

★ TAKAICHI'S FIRST YEAR ★ CHAMPI DEEPENS TO 900 HPA ★ TAX CUT DEBATE OPENS ★ RUSSIA HOLDS REPORTER ★ JAPAN KEEP GYMNASTICS CROWN ★ RAYS WIN PENNANT ★

Takaichi Marks a Year in Power With Her Rivals Kept Close and Her Party Firmly Behind Her, as the Food Tax Cut Opens Year Two

Japan's first woman prime minister won a landslide in February and has used her majority to pass contested conservative laws; a minister's dismissal and the funding of a 10 trillion yen tax cut now dominate the Diet

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi speaks at a podium, in a file photo. She marks one year in office on Wednesday, with a 352-seat coalition behind her in the lower house and the food tax cut before the Diet. (File photo: WPM Productions)

Sanae Takaichi marks one year as prime minister on Wednesday with a commanding majority in the House of Representatives, a Cabinet built to keep her rivals inside the government rather than outside it, and the first big test of her second year already under way in the Diet: the bill to cut the consumption tax on food.

She became Japan's first woman prime minister on October 21 last year. Earlier that month she had won the leadership of the Liberal Democratic Party in a runoff against Shinjiro Koizumi, and when Komeito ended its 26-year partnership with the Liberal Democrats, she formed a coalition with the Japan Innovation Party, known as Ishin, to secure her election in the Diet.

Diplomacy first

Her first weeks were dominated by diplomacy. She hosted President Donald Trump in Tokyo at the end of October last year, and days later met President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in South Korea. Relations with Beijing then soured sharply after she told the Diet in November that a Taiwan contingency involving the use of force could amount to a "survival-threatening situation" for Japan, the legal term under which the security laws allow Japan to exercise collective self-defence, and China urged its citizens to avoid travelling to Japan.

The landslide

The arithmetic changed in the new year. Ms Takaichi dissolved the lower house at the opening of the ordinary Diet session in January, and in the general election on February 8 the Liberal Democrats won 316 seats, a figure that includes candidates endorsed after the vote. With Ishin's 36, the ruling bloc took 352 of the 465 seats, about three-quarters of the chamber.

The Centrist Reform Alliance, the party formed in January by the Constitutional Democrats and Komeito to fight the election, won 49 seats. It has since effectively broken up. Lawmakers from its Constitutional Democratic side left last month to form the Democratic Reform Association, and Komeito has restarted as a party in its own right.

On February 18 the Diet re-elected Ms Takaichi as the 105th prime minister, and her second Cabinet took office that night.

The power of numbers

Kyodo News described her approach as using "the power of numbers" to advance conservative policies. In the special Diet session after the election, the coalition passed a revision of the Imperial House Law

creating a system to adopt male descendants, in the male line, of former branches of the imperial family into the imperial family. It also passed a law making it a crime to damage the national flag. Both were enacted over the objections of opposition parties, and critics of the flag law say it could infringe on freedom of expression.

Ms Takaichi has signalled that she intends to press ahead with further policies on the economy and security that divide national opinion, Kyodo reported. In her policy speech to the current extraordinary session, she pledged to build what she calls a strong economy, a promise on which the government's results are now being judged.

The first economic steps

Her government compiled an economic package worth 21.3 trillion yen in its first weeks, and the provisional surcharge on gasoline tax, in place for half a century, was abolished at the end of last year with the support of opposition parties. The food tax cut is meant to be the next step in the same direction, easing the cost of living for households squeezed by rising prices.

Rivals inside the tent

Her reshuffle last month showed how she means to hold her position. Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara, Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama and Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi kept their posts. Mr Koizumi, now 45, stayed on as defence minister, and Takayuki Kobayashi, another rival from the leadership race, was reappointed chairman of the party's Policy Research Council.

Yoshimasa Hayashi, the former chief cabinet secretary who served as her internal affairs minister and is seen as a possible successor, left the Cabinet. The Yomiuri Shimbun described the strategy on its front page on Wednesday as containing rivals, with an eye on the party leadership election next year, when Ms Takaichi will seek a full term.

In the party, Secretary-General Shunichi Suzuki, 73, and Election Strategy Committee chairman Yasutoshi Nishimura were reappointed. Hiroshi Kajiyama moved from Diet affairs to chair the General Council, Hideki Murai, 46, a former deputy chief cabinet secretary, took over Diet affairs, and Taro Aso, 85, remains vice president.

The reshuffle also gave Ishin its first seat in the Cabinet. Hiroshi Nakatsuka, 70, became minister for regulatory reform, and Goshi Hosono, who served as environment minister in the Democratic Party of Japan government, became reconstruction minister.

Continued on Page 2

TYPHOONS

Typhoon Champi Deepens to 900 Hectopascals and Heads for the Seas South of Okinawa; the Sakishima Islands Brace for Storm Winds

The violent typhoon is forecast to pass near Yonaguni before dawn on Saturday as a strong typhoon, then turn north across the East China Sea toward Kyushu, reaching the waters near Tsushima by early Monday

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, deepened to a central pressure of 900 hectopascals early on Wednesday, one of the lowest readings a typhoon can reach, and was moving west-northwest east of the Philippines toward the seas south of Okinawa, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

At 6 a.m. the large, violent typhoon was at 17.6 degrees north latitude and 130.9 degrees east longitude, moving west-northwest at 25 kilometres an hour, with maximum sustained winds of 60 metres a second near its centre and gusts of 85 metres a second.

Storm-force winds of 25 metres a second or more extended 280 kilometres to the northeast and 220 kilometres to the southwest. Gale-force winds reached 650 kilometres to the northeast and 500 kilometres to the southwest.

The forecast

The agency expects Champi to stay a violent typhoon close to 900 hectopascals into the sea south of Okinawa on Thursday, then to weaken. On its forecast centre line, it passes about 30 kilometres west of Yonaguni before dawn on Saturday as a strong typhoon, of 965 hectopascals, with maximum winds of 40 metres a second.

Ishigaki and Miyakojima are inside the area that could have storm winds by 3 a.m. Friday, and Yonaguni and Taipei by 3 a.m. Saturday. The typhoon is then forecast to turn north across the East China Sea, becoming a severe tropical storm by 3 a.m. Sunday and a tropical storm near Tsushima, about 210 kilometres west of Fukuoka, by 3 a.m. Monday.

Okinawa braces

Swells from the typhoon were already reaching Okinawa on Wednesday. Weathernews forecast waves of about 5 metres on Wednesday and 6 metres or more on Thursday, and said gusts of more than 40 metres a second were possible in the Sakishima Islands around Friday, when the typhoon is closest.

The Okinawa Meteorological Observatory warned that storms or warning-level heavy rain were possible in the Miyako region around Friday and in the Yaeyama region on Friday and Saturday, and that storm surges could reach warning levels there, depending on the track. Organisers have already cancelled the Okinawa Industry Festival and other weekend events.

Western Japan next

The agency's 70 per cent probability circle for 3 a.m. Monday, which shows where the centre is likely to be, is 460 kilometres in radius and takes in all of Kyushu, so people in western Japan are being urged to follow the forecasts closely.

A busy season

Champi is the 30th typhoon of the year, already more than the annual average of about 25 recorded by the agency.

The path so far

The storm's track, plotted on the agency's map, began far to the east of Guam around October 15. It passed close to Guam on October 18 and has moved steadily west-north-west since, strengthening as it crossed

TODAY'S INDEX	
Typhoons	3-4
Politics	4-8
International	8-11
Economy	12-13
Business	12-14
Technology	14-17
Society	17-22
Sports	22-25
Culture	23-25
Editorial & Opinion	26-30
Crossword	24
Weather	18

WEATHER — TOKYO

29°C

Low 19°C · Cloudy, some sun

Sapporo

17°

Osaka

30°

Fukuoka

26°

Naha

31°

Rain across the north, heavy at times in Akita; Kanazawa's rain turns heavy this afternoon. 29°C in Tokyo, 31°C in Takamatsu and Naha. Typhoon No. 30, Champi, at 900 hPa, forecast to pass near Yonaguni on Saturday. Full weather, Page 18.

TODAY IN BRIEF

- Politics: Sanae Takaichi marks a year as prime minister, her rivals inside the Cabinet and 352 seats behind her.
- Typhoon: Champi deepens to 900 hPa and is forecast to pass near Yonaguni before dawn on Saturday.
- Diet: the lower house begins debating the food tax cut; the PM will not yet say who pays or who benefits.
- Russia: Japan demands consular access to the detained Hokkaido Shimbun reporter.
- Markets: the Nikkei falls 841 yen; the half-year trade deficit nearly doubles to 2.8 trillion yen.
- Sports: Japan keep the men's team world title in gymnastics and qualify for Los Angeles.

ONE YEAR

- PM since Oct. 21, 2025.
- 352 of 465 lower house seats.
- Sankei-FNN support: 62.6%.
- Party vote: Sept. 2027.

TODAY

- Takaichi's first anniversary.
- Women's gymnastics team final.
- Tokyo 29, cloudy, some sun.
- Champi at 900 hPa.

