwill.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Today's Numbers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

- 4:41 A.M.: Liftoff of the H3 rocket carrying MMX from Tanegashima.
- 10 GRAMS: The minimum amount of Phobos that MMX is meant to bring home, in July 2031.
- 935 HPA: Typhoon Champi's central pressure at 6 a.m., now violent.
- 407.59 YEN: The Nikkei's fall on Monday, after a drop of more than 1,400 yen at one point.
- 103.66 DOLLARS: New York crude's close on Monday, its eighth straight rise.
- 2,513: People detained in France in connection with the riots.
- 1.26 MILLION: Customer records leaked from H2O Retailing.

16.2 PER CENT: Companies that have experienced a data leak, in a Teikoku Databank survey.

.306, 39, 106: Teruaki Sato's batting average, home runs and runs batted in.

50,000: The ceiling for foreign workers in the food service field, through March 2029.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Words in the News

By the Copy Desk

QUASI-SATELLITE ORBIT: A path that keeps a spacecraft close to a small moon, such as Phobos, whose gravity is too weak to hold it in an ordinary orbit.

TOKUTEI GINO: Specified Skilled Worker, a residence status for foreign workers in designated fields with labour shortages.

POSTING SYSTEM: The route by which a Japanese club releases a player to negotiate with major league teams for 45 days.

AI AGENT: A program built on an AI language model that carries out a series of tasks by itself.

KISHI: A professional shogi player, a status no woman has yet held.

NAGARA UNTEN: Driving while doing something else, such as using a phone.

TAMAGUSHI-RYO: A cash offering made to a Shinto shrine in place of a sacred branch.

MORETSU: Violent, the highest grade of typhoon strength used by the Japan Meteorological Agency, from about 54 metres a second.

KINKYU JURYO: Emergency shooting, under which municipalities can authorise hunters to shoot dangerous bears in residential areas.

SOUKEISEN: The Waseda-Keio baseball series, traditionally the last of the Big Six season.

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EDITORIAL & OPINION

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Japan Morning Post corrects errors of fact as soon as they are identified:

corrections@japanmorningpost.com. The notes supplied for today's edition describe the reopening of Specified Skilled Worker acceptance as being for school lunch staff; the plan covers meal services at hospitals, care homes and other medical and welfare facilities, which will move into the food and beverage manufacturing field from April 2027. They give Teruaki Sato's batting average as .360; it was .306, with 39 home runs and 106 runs batted in. They again call Typhoon No. 30 Champa; its international name is Champi. They describe it as extremely powerful; the agency's grade, which it reached on Monday evening, is violent. The notes' figures for 6 p.m. Monday and their forecasts of 920 and 910 hPa are superseded by the 6:45 a.m. Tuesday bulletin used in the maps, which has Champi at 935 hPa and forecast to deepen to 925 hPa. They date the mandatory driver-monitoring systems to 2019 in one place and 2031 in another; the requirement applies to new models from September 2031 and to existing models from September 2033. They put the additional investment in Rapidus at 250 billion yen; the industry ministry is seeking 400 billion yen over three years, of which 150 billion yen is in next year's budget request, and both figures take total government investment to 650 billion yen. CoreWeave is so spelt.

Not repeated today because they were reported in earlier editions, or concern earlier days: the Yokohama mayoral election, the Yomiuri poll, the textbook guidelines (which apply from fiscal 2030, not 2018), the regional banks' property lending, the rice harvest, the Nozomi fare rise, the kerosene subsidy, Subaru's software-defined vehicles, Europe's car rules, support for games and anime, the crude oil bills, the Bank of Japan governor's remarks, the SoftBank and DeNA Climax Series victories, the opening of the Asian Para Games (which run until Saturday; the 76-38 wheelchair basketball win over China was on October 16), Takefusa Kubo's goal, Shoki Oda, FIFA's funding, the Levain Cup, the judo world championships, the Asian Games, the FIFA rankings, the sumo tour of Bangkok, the Tohto League, Saturday's weather, the autumn leaves, Typhoon No. 29, the Abashiri fire, gasoline prices, electronic warrants, the earthquake early warning, the SourceNext and Arcadia leaks, the review of sensitive personal data, the leap second, Anthropic's warning, the lawsuits against OpenAI and the start of active cyber defence. The 'lineage' items in the technology notes are not October 20 anniversaries, and today's history items are dated from other sources.