MARKETS	
Nikkei 225 (Tue)	64,075.42 ▼841.28
Topix (Tue)	4,009.21 ▼58.27
Dow (Tue)	52,495.88 ▲529.85
Nasdaq (Tue)	26,424.82 ▼6.07
WTI crude (Tue)	\$101.79 ▼1.87
Yen (Tue, 5 p.m.)	158.07-09 per \$
Bank of Japan	meets Oct. 29-30

INSIDE

- Champi at 900 hPa, Page 3.
- Tax cut debate opens, Page 5.
- Security talks: subs and principles, Page 6.
- Russia holds reporter, Page 10.
- Nikkei sheds 841 yen, Page 12.
- MMX on its way to Mars, Page 15.
- Experts to help with bears, Page 21.
- Kyoto's citizen bus fare, Page 22.
- Gymnasts keep world title, Page 23.
- Editorial: one year, rivals contained, Page 26.

THE WEEK

- Thu. 22: baseball draft.
- Fri. 23: Champi near Sakishima.
- Sat. 24: Japan Series.
- Sun. 25: Fukushima vote.

THE TROPICS

- Champi: 900 hPa, violent.
- Near Yonaguni early Saturday.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

FROM PAGE 1

Takaichi Marks a Year in Power With Her Rivals Kept Close and Her Party Firmly Behind Her, as the Food Tax Cut Opens Year Two

Continued from Page 1

The stumble

The new lineup produced the government's first resignation within a month. Kazuo Yana, appointed agriculture minister at the prime minister's own initiative, was replaced on October 15 after remarks about cutting road budgets for local governments and a suspected violation of the Public Offices Election Law. Arata Takebe, a former senior vice minister for agriculture, succeeded him.

Education Minister Yoshihiro Seki, meanwhile, has been criticised for holding a fundraising party inside a lower house members' office building, in breach of the chamber's rules. Both men were disciplined by the party over the factions' slush-fund scandal, and opposition leaders say the prime minister must answer for appointing them.

What the polls say

A Sankei Shimbun and FNN poll taken on Saturday and Sunday put support for the Cabinet at 62.6 per cent, up 1 point from September, and 62.3 per cent of respondents rated her first year positively. Eighty-five per cent said Mr Yana's resignation was appropriate, but 51.2 per cent said the prime minister had not dealt with it at the right time.

Other surveys are less kind. A Kyodo News poll at the weekend found support below 50 per cent for the first time, at 49.1 per cent.

The test of year two

On Tuesday the lower house began debating the bill that would cut the consumption tax on food and non-alcoholic drinks from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027, the first cut since the tax was introduced in 1989. The cost is put at about 10 trillion yen. The government says it will not rely on deficit-covering bonds, but it has not said where the money will come from.

Voters like the idea but want an answer to that question. In the Sankei-FNN poll, 62.6 per cent supported the cut, while 80.9 per cent said the government should clearly show how it would be funded, and 52.2 per cent doubted it would work as a

response to rising prices.

The coalition is four seats short of a majority in the House of Councillors, so the bill will need opposition votes there. The Democratic Party for the People has submitted its own plan built on tax deductions, and the Democratic Reform Association wants a cash payment of 40,000 yen a person instead.

Security and the economy

The Liberal Democrats and Ishin plan to start talks in November on revising the three documents that set Japan's security strategy, due by the end of the year, including whether to review the three non-nuclear principles and to acquire nuclear-powered submarines.

On the economy, the weak yen, which has hovered around 158 to the dollar, and crude oil above 100 dollars a barrel because of the war in the Middle East are squeezing households. On Tuesday the Nikkei Stock Average fell 841 yen, and figures released on Wednesday morning showed Japan's trade deficit for the April-September half year nearly doubling, to 2.8 trillion yen, as fuel import bills rose.

The year ahead

The extraordinary Diet session runs until December 12. Ishin wants the session to deliver a cut of 45 proportional representation seats in the lower house, a demand that has met resistance in the Liberal Democratic Party, and Ishin's leader, Osaka Governor Hirofumi Yoshimura, is preparing for a referendum next spring on his plan to reorganise Osaka.

For Ms Takaichi, the date that matters most is next year's party leadership election. A year in, her hold on the party looks firm. Whether it stays that way will depend on whether the tax cut delivers the relief she has promised, and on whether she can stop the kind of appointment that cost her an agriculture minister this month.

allowing an extension if the economy weakens.

The benefit

The bill also states the government's intention to introduce a benefit linked to income early, in fiscal 2027. Asked who would qualify, Ms Takaichi said annual incomes of 1 million to 3.5 million yen were one point of reference, with the details to be decided after further debate.

The cost

The cut is expected to cost about 10 trillion yen. The government says it will not rely on special deficit-covering bonds, but it has not said what spending cuts or other revenue will pay for it.

Why it is historic

Japan introduced the consumption tax in 1989 at 3 per cent and has raised it three times since, most recently in 2019. It has never been cut.

The hurdle

The ruling coalition has a large majority in the lower house but is four seats short in the House of Councillors, so the government needs the support of opposition parties or independents there to pass the bill.

The deadline

The government wants the bill enacted before the extraordinary Diet session ends on December 12.

Today's reduced rate

The 8 per cent reduced rate was introduced in October 2019, when the standard rate rose to 10 per cent. It applies to food and drink bought to take home, including takeaway meals and home deliveries, while meals eaten in restaurants are taxed at 10 per cent. That dividing line would stay.

The reference point

The prime minister said the income range of 1 million to 3.5 million yen was drawn from international comparisons of the combined burden of taxes and social insurance premiums.

POLITICS

The Week Ahead

By the Political Desk

WEDNESDAY 21: The Takaichi government's first anniversary. Komeito, the Democratic Reform Association and the Centrist Reform Alliance discuss the food tax cut. Champi stays a violent typhoon south of Japan.

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 and the Kurama Fire Festival in Kyoto.

FRIDAY 23: Champi is forecast to be closest to the Sakishima Islands; storm winds are possible in Ishigaki and Miyakojima. The World Series opens in Milwaukee, on Saturday morning Japan time.

SATURDAY 24: The Japan Series opens at Yokohama Stadium, DeNA against SoftBank. Champi passes near Yonaguni before dawn. The Asian Para Games close in Aichi.

SUNDAY 25: Fukushima governor and Naha mayoral elections. Champi over the East China Sea. Europe's clocks go back an hour.

MONDAY 26: Champi is forecast to be near Tsushima as a tropical storm. Tomoka Nishiyama holds a news conference on whether to turn professional in shogi.

LATER: Israeli general election, October 27; U.S. Federal Reserve, October 27-28; the B.League board looks again at Osaka's licence, October 28; Bank of Japan, October 29-30; U.S. clocks go back, November 1; U.S. midterm elections, November 3; Osaka Ishin leadership vote, November 7.

MID-NOVEMBER: Quad leaders' summit in Manila, according to U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

NOVEMBER 22: Game 3 of the Tengen go title match, in Busan, South Korea.

ALSO THIS WEEK: The women's team final at the gymnastics world championships in Rotterdam, Wednesday; the Kinoshita Group Japan Open in Osaka continues; the Asian Para Games run until Saturday.

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

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Nikkei sheds 841 yen, Page 12.

MMX on its way to Mars, Page 15.

POLITICS

The Cabinet After the September Reshuffle

By the Political Desk

PRIME MINISTER: Sanae Takaichi.

CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY: Minoru Kihara (retained), also in charge of the abduction issue.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS: Toshimitsu Motegi (retained). FINANCE: Satsuki Katayama (retained). DEFENCE: Shinjiro Koizumi (retained).

ECONOMY, TRADE AND INDUSTRY: Ryosei Akazawa (retained). HEALTH, LABOUR AND WELFARE: Kenichiro Ueno (retained).

ECONOMIC SECURITY: Kimi Onoda (retained). GROWTH STRATEGY: Minoru Kiuchi (retained).

INTERNAL AFFAIRS: Hisayuki Fujii. JUSTICE: Takashi Yamashita. EDUCATION: Yoshihiro Seki.

LAND, INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT: Tatsunori Ibayashi. ENVIRONMENT: Hiroyoshi Sasagawa. DIGITAL: Toshiharu Furukawa.

RECONSTRUCTION: Goshi Hosono. NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION: Yasuhiro Hanashi.

REGULATORY REFORM: Hiroshi Nakatsuka, the first Cabinet minister from the Japan Innovation Party.

AGRICULTURE: Arata Takebe, who replaced Kazuo Yana on October 15.

LEFT THE CABINET: Yoshimasa Hayashi, internal affairs minister until the reshuffle and seen as a possible successor.

PARTY: Shunichi Suzuki, secretary-general; Takayuki Kobayashi, policy chief; Hiroshi Kajiyama, General Council; Yasutoshi Nishimura, election strategy; Hideki Murai, Diet affairs; Taro Aso, vice president.

POLITICS

How the Liberal Democrats Choose Their Leader, and Why Next September Matters So Much to the Prime Minister

Ms Takaichi was elected to complete her predecessor's term; to stay on, she must win a party vote in which lawmakers and rank-and-file members both have a say

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

In Japan the leader of the largest party in the House of Representatives is normally elected prime minister by the Diet, so the contest that matters most for the head of government is often the one inside the Liberal Democratic Party.

A three-year term

The party's president serves a term of three years. Under rules changed in 2017, a president may serve up to three consecutive terms.

Completing a term

When a president steps down early, the successor serves out the rest of the term. Ms Takaichi was elected in October last year to complete the term of Shigeru Ishiba, which runs until September next year, so she must face the party again to win a full term of her own.