THE WEEK AHEAD

TUE. 20: Food tax cut bill in the lower house; Empress Emerita turns 92; Newspaper Advertising Day; Japan Open tennis in Osaka. WED. 21: First anniversary of the LDP-Ishin coalition; Champi stays violent. THU. 22: Baseball draft; telecoms cyber security panel meets; Jidai Matsuri and Kurama Fire Festival. FRI. 23: Champi passes south of the Sakishima Islands; World Series opens in Milwaukee (Saturday morning, Japan time). SAT. 24: Japan Series opens in Yokohama; Asian Para Games close. SUN. 25: Fukushima governor and Naha mayoral elections; Champi over the East China Sea; Europe's clocks go back. MON. 26: Tomoka Nishiyama's news conference. OCT. 27: Israeli election. OCT. 27-28: Federal Reserve. OCT. 28: Narita runway briefing. OCT. 29: Keen Sword ends. OCT. 29-30: Bank of Japan. NOV. 3: U.S. midterms. NOV. 18-19: APEC, Shenzhen. DEC. 12: Diet session ends.

TYPHOON AND MARINE ADVISORIES

6 a.m. Tuesday. No. 30, Champi: large, violent typhoon east of the Philippines, 15.7N, 136.2E; 935 hPa; winds 55 m/s, gusts 75; west-north-west at 20 km/h. Storm-force winds 150 km all around; gale-force 650 km to the east and 500 km to the west. Forecast: 925 hPa and 55 m/s, violent, at 6 p.m. Tuesday, 6 a.m. Wednesday and 3 a.m. Thursday; very strong, 935 hPa and 50 m/s, at 3 a.m. Friday; very strong, 950 hPa and 45 m/s, at 3 a.m. Saturday, about 620 km west-south-west of Naha; severe tropical storm, 985 hPa and 25 m/s, at 3 a.m. Sunday. Ishigaki, Miyakojima and Yonaguni inside the storm-wind area by 3 a.m. Friday; Taipei by 3 a.m. Saturday. Emergencies at sea: 118.

MARKET REFERENCE

Monday close: Nikkei 225 64,916.70, down 407.59; Topix 4,067.48, up 1.48; prime market volume about

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2.06 billion shares. Morning close: Nikkei 64,534.03, down 790.26. New York, Monday: Dow 51,966.03, down 36.38; Nasdaq 26,430.89, up 290.86; WTI crude \$103.66, up \$2.25. Dollar 158.16-18 yen at 5 p.m. in Tokyo; 158.47-57 yen late in New York. Euro 176.96-177.00 yen. Federal Reserve meets October 27-28; Bank of Japan October 29-30.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

Front: an H3 rocket launch, file photo, WPM Productions. Typhoon map, Japan and United States weather maps: supplied for this edition. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, the Paris riot scene, President Emmanuel Macron, the bear warning sign, and Teruaki Sato with Dave Roberts: file photos, WPM Productions. Cyberattack illustration: file image, WPM Productions. Tokyo Stock Exchange: photo by TG2 (CC). Cartoon: Taro Suzuki. U.S. government works are public domain and credited; agency news photographs are not reproduced.

SYMBOLS, UNITS AND TITLES

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). Pressure in hectopascals. Japan is 9 hours ahead of GMT, 13 ahead of New York and 16 ahead of Los Angeles; it is 7 hours ahead of Paris, Rome and Milan until Europe's clocks go back on Sunday, and 8 hours ahead after that. 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. Consumer hotline 188. Child guidance centres 189. Anyone whose personal data may have leaked should change passwords, watch for phishing messages and check card statements. People in bear country should not go alone into the hills, should carry a bell or radio, 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 Tuesday morning papers, including the Yomiuri Shimbun, the Asahi Shimbun and the Nikkei; on Kyodo News, Jiji Press and NHK; on the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Teikoku Databank and official statements in Japan and abroad; on Reuters, Bloomberg, Axios, Al Jazeera, The Hill, the

Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Fox News, Iran International, Korea JoongAng Daily, Business+IT, MLB.com, The Athletic, the New York Post, Space.com and soe where cited; on the Japan Meteorological Agency and Weathernews for weather; and on the U.S. National Weather Service for the American map.

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TOMORROW'S EDITION

Wednesday: the first day of lower house questioning on the food tax cut, MMX's first day on its way to Mars, Typhoon Champi at its peak as it heads for the seas south of Okinawa, the coalition's first anniversary, the result of the American League Championship Series and the Asian Para Games.

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