Who votes

In a full leadership election, each of the party's Diet members casts a vote, and an equal number of votes is allocated according to the ballots of rank-and-file party members across the country. If no candidate wins a majority, the top two go to a runoff.

Getting on the ballot

A candidate needs the endorsement of 20 of the party's Diet members to stand, which is why rivals spend years building support among colleagues.

Why the reshuffle matters

That is the background to September's personnel decisions. Keeping potential challengers such as Shinjiro Koizumi and Takayuki Kobayashi in senior posts ties their records to her government, while Yoshimasa Hayashi, who has not hidden his interest in the leadership, now has more freedom outside the Cabinet.

The runoff last year

In the 2025 election Ms Takaichi and Mr Koizumi went to a runoff, which she won, before going on to become prime minister.

FROM PAGE 1

Typhoon Champi Deepens to 900 Hectopascals and Heads for the Seas South of Okinawa; the Sakishima Islands Brace for Storm Winds

Continued from Page 1

warm water east of the Philippines.

Full coverage, Page 3.

POLITICS

The Takaichi Year in Dates

By the Political Desk

OCTOBER 4, 2025: Sanae Takaichi wins the leadership of the Liberal Democratic Party, beating Shinjiro Koizumi in a runoff.

OCTOBER 10: Komeito ends its 26-year coalition with the Liberal Democrats.

OCTOBER 20: The Liberal Democrats and the Japan Innovation Party agree to govern together.

OCTOBER 21: The Diet elects Ms Takaichi prime minister, the first woman to hold the post.

OCTOBER 28: She hosts President Donald Trump in Tokyo.

OCTOBER 31: She meets President Xi Jinping at the APEC summit in South Korea.

NOVEMBER: Her Diet remarks on a Taiwan contingency set off a row with China; an economic package worth 21.3 trillion yen follows.

DECEMBER 31: The provisional surcharge on gasoline tax is abolished.

JANUARY 2026: She dissolves the House of Representatives at the opening of the ordinary Diet session.

FEBRUARY 8: General election. The Liberal Democrats win 316 seats and Ishin 36, giving the ruling bloc 352 of the 465 seats.

FEBRUARY 18: Re-elected prime minister; her

second Cabinet takes office.

SPECIAL SESSION: The Imperial House Law is revised and a law making damage to the national flag a crime is enacted, both over opposition objections.

SEPTEMBER: Party executives and Cabinet reshuffled; Ishin receives its first Cabinet post.

OCTOBER 15: Agriculture Minister Kazuo Yana is replaced by Arata Takebe.

OCTOBER 20: The lower house begins debating the bill to cut the consumption tax on food to 1 per cent.

SEPTEMBER 2027: Her term as party president ends; the leadership election will decide whether she wins a full term.

POLITICS

From 8 Per Cent to 1 Per Cent for Two Years, Then a Benefit Tied to Income: What the Government's Tax Bill Would Do

The first cut in the consumption tax since it was introduced in 1989 would cost about 10 trillion yen; the government says the rate will go back up in 2029, and that it will not borrow to pay

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

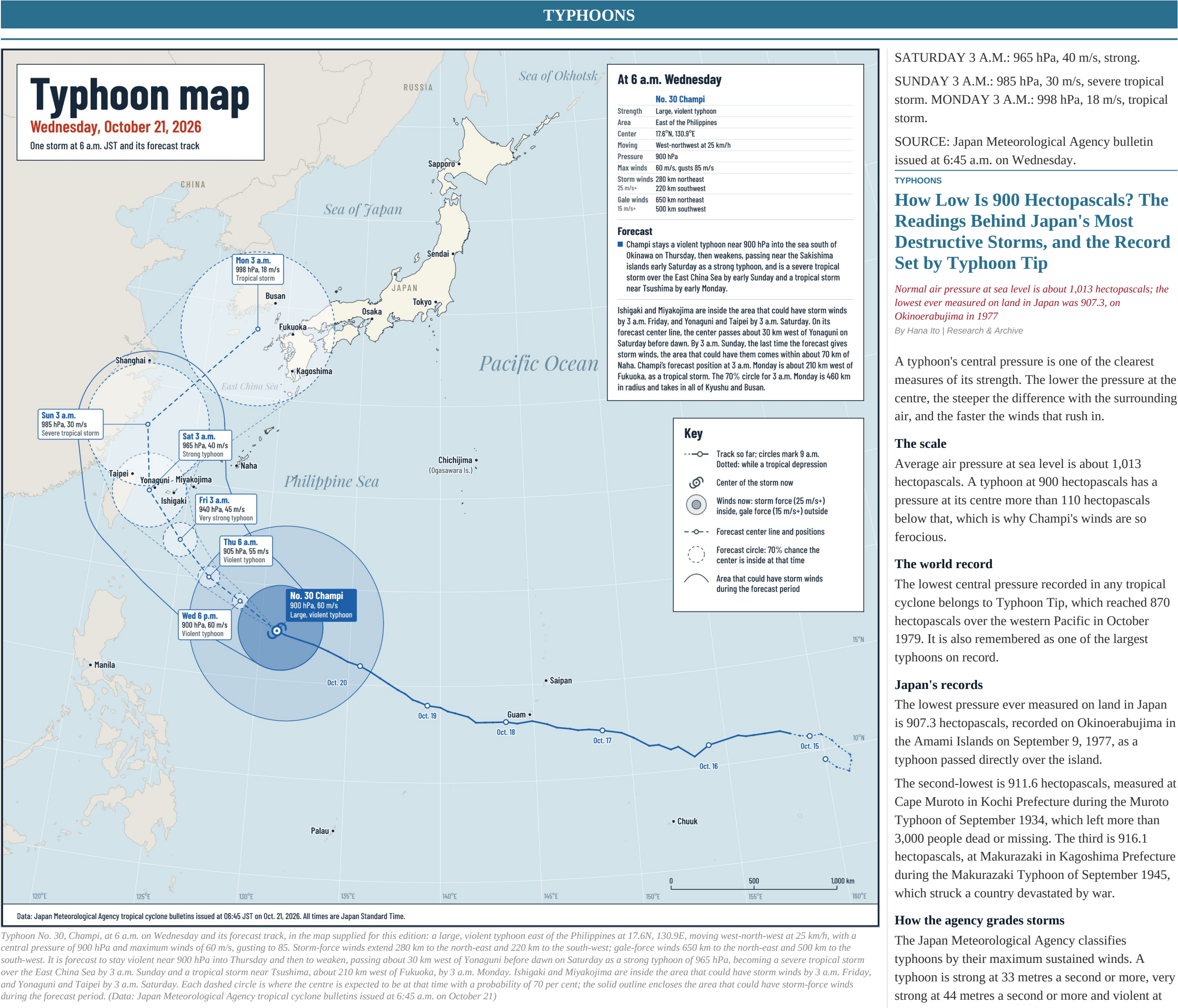
The bill the House of Representatives began debating on Tuesday is the centrepiece of the Takaichi government's response to rising prices. Here is what it would do.

The rate

The consumption tax on food and non-alcoholic drinks, currently charged at a reduced rate of 8 per cent, would fall to 1 per cent. Eating out, alcohol and most other goods and services would stay at the standard rate of 10 per cent.

How long

The cut would take effect in April 2027 and last two years. The prime minister told the lower house on Tuesday that the rate would go back up when the two years end and that she was not considering a delay for economic reasons. The bill contains no clause



TYPHOONS

The sea

Seas were already high with swells on Wednesday. Very rough seas are forecast around the Sakishima Islands, and the observatory said storm surges could reach warning levels there depending on the typhoon's track.

Before the wind

Officials advise residents to secure or bring inside anything that could be blown away, such as potted plants, bicycles and signboards, to check gutters and drains, and to reinforce windows where shutters are not fitted.

Households are urged to keep drinking water, food that needs no cooking, medicine, torches, batteries and a radio, enough for several days, and to charge mobile phones and spare batteries before power cuts begin.

Where to go

Residents should check the location of evacuation shelters and the safe routes to them in advance, and move early if their homes are in areas at risk of storm surge, flooding or landslides. Going out once storm winds begin is dangerous.

Travellers

Flights and ferries to and from the islands are likely to be disrupted as the typhoon approaches. Visitors should check with airlines and shipping companies and be ready to change their plans.

Events called off

Organisers in Okinawa have begun cancelling events. The Okinawa Industry Festival was called off for all its dates, with its organisers describing the decision as painful but unavoidable because safety concerns could not be dispelled.

TYPHOONS

Okinawa: Seas, Winds and Warnings

By the Weather Desk

WAVES: About 5 metres on Wednesday and 6 metres or more on Thursday, according to Weathernews.

SWELL: Already reaching Okinawa on Wednesday.

GUSTS: More than 40 metres a second possible in the Sakishima Islands around Friday, when the typhoon is closest.

MIYAKO: Storms or warning-level heavy rain possible around Friday.

YAEYAMA: Storms or warning-level heavy rain possible on Friday and Saturday.

STORM SURGE: Warning levels possible in the Sakishima Islands, depending on the track.

MAIN ISLAND: Winds strengthening from Wednesday; rough seas.

PROBABILITY OF STORM WINDS WITHIN FIVE DAYS: Ishigaki area and Yaeyama 91 per cent; Yonaguni 82; Miyako 72; Okinawa main island and Kume Island 10.

CANCELLED: The Okinawa Industry Festival, and other events in the prefecture.

SOURCE: Okinawa Meteorological Observatory and Weathernews, early Wednesday.

TYPHOONS

How to Read a Typhoon Map: Forecast Circles, the Storm-Wind Area and Why the Circles Grow Larger Each Day

Each dashed circle shows where the centre is likely to be, with 70 per cent probability, not how big the storm will be

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

The typhoon map in this edition, like the Japan Meteorological Agency's own charts, shows the path of Typhoon No. 30, Champi, as a series of dashed circles joined by a line. They are easy to misread.

The forecast circle

Each dashed circle shows the area in which the centre of the typhoon is expected to be at the stated time, with a probability of 70 per cent. It does not show the size of the storm. A large circle means the forecast is less certain, not that the typhoon is bigger.

Why they grow

The circles get larger the further ahead the forecast looks, because small differences in steering winds add up over time. On today's map the circle for 3 a.m. on Monday has a radius of 460 kilometres and takes in all of Kyushu and Busan.

The centre line

The line through the circles joins their centres. The typhoon will not necessarily follow it, and on the edges of a forecast circle the effects can be quite different from those on the line.

The storm-wind area

The solid outline on the map encloses the area that could have storm-force winds, of 25 metres a second or more, during the forecast period if the centre moves anywhere within the forecast circles. Ishigaki and Miyakojima are inside it by 3 a.m. on Friday, and Yonaguni and Taipei by 3 a.m. on Saturday.

Winds now

Around the typhoon's present position, the inner shaded area shows where storm-force winds are blowing now, and the outer area the reach of gale-force winds, of 15 metres a second or more. For Champi at 6 a.m. on Wednesday, storm-force winds reached 280 kilometres to the north-east and gales 650 kilometres.

Strength and size

The agency grades a typhoon's strength by its maximum sustained winds: strong from 33 metres a second, very strong from 44 and violent from 54. Its size is graded by the radius of gale-force winds: large from 500 kilometres and very large from 800.

What to do

If you live in or are travelling to an area inside a forecast circle or the storm-wind area, follow the latest bulletins and local government advice, and prepare early.

POLITICS

The Weekend Poll at a Glance

By the Political Desk

WHO: The Sankei Shimbun and FNN, by telephone on October 17 and 18; 1,014 adults nationwide.

CABINET SUPPORT: 62.6 per cent, up 1 point from 61.6 per cent in September.

THE FIRST YEAR: 62.3 per cent rate it positively, including 8.6 per cent who rate it highly.

YANA'S RESIGNATION: 85 per cent say it was appropriate; 9.8 per cent say it was not.

THE TIMING: 51.2 per cent say the prime minister did not act at the right time.

KEEP EXPLAINING: 69.3 per cent say Mr Yana should go on explaining himself after resigning.

THE FOOD TAX CUT: 62.6 per cent in favour.

THE MONEY: 80.9 per cent say the government should clearly show how the cut will be paid for.

DOES IT WORK: 52.2 per cent say the cut will have little or no effect against rising prices.

ANOTHER VIEW: A Kyodo News poll at the weekend put Cabinet support at 49.1 per cent, below 50 per cent for the first time.

POLITICS

Democratic Party for the People Tables Its Own Bill, Warning the Food Tax Cut Ends in 'a Big Tax Rise for the Middle Class'

Yuichiro Tamaki's party proposes cuts in income and resident taxes plus payments to people on low incomes, and urges the ruling parties to negotiate changes to the government's plan

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The Democratic Party for the People submitted a bill to the House of Representatives on Tuesday as an alternative to the government's plan to cut the consumption tax on food, centring its proposal on tax deductions for income and resident taxes combined with cash payments.

The party says the government's new benefit, which would be linked to income, leaves out middle-income households, and that its own plan would provide more support for them.

About 50,000 yen

It estimates that its bill would reduce the burden on households by about 50,000 yen.

The cliff in 2029

The party's leader, Yuichiro Tamaki, told reporters at the Diet on Tuesday morning that his greatest concern was what happens when the government's two-year cut ends and the rate on food returns to 8 per cent.

"The biggest problem is that it would turn into a big tax increase for the middle class," he said.

A call for talks

Mr Tamaki urged the ruling parties to agree to talks on amending the government's bill, and the party intends to press the government to accept its proposals.

A record of leverage

The party made its name by pressing to raise the income level at which income tax starts to be paid, the so-called 1.03 million yen wall, after the 2024 general election left the government of the day without a lower house majority, and the threshold was subsequently raised.

The question on the floor

In the plenary session, the party's Satoshi Asano asked the prime minister whether she would seek a fresh mandate if she decided to delay the rate's return. Ms Takaichi said she was not considering a delay on economic grounds.

Why the party matters

The Democratic Party for the People has pressed for tax cuts aimed at working households for several years, and its votes could count in the House of Councillors, where the coalition lacks a majority.

The government's position

The government says its bill would combine immediate relief at the checkout with a benefit targeted at lower incomes, and that it will not rely on deficit-covering bonds to pay for the cut.

POLITICS

Democratic Reform Association Wants 40,000 Yen for Everyone Now and a Benefit Tied to Income, Saying No Tax Cut Would Then Be Needed

The party formed last month by former Constitutional Democrats will present its plan to Komeito and the Centrist Reform Alliance on Wednesday as opposition parties look for common ground

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The Democratic Reform Association decided on Tuesday that the government should quickly pay 40,000 yen to every resident to help with rising prices, and then, once the money has been found, introduce a benefit system linked to income.

The party approved the position at a meeting on Tuesday, and its secretary-general, Takeshi Shina, announced it at a news conference at the Diet that afternoon.

No need for a tax cut

Mr Shina indicated that if such a benefit system were put in place, the cut in the consumption tax on food proposed by the government would be unnecessary.

Talks with Komeito

The party will explain its position at a joint meeting with Komeito and the Centrist Reform Alliance on Wednesday, as the three look for a common approach to the government's bill.

A new party

The Democratic Reform Association was formed in September by about 20 lawmakers who came from the Constitutional Democratic Party and left the Centrist Reform Alliance, the party set up with Komeito to fight February's general election. It is led by Junya Ogawa, who led the alliance.

It is still finding its feet. A Sankei Shimbun and FNN poll at the weekend put support for the party at 0.1 per cent.

No subsidy this time

The party received nothing when the Internal Affairs Ministry paid the latest instalment of political party subsidies on Tuesday, while the Centrist Reform Alliance, now reduced to one lower house member, received about 585 million yen.

Mr Shina's defence

Mr Shina, who was also the alliance's secretary-general, said the alliance needed the money to wind up its affairs. "It is not as if it is trying to receive money with no real activity. It is nothing to feel guilty about," he said.

POLITICS

Three Answers to Rising Prices

By the Political Desk

THE GOVERNMENT: Cut the consumption tax on food and non-alcoholic drinks from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027, then restore it.

ITS BENEFIT: A new benefit linked to income, to be introduced early in fiscal 2027; incomes of 1 million to 3.5 million yen are one point of reference.

THE COST: About 10 trillion yen, without deficit-covering bonds; the source has not been named.

THE DPP: Deductions from income and resident taxes plus payments to people on low incomes, worth about 50,000 yen to a household, according to the party.

ITS WARNING: When the two years end, the return to 8 per cent "would turn into a big tax increase for the middle class," says leader Yuichiro Tamaki.

THE DEMOCRATIC REFORM ASSOCIATION: 40,000 yen to every resident now, then a benefit linked to income once the money is found.

ITS VIEW: With such a benefit in place, the tax cut would be unnecessary.

THE TALKS: Komeito, the association and the Centrist Reform Alliance meet on Wednesday to look for a common approach.

THE ARITHMETIC: The coalition is four seats short of a majority in the House of Councillors.

THE PUBLIC: 62.6 per cent back the cut, but 80.9 per cent want the funding shown, in the Sankei-FNN poll.

POLITICS

Kishida Tells Oxford Audience That a Russian Victory in Ukraine Would Tempt Others in East Asia to Change the Status Quo by Force

The former prime minister, in conversation with Rishi Sunak, explains why Japan took such a hard line on Moscow: the world's support in an Asian crisis depends on it

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Former Prime Minister Fumio Kishida warned that if Russia's invasion of Ukraine succeeded, some country in East Asia might wrongly conclude that changing the status quo by force would be tolerated there too, in a public conversation with the former British prime minister Rishi Sunak at the University of Oxford on Monday.

"A country could emerge in East Asia that mistakenly believes a unilateral change to the status quo by force is allowed," Mr Kishida said.

A question from Sunak

Mr Sunak asked why Japan had taken such a strong stance against Russia over a war so far from its shores.

Mr Kishida replied that Japan had joined the United States and Europe in imposing strict sanctions to show that it would not accept such an outrage. How Japan responded, he said, would decide "whether the world will stand with Japan if a crisis breaks out in East Asia."

"We could not treat it as someone else's problem," he said.

One security

Mr Kishida said that the security of the Euro-Atlantic region and of the Indo-Pacific could not be separated.

The 2022 decision

He recalled that his government had adopted the three security documents in December 2022, which set a goal for raising defence spending. Japan's security environment was severe, he said, and he had acted because "I believed that doing nothing was a risk."

The documents now

The documents he introduced are now being revised. The Takaichi government intends to finish the revision by the end of the year, and the Liberal Democrats and the Japan Innovation Party will begin talks on it in November.

Two former leaders

Mr Kishida was prime minister from October 2021 to October 2024. Mr Sunak led Britain from October 2022 to July 2024, and the two governments signed a defence agreement in 2023 allowing their forces to train and operate in each other's countries.

A shared fighter

In December 2022 the two leaders, with Italy, announced the Global Combat Air Programme to develop a next-generation fighter jet together.

POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi speaks in the Diet, in a file photo. The House of Representatives began debating her bill to cut the consumption tax on food to 1 per cent for two years on Tuesday. (File photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

Tax Cut Debate Opens in the Lower House: Takaichi Calls It Her 'Long-Held Wish' but Will Not Yet Say Who Pays or Who Benefits

The prime minister gives annual incomes of 1 million to 3.5 million yen as one reference point for a new benefit, rules out delaying the rate's return in 2029 and sees no need for an election over it

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The House of Representatives began debating the government's bill to cut the consumption tax on food on Tuesday, opening what is likely to be the defining argument of the Diet session, with opposition parties pressing Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on how the cut would be paid for and who would receive the benefits that come with it.

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama explained the bill at a plenary session, and representatives of the parties then put questions to the prime minister.

The bill would lower the consumption tax on food and non-alcoholic drinks from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027. It also states the government's intention to introduce a benefit linked to income early, in fiscal 2027. It would be the first cut in the consumption tax since its introduction in 1989.

'A long-held wish'

Ms Takaichi described the cut as her long-held wish and said she would do everything she could to bring it about.

But she did not disclose the specific sources of the roughly 10 trillion yen needed or say exactly who would receive the benefit. The bill says the government will not rely on special deficit-covering bonds, but leaves the details for later.

Who would qualify

Asked about eligibility for the benefit, the prime minister said annual incomes of 1 million to 3.5 million yen were one point of reference, drawing on international comparisons of the burden of taxes and social insurance premiums, and added that the details would be decided after further debate. Opposition lawmakers had pressed her to set out clear income thresholds and payment amounts.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said at a news conference that the government would respond appropriately during the deliberations while listening

POLITICS

The Tax Bill: Day One 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: April 2027, for two years. The rate then returns to 8 per cent.

THE BENEFIT: A new benefit linked to income, to be introduced early in fiscal 2027.

WHO QUALIFIES: Not yet decided. The prime minister called annual incomes of 1 million to 3.5 million yen one point of reference.

THE COST: About 10 trillion yen.

THE MONEY: No special deficit-covering bonds, the bill says; the sources are not yet specified.

A DELAY: The prime minister says she is not considering postponing the rate's return for economic reasons.

THE DPP PLAN: Income and resident tax cuts plus payments to people on low incomes; the party says burdens would fall by about 50,000 yen.

THE DRA PLAN: 40,000 yen a person now, then an income-linked benefit instead of a tax cut.

to the views of each party.

No election over a delay

Satoshi Asano of the Democratic Party for the People asked whether Ms Takaichi would dissolve the lower house to seek a mandate if she decided to postpone restoring the rate. In 2014, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe postponed a planned consumption tax increase, citing the economy, and called a general election to seek voters' approval.

"We are not considering a postponement on economic grounds, so I do not envisage seeking the people's judgment," Ms Takaichi replied. She also said the government would see the return of the rate after two years through to the end. The bill contains no clause allowing the cut to be extended if the economy weakens.

The opposition's alternatives

Opposition parties argue that targeted payments would do more good than a tax cut, and several have set out alternatives. The Democratic Party for the People submitted its own bill on Tuesday centred on cuts in income and resident taxes and payments to people on low incomes, and the Democratic Reform Association proposed a payment of 40,000 yen to every resident.

The road ahead

The coalition has a large majority in the lower house but is four seats short in the House of Councillors, so the government will need opposition votes to enact the bill before the session ends on December 12. Most opposition parties in the cross-party national council on social security had already opposed the plan to cut the rate to 1 per cent.

THE HURDLE: The coalition is four seats short of a majority in the House of Councillors.

THE DEADLINE: The Diet session ends on December 12.

POLITICS

Komeito and the Democratic Reform Association Agree to Press Education Minister Seki Over His Party in a Diet Office Building

Komeito's secretary-general says failing to follow the rules is a serious problem; the opposition says the prime minister bears responsibility for appointing a minister disciplined over the slush-fund scandal

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Senior figures from Komeito and the Democratic Reform Association agreed on Tuesday to press Education Minister Yoshihiro Seki to explain why he held a political fundraising party inside a House of Representatives members' office building.

Holding such a party in the building breaks the chamber's internal rules.

The meeting

Makoto Nishida, Komeito's secretary-general, and Takeshi Shina, his counterpart in the Democratic

Reform Association, met at the Diet and agreed to demand that Mr Seki fulfil his duty to explain himself. Mr Nishida said he would raise the matter in committee sessions of both houses.

"Not being able to follow the rules is a big problem," Mr Nishida said.

The prime minister's responsibility

Mr Shina noted that both Mr Seki and the former agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, who was replaced last week, were disciplined by the Liberal Democratic Party over the factions' slush-fund scandal.

"The responsibility of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who deliberately appointed a lawmaker involved in the slush funds, should continue to be questioned," he said.

The minister's position

Mr Seki became education minister in September's reshuffle. On Monday the prime minister told him in the House of Councillors Budget Committee to reflect on his conduct and straighten himself up, saying she had learned of the party from the media.

A second front

The minister is also dealing with a dispute with the University of Tokyo. On Tuesday his ministry asked the university to examine how it chose its next president, the first such request to a university.

Pressure building

The opposition hopes to keep the focus on the government's appointments as the Diet debates the food tax cut. Polls suggest voters approved of Mr Yana's departure but felt the prime minister was slow to act.

POLITICS

The Security Documents at a Glance

By the Political Desk

WHAT THEY ARE: The National Security Strategy, the defence policy and the five-year plan for building up the Self-Defense Forces.

LAST REVISED: December 2022, under Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

THE DEADLINE: The government wants new versions by the end of this year.

THE TALKS: The Liberal Democrats and Ishin begin working-level talks in November.

WHO LEADS: Yasukazu Hamada for the Liberal Democrats and Seiji Maehara for Ishin.

ISSUE ONE: Whether to review the three non-nuclear principles.

ISSUE TWO: Whether to acquire nuclear-powered submarines.

ALSO ON THE TABLE: The scale of defence spending and the structure needed to strengthen defence.

INFRASTRUCTURE: Koizumi wants defence-related spending to cover more than airports and ports.

THE MONEY: Keidanren opposes another corporate tax rise to pay for defence.

POLITICS

LDP Promises to Back Okinawa's New Governor With Money, as the Promotion Budget's 300 Billion Yen Line Becomes the Focus

Genta Koja, elected in September with Liberal Democratic support and backing the Henoko relocation, meets the party's Okinawa commission; Yuko Obuchi pledges to give shape to expectations

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The Liberal Democratic Party's commission on Okinawa promotion held talks on Tuesday with Okinawa Governor Genta Koja, who was elected in September with the backing of the Liberal Democrats and other parties, at the party's headquarters in Nagatacho, Tokyo.

The meeting, held jointly with a group of Diet members supporting Okinawa, was chaired by Yuko Obuchi, who heads the commission.

The 300 billion yen question

The focus is whether to increase the Okinawa promotion budget for fiscal 2027, which has stayed below 300 billion yen in recent years.

"We will give shape to our expectations of Mr Koja," Ms Obuchi said. "Let us join forces."

"I want to move Okinawa forward while working with the LDP," Mr Koja said.

Henoko

Mr Koja supports moving the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to the Henoko area of Nago, unlike his predecessor, who opposed the relocation. The Takaichi government wants closer ties with the prefectural government to advance the relocation and strengthen defences in the Nansei Islands.

The work at sea

Mr Koja visited the Henoko site on October 17 and said the schedule for the work should be kept. Pile-driving to improve the soft seabed in Oura Bay has been suspended for four months, according to the Okinawa Defence Bureau.

Money and politics

The promotion budget, which funds public works and other projects in Okinawa, was cut in years when the prefecture's leadership opposed the relocation, and critics have accused successive governments of linking it to the base issue.

The typhoon

The meeting came as Okinawa braced for Typhoon Champi, which is forecast to approach the Sakishima Islands at the end of the week.

The old pledge

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged in 2013, as the governor of the day approved land reclamation at Henoko, to keep the budget at 300 billion yen or more a year through fiscal 2021. It has stayed below that level since fiscal 2022.

POLITICS

Yoshimura Will Seek a Third Term as Head of Osaka Ishin, Vowing to Throw All His Political Power Behind Next Spring's Referendum

No strong rival has emerged for the November 7 vote; the Osaka governor wants to win approval for the metropolis plan, rejected twice before, and see Osaka named a secondary capital

By Aiko Tanaka | Society Correspondent

Osaka Governor Hirofumi Yoshimura announced on Tuesday that he would run for a third term as leader of Osaka Ishin no Kai, the regional party at the heart of the Japan Innovation Party.

The leadership vote is on November 7. No strong rival has emerged, so a third term is considered certain, according to people familiar with the matter.

"I will see it through to the end and take responsibility as leader," Mr Yoshimura told reporters at the prefectural government office.

The metropolis plan

His central aim is to realise the Osaka Metropolis Plan, which would reorganise the city of Osaka into special wards similar to those in Tokyo, and to have Osaka designated a secondary capital.

A referendum on the plan is expected next spring. "I will pour all of my political power into winning approval," he said.

Twice rejected

Osaka voters rejected the plan in referendums in 2015 and again in November 2020. After the second defeat, Mr Yoshimura succeeded Ichiro Matsui, one of the party's founders, as leader of Osaka Ishin.

A national figure

In December 2024 he also became leader of the Japan Innovation Party, which has been in coalition with the Liberal Democrats for a year, and which won 36 seats in February's general election.

The stakes

A third referendum defeat would be a heavy blow to the party, which has made the plan its founding cause. A victory would give Ishin a powerful argument as it presses the Liberal Democrats on its national demands, including a cut in the number of lower house seats.

The calendar

The referendum would come about two years after the Osaka-Kansai Expo, held in 2025, which Mr Yoshimura championed.

The arguments

Supporters say merging functions now split between the prefecture and the city would end wasteful duplication and strengthen Osaka as a second centre after Tokyo. Opponents say abolishing the city would weaken local services.

POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who marks a year in office on Wednesday, greets a visitor, in a file photo. (File photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

LDP and Ishin to Begin Talks in November on Rewriting Japan's Security Documents, With Nuclear Submarines and the Non-Nuclear Principles in Play

Yasukazu Hamada and Seiji Maehara will lead working-level discussions before the year-end revision; the partners differ on how far to go on the principle of not allowing nuclear weapons into Japan

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Innovation Party plan to start working-level talks in November on the revision of the three documents that set out Japan's security policy, including the National Security Strategy, which the government intends to revise by the end of the year, several sources said on Tuesday.

The talks will be led by the chairmen of the two parties' security research commissions, Yasukazu Hamada of the Liberal Democrats and Seiji Maehara of Ishin. The government will report on the progress of its review, and the parties will try to reach a common position.

The non-nuclear principles

The partners differ on two issues in particular. The first is the three non-nuclear principles, under which Japan does not possess or manufacture nuclear weapons or allow them into the country.

In its recommendations to the government in June, the Liberal Democratic Party called for strengthening the reliability of American nuclear deterrence but did not mention the principles. Ishin has argued that the principle of not allowing nuclear weapons in should be given "realistic consideration."

Nuclear-powered submarines

The second is nuclear-powered submarines, which could carry long-range missiles for the counterstrike

POLITICS

Not Possessing, Not Producing, Not Permitting: The Three Non-Nuclear Principles, and Why Their Review Is on the Table

Set out by Eisaku Sato in 1967 and endorsed by a Diet resolution in 1971, the principles are a policy rather than a law; Ishin wants the third looked at again

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The three non-nuclear principles state that Japan will not possess nuclear weapons, will not produce them and will not permit them to be brought into the country.

Where they came from

Prime Minister Eisaku Sato set out the principles in the Diet in December 1967. In 1971, as Okinawa's return from American administration approached, the House of Representatives adopted a resolution affirming them.

Sato received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1974, and the principles were cited as part of the reason.

A policy, not a law

The principles are a statement of government policy and are not written into law. Two legal commitments overlap with them, however. The Atomic Energy Basic Act limits the use of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes, and Japan is a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a state without nuclear weapons.

The third principle

The principle of not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons has always been the most debated. In 2010 a Foreign Ministry investigation and a panel

capability Japan adopted in 2022. The Liberal Democrats have asked the government to consider quickly whether to acquire such submarines, including the use of what they call next-generation propulsion.

Spending

A ruling party source said the talks could also cover the structure needed to strengthen defence fundamentally and the scale of defence spending.

Why it matters

The three documents, revised in 2022, set the strategy, the defence policy and the five-year plan for building up the Self-Defense Forces. The government has brought their revision forward to reflect the security environment.

The counterweights

Any change to the non-nuclear principles would be among the most sensitive decisions in post-war security policy, and opposition parties and survivors of the atomic bombings have long opposed weakening them.

of outside experts examined so-called secret agreements with the United States, and the panel found that there had been a broad tacit understanding allowing American warships to call at Japanese ports without the question of nuclear weapons being raised.

In the early 1990s the United States withdrew tactical nuclear weapons from its surface ships and attack submarines, which reduced the practical tension between the alliance and the principle.

The umbrella

Japan relies on American extended deterrence, often called the nuclear umbrella, for protection against nuclear attack, while calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide. This week it submitted its annual resolution on nuclear abolition to the United Nations for the 33rd year in a row.

Today's debate

The Liberal Democrats and the Japan Innovation Party will begin talks in November on revising Japan's three security documents. In June the Liberal Democrats called for strengthening the reliability of American nuclear deterrence without mentioning the principles, while Ishin has argued that the principle of not allowing nuclear weapons in should be given "realistic consideration."

The opposition

Opposition parties and survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have long opposed any weakening of the principles, and any change would be among the most sensitive decisions in Japan's post-war security policy.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Champi at 900 hPa, Page 3.

POLITICS

Why Some in Tokyo Want Nuclear-Powered Submarines, and the Legal and Practical Questions Japan Would Have to Answer

Nuclear propulsion lets a submarine stay submerged for months; the Liberal Democrats want a quick study, but the law limits nuclear energy to peaceful purposes

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The Liberal Democratic Party has asked the government to consider quickly whether Japan should acquire nuclear-powered submarines, and the question will be discussed with the Japan Innovation Party when the parties begin talks on the security documents in November.

What nuclear power offers

A conventional submarine runs on batteries underwater and must come close to the surface regularly to run its diesel engines and recharge them, which can give away its position. A nuclear-powered submarine has a reactor that can drive it underwater at high speed for months, limited mainly by the food it carries and the endurance of its crew.

Armed or not

Nuclear propulsion is different from nuclear weapons. A nuclear-powered submarine can carry conventional weapons only. The Liberal Democrats have discussed such submarines as a possible platform for long-range missiles for the counterstrike capability Japan adopted in 2022.

Japan's current fleet

The Maritime Self-Defense Force operates conventionally powered submarines. Its newest, the Taigei class, use lithium-ion batteries, which let them stay submerged longer than older boats.

The law

The Atomic Energy Basic Act limits the research, development and use of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes, and whether a reactor that propels a warship can fall within that definition is one of the legal questions any decision would raise.

The cost and the skills

Nuclear submarines are expensive to build and to run, and they require specialist crews, shipyards and arrangements for handling nuclear fuel and waste, none of which Japan has for military vessels.

Australia's example

Australia is acquiring nuclear-powered submarines with American and British help under the AUKUS partnership, a precedent that supporters in Japan often cite.

Next-generation propulsion

The Liberal Democrats have also asked the government to study what they call next-generation propulsion, a broader term that leaves room for options other than conventional reactors.

POLITICS

Eleven Parties Receive 7.88 Billion Yen in Subsidies; the Liberal Democrats Take Nearly Half, and a Party With One Lawmaker Gets 585 Million

The Internal Affairs Ministry pays the year's third instalment; the Communists refuse the money on principle and the newest opposition party is not eligible

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry paid political party subsidies totalling about 7.884 billion yen to 11 parties on Tuesday, the third of the year's four instalments.

The subsidies, funded by taxpayers, are paid in April, July, October and December under a system introduced in the 1990s alongside limits on corporate donations.

Who received what

The Liberal Democratic Party received 3.841 billion yen, nearly half the total. The Constitutional Democratic Party received 780 million yen, the Japan Innovation Party 704 million yen and the Democratic Party for the People 679 million yen.

Sanseito received 497 million yen, Komeito 350 million yen, the Inochi no To 175 million yen and Team Mirai 142 million yen. The Conservative Party of Japan received 74 million yen and the Social Democratic Party 58 million yen.

The one-member party

The Centrist Reform Alliance received 585 million yen. The party, formed by the Constitutional Democrats and Komeito to fight February's general election, split in September and now has a single lower house member, who remains to handle its liquidation.

Not paid

The Democratic Reform Association, formed in September by lawmakers who left the alliance, received nothing. The Japanese Communist Party, which opposes the subsidy system, did not file the paperwork needed to receive money.

The defence

Takeshi Shina, the Democratic Reform Association's secretary-general and a former secretary-general of the alliance, said the alliance needed the subsidy to finish winding up its affairs. "There is no reason to feel guilty," he said.

The debate

Payments to a party that has all but ceased to exist are likely to fuel criticism of the subsidy rules, which base allocations on seats and votes at a fixed reference date.

POLITICS

Koizumi Wants Defence-Related Spending to Cover More Than Airports and Ports, and Railways May Feature in the New Strategy

The defence minister says public works that strengthen the country's overall defence posture should be considered; the budget item is booked by other ministries

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said on Tuesday that he wanted to widen the range of public infrastructure covered by defence-related spending beyond the airports and ports that are its main targets now.

"Not limited to those, I want to consider public infrastructure that contributes to strengthening our overall defence posture," Mr Koizumi told a news conference at the Diet.

How the spending works

The infrastructure money is part of the effort to strengthen Japan's defences fundamentally, but it is booked by ministries other than the Defence Ministry. It pays for projects such as longer runways and new quays that allow the Self-Defense Forces and the Japan Coast Guard to use civilian airports and harbours smoothly in an emergency.

Railways next

According to government sources, the three security documents to be revised at the end of the year are expected to state the importance of developing railways.

No figures yet

Mr Koizumi did not give a budget figure or name specific projects.

The bigger debate

The remarks come as the government and the ruling parties prepare to discuss the scale of defence spending in the revision of the security documents, and as Keidanren's chairman said he opposed any additional corporate tax increase to pay for defence.

Islands in mind

The airports and ports designated under the programme so far include facilities in Kyushu and Okinawa, where they would be needed to move troops and evacuate residents in a crisis.

The minister

Mr Koizumi, 45, kept the defence portfolio in last month's reshuffle and is seen as a future candidate for the party leadership.

POLITICS

Keidanren's Tsutsui 'Fundamentally Opposed' to a Further Corporate Tax Rise for Defence, Warning It Would Dampen Investment

The business lobby's chairman says Japan's effective tax rate is already the highest in the G7 in substance, as an extra levy is reported to be under discussion in the government

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Yoshinobu Tsutsui, chairman of the Japan Business Federation, known as Keidanren, said on Tuesday that he was basically opposed to an additional

POLITICS

increase in corporate tax to pay for the strengthening of Japan's defences.

"Basically, I am against it," Mr Tsutsui told his regular news conference. An additional corporate tax rise is reported to be emerging as an option within the government.

Investment at risk

Keidanren has been urging companies to increase capital investment and spending on research and development, and Mr Tsutsui said an extra tax would "pour cold water on that momentum."

He said the business community was aiming for an "investment-led economy" and that the Takaichi government's pursuit of a strong economy was moving in step with that goal.

The G7 comparison

Mr Tsutsui also argued that Japanese industry would lose international competitiveness. "Among the G7 countries, Japan effectively has the highest effective tax rate," he said.

The defence budget

The total for defence spending over five years is set in the defence buildup plan, one of the three security documents the government plans to revise by the end of the year. Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi also said on Tuesday that he wanted defence-related infrastructure spending to cover more projects.

Paying for it

The government has already decided to raise some taxes, including corporate tax, to fund the defence buildup agreed in 2022. How any further increase in spending would be paid for is likely to be one of the hardest questions in the year-end budget talks.

Keidanren at 80

The remarks came days after Keidanren marked 80 years since its founding, with Mr Tsutsui saying there were signs that Japan's economy was emerging from stagnation.

POLITICS

A Record 560 Applications for Defence Research Grants, With 47 Projects Chosen; the Defence Minister Sees a Change in Academia

The Defence Ministry's programme funds basic research with possible military uses; some universities were selected for the first time, despite a long tradition of keeping away from military work

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The Defence Ministry said on Tuesday that its programme funding basic research that could be applied to military technology had received 560 applications for fiscal 2026, the most since it began, and that it had selected 47 research projects.

The programme, known as the Security Technology Research Promotion Program, pays for basic research at universities, public research institutes and companies.

New universities

Kyodo News reported that 11 universities were selected for the first time.

'A change in attitude'

Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said the figures reflected a change in the attitude of the academic world, according to Kyodo.

A long reluctance

Many Japanese universities have kept their distance from military research since the Second World War. In 2017 the Science Council of Japan, which represents the country's scientists, said it would carry on statements opposing research for military purposes and raised concerns about the programme in particular.

Dual use

Supporters argue that the line between civilian and military technology has blurred, with fields such as artificial intelligence, drones, materials and quantum technology useful for both, and that Japanese researchers should not be cut off from them.

The government's push

The government has sought to strengthen ties between the defence sector and civilian research as part of the defence buildup it began in 2022, and it is now revising the three documents that set its security policy.

The critics

Critics worry that defence funding could compromise academic freedom and the openness of research. The ministry says it does not restrict the publication of results from the projects it funds.

POLITICS

Ishin's First Minister Says His First Month 'Flew By' and Promises to Clear the Way for Self-Driving Cars and Other New Ventures

Hiroshi Nakatsuka, 70, the minister for regulatory reform, says he feels the weight of being the first Cabinet member from the Japan Innovation Party

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Hiroshi Nakatsuka, the minister for regulatory reform and the first member of the Japan Innovation Party to sit in the Cabinet, said on Tuesday that his first month in the job had passed in a flash.

"It went by in no time," he told a news conference at the Cabinet Office. "From now on I want to settle in and get to grips with regulatory reform."

The weight of a first

Mr Nakatsuka said he felt the weight of his responsibility as Ishin's first minister. "I believe I have carried out my duties properly, in my own way, given the weight of the responsibility," he said.

Speed for the AI era

He stressed the need to move quickly. "I want to proceed with a sense of speed, in response to the era of artificial intelligence," he said.

Citing self-driving vehicles as an example, he said barriers should be removed "so that companies can actively take on all kinds of challenges."

The reshuffle

Mr Nakatsuka, 70, joined the Cabinet in last month's reshuffle, which brought Ishin into the government's ranks for the first time since it formed a coalition with the Liberal Democrats a year ago.

Why it matters to Ishin

Deregulation has long been one of Ishin's central causes, and a Cabinet post gives the party a direct say in the government's agenda as it presses other demands, including a cut in the number of lower house seats.

The coalition at one

The coalition between the two parties marked its first anniversary this week, and Ishin's leader, Hirofumi Yoshimura, has said he has no intention of threatening to leave it.

POLITICS

Reconstruction Agency Official Calls Tokushima Request 'a Great Honour' and Is Said to Lean Toward Challenging Governor Gotoda

Liberal Democratic assembly members hand him a written request in Tokyo; Miyoshi's mayor, a former Democratic Party lawmaker, is also weighing a run

By the Political Desk

A senior official of the Reconstruction Agency who was asked on Tuesday to run for governor of Tokushima Prefecture called the request "a great honour," and people close to him said he was leaning toward accepting.

Members of the prefectural assembly, from a group formed by the assembly's largest faction, the Liberal Democrats, and others, met the 59-year-old in Tokyo and handed him a written request to stand in the election expected next spring.

'Humbly and carefully'

"I will take it seriously and think about it humbly and carefully," he told reporters after the meeting.

The governor

Governor Masazumi Gotoda, a former deputy chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party's Policy Research Council, has already said he will seek re-election, making a split in the conservative vote likely.

A third name

Miho Takai, the mayor of Miyoshi in the prefecture, who served as a parliamentary vice minister of education in the Democratic Party of Japan government, is also interested in running, raising the prospect of a crowded race.

The background

The group, which calls itself the volunteer association for renewing prefectural government, was formed after the assembly passed a resolution on October 7 censuring Mr Gotoda over his remarks and conduct.

The official

The candidate, a native of the prefecture, joined the former Ministry of International Trade and Industry in 1991 and has worked at the Reconstruction Agency since July last year.

When

The election is expected to be held as part of the unified local elections in the spring of 2027.

POLITICS

Yokohama's New Mayor, a Former Airline Mechanic Turned Lawyer, Promises an 'Open Mayor's Office' After Her Predecessor's Harassment Scandal

Atsumi Harasawa, 59, who won on Sunday with backing from four parties, puts disaster prevention first and will consider an ordinance against harassment

By Aiko Tanaka | Society Correspondent

Atsumi Harasawa, the newly elected mayor of Yokohama, held her first news conference on Tuesday, pledging to restore trust at city hall after her predecessor resigned over allegations of power harassment.

"People need an environment where they can work with peace of mind," she said. "I want to listen to views from the workplace and create an open mayor's office."

A harassment ordinance

Ms Harasawa said she would consider an ordinance on harassment.

The background

Born in Yokohama, Ms Harasawa, 59, worked as an aircraft mechanic at Japan Airlines before becoming a lawyer, and has served as an outside director at several companies.

In Sunday's election she defeated six other candidates, including the former mayor, by a wide margin. She was backed by the local chapters of the Liberal Democratic Party, the Japan Innovation Party, the Democratic Party for the People and Komeito.

Finances

"We will build a firm economic base and pursue both better administrative services and secure revenue, the two wheels together," she said.

Disaster prevention first

She named disaster prevention as her priority, including improvements to sewer pipes and better conditions in evacuation shelters.

No casino bid

The Sankei Shimbun reported that she said the city would not put itself forward again to host an integrated resort with a casino. Yokohama withdrew its bid in 2021 after a mayor who opposed the plan was elected.

Japan's largest city

Yokohama, with a population of about 3.7 million, is the country's largest city after Tokyo's wards, and its mayor oversees one of the biggest municipal budgets in Japan.

POLITICS

Japan Submits Its Nuclear Abolition Resolution to the United Nations for the 33rd Straight Year, Urging Nuclear Powers to Keep Their NPT Promise

The draft voices deep concern at the lack of progress after a review conference failed for the third time in a row; it only 'notes' the treaty banning nuclear weapons

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The Japanese government said it had submitted a draft resolution calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons to the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, which deals with disarmament.

It is the 33rd consecutive year that Japan has submitted such a resolution.

Keep the promise

The draft calls on nuclear-armed states to fully carry out their obligation under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to pursue negotiations on

nuclear disarmament, and expresses deep concern that those negotiations have not advanced.

A failed conference

The resolution follows the treaty's review conference in May, which ended without an agreed outcome document. It was the third review conference in a row to fail, deepening concern that the treaty is being hollowed out.

The ban treaty

On the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the draft only notes its adoption and entry into force. The treaty's first review conference is scheduled for November and December.

Japan, which relies on the American nuclear umbrella, has not joined the ban treaty and has been cautious about attending its meetings as an observer.

A bridge role

The government says it seeks to bridge the gap between nuclear and non-nuclear states. Its resolution traditionally wins broad support, but some countries that back the ban treaty say it does not go far enough, and some nuclear powers have voted against or abstained in past years.

The domestic debate

The resolution comes as the Liberal Democrats and Ishin prepare to discuss whether to review the three non-nuclear principles in the revision of Japan's security documents, a debate that groups of atomic bomb survivors are watching with concern.

POLITICS

Quad Leaders to Meet in Manila Next Month, Rubio Says, in the First Summit of Japan, the U.S., Australia and India Since 2024

The meeting would coincide with ASEAN-related summits; last year's planned summit in India was called off amid strains over India's purchases of Russian oil

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Tuesday that leaders of the Quad, the grouping of Japan, the United States, Australia and India, would meet next month, in an interview with Indian media, Kyodo News reported from New Delhi.

The summit is planned for mid-November in Manila, alongside the summits of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and related meetings. It would be the first Quad leaders' meeting since September 2024.

A cancelled summit

A Quad summit that was to have been held in India last year was called off as relations between Washington and New Delhi soured over India's purchases of Russian crude oil during the war in Ukraine.

A lower profile

The Quad has not held a summit under the second Trump administration, which has been seen as placing less weight on multilateral frameworks, and its profile has fallen.

The likely agenda

The leaders are expected to discuss the Indo-Pacific, including the South China Sea, cooperation on supply chains for critical minerals and energy security.

Rubio in India

Mr Rubio met India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in Mumbai on Tuesday. The two discussed energy cooperation, a trade agreement and defence, and the State Department said Mr Rubio asked India to buy more American technology in defence and civil nuclear power.

Japan's interest

For Japan, which has championed the Quad as a pillar of a free and open Indo-Pacific, a summit would be a chance to show that the four democracies still share a common purpose in the face of China's growing power.

Back to Manila

The four countries first worked together to deliver aid after the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, and officials revived the grouping at a meeting in Manila in 2017. Its leaders first met in person in Washington in 2021, and Tokyo hosted their summit in 2022.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Gymnasts keep world title, Page 23.

Editorial: one year, rivals contained, Page 26.

POLITICS

POLITICS

Pile-Driving at Henoko Halted for Four Months as Typhoon Season Keeps the Work Boats Away, Fuelling Doubts About the Schedule

About 9,500 of some 71,000 piles meant to firm up Oura Bay's soft seabed have been driven since January 2025; the defence bureau insists there is no delay so far

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Pile-driving to improve the soft seabed at the site in Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, where the government is building a replacement for the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station has been suspended for four months, the Okinawa Defence Bureau said.

The work vessels were moved away for safety during the typhoon season.

The scale of the job

The soft ground lies under Oura Bay, east of Henoko. The plan calls for driving about 71,000 piles over roughly four years, and work began in late January 2025.

By the end of September about 9,500 had been driven.

The arithmetic

At that pace, a simple projection suggests the work would not be finished on schedule, and concerns about delays persist.

A defence bureau official said, however, that no delay had occurred so far.

The governor's view

Okinawa Governor Genta Koja, who supports the relocation, visited the site on October 17 and told reporters at the prefectural office that the construction period should be kept. "I want them to keep to the schedule," he said.

Why it matters

The relocation is meant to remove the Futenma base from the crowded centre of Ginowan. Japan and the United States agreed in 1996 to return the Futenma site, but the move has been delayed for decades by local opposition, legal battles and the discovery of the soft seabed.

The storm ahead

The typhoon season is not over. Typhoon Champi is forecast to pass near the Sakishima Islands this weekend.

POLITICS

U.S. Troops in Keen Sword Are Under a Drinking Ban and Curfew Wherever They Train, the Defence Ministry Says

The American side explained the restrictions to the ministry; the exercise opened in Ishigaki behind closed doors after the arrest of a U.S. Marine in Okinawa

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

American service members taking part in Keen Sword, the large-scale joint exercise between the Self-Defense Forces and U.S. forces, are under a ban on drinking and restrictions on going out wherever they are training, Vice Defence Minister Kiyoshi Odawara said on Tuesday.

The U.S. side explained the measures to the Defence Ministry, he said. "A ban on drinking and restrictions on going out have been imposed, regardless of the training location."

The background

The opening ceremony of the exercise was held at the Ground Self-Defense Force's Ishigaki garrison on Monday without the press, after a U.S. Marine stationed in Okinawa was arrested on suspicion of robbery and murder this month. The organisers had originally planned to let reporters attend.

The exercise

Keen Sword runs until October 29. About 45,000 members of the Self-Defense Forces and about 12,000 American personnel are taking part at facilities across Japan, in an exercise covering land, sea and air as well as cyberspace and outer space.

Local feeling

Crimes involving American service members have long caused anger in Okinawa, which hosts most of the facilities used exclusively by U.S. forces in Japan, and local governments have repeatedly called for stricter discipline.

The typhoon

The exercise also faces the approach of Typhoon Champi, which is forecast to pass near Ishigaki and the other Sakishima Islands at the end of the week.

Words and deeds

Restrictions of this kind have been imposed after past incidents and later eased, and Okinawa's leaders have long called for lasting measures to prevent crimes rather than temporary ones.

POLITICS

Recovered Object Is Part of the Crashed Global Hawk, the Air Self-Defense Force Says, as Searches Continue Off Tottori

The 6-metre section of fuselage from the unmanned reconnaissance aircraft, based at Misawa, is on its way to the base for detailed examination; the cause of September's crash is still unknown

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

An object recovered from the sea off Tottori Prefecture is part of the fuselage of a Global Hawk unmanned reconnaissance aircraft that crashed in September, the chief of staff of the Air Self-Defense Force, Takehiro Morita, said on Tuesday.

The aircraft, an RQ-4 built by Northrop Grumman, belonged to the unit at Misawa Air Base in Aomori Prefecture.

The recovery

The object was retrieved on October 17. It is about 6 metres long, 1.6 metres wide and 1.5 metres high, and is being taken to Misawa for detailed examination.

Broken and scattered

Based on the recovery and wreckage found along the shore, the aircraft is "damaged and scattered," General Morita told a news conference.

The search goes on

Some debris remains under water, and the force plans to continue searching and recovering it at sea. Searches along the coast have also turned up more wreckage.

The cause

The cause of the crash has not been determined.

A high-altitude watcher

The Global Hawk flies at high altitude for long periods, gathering intelligence over wide areas, and Japan acquired the aircraft to strengthen surveillance of the seas around the country.

The base

Misawa Air Base, in northern Aomori Prefecture, is shared by the Air Self-Defense Force and the U.S. Air Force.

POLITICS

Education Ministry Asks the University of Tokyo to Examine How It Chose Its Next President, a First for Any University

Yuko Fujigaki was selected although she came second in the internal vote with half the leader's tally; the minister calls the lack of explanation regrettable

By Aiko Tanaka | Society Correspondent

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology asked the University of Tokyo on Tuesday to examine how it selected its next president, saying many doubts had been raised inside and outside the university.

Tetsuo Goda, director-general of the ministry's Higher Education Bureau, visited the university in the morning and handed over the written request in person. It is the first time the ministry has made such a request of a university.

The minister's words

Education Minister Yoshihiro Seki told a news conference after the Cabinet meeting that many people felt the process and reasons for the selection had still not been clearly explained. "That is regrettable," he said. "I want them to fulfil their duty to explain."

The selection

On September 28 the university chose Yuko Fujigaki, a professor at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, as its next president. In the vote within the university she came second, with half the votes of the leading candidate.

How it works

At national university corporations, a selection committee that includes members from outside the university decides on the president. An internal vote of faculty members is held for reference, but the committee is not bound by it.

Autonomy

Universities guard their autonomy closely, and the ministry's request is likely to be seen by some academics as interference. Others argue that a public institution must be able to explain its decisions.

The president-elect

Ms Fujigaki, 64, is a scholar of science, technology and society.

POLITICS

All 47 Prefectures Recommend Pay Rises for Their Staff for the Fifth Year Running, With Increases Above 3 Per Cent in 36

Personnel commissions follow the private sector's wage gains to help recruit staff; Tokyo's administrative employees would average 7.6 million yen a year if the recommendations are adopted

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Personnel commissions in all 47 prefectures have recommended raising both monthly pay and bonuses for prefectural employees in fiscal 2026, the fifth year in a row, according to a Kyodo News tally completed on Tuesday.

The recommendations reflect continuing wage increases at private companies and are intended to help prefectures attract staff.

The size of the rises

The average rise in monthly pay was in the 3 per cent range in 36 prefectures and in the 2 per cent range in the other 11.

Among administrative staff, Shiga and Hyogo recommended the largest increase, 3.52 per cent, followed by Wakayama at 3.51 per cent. Hokkaido's was the smallest, at 2.90 per cent.

Last year the largest rise was Kagoshima's, at 3.62 per cent, and the smallest Wakayama's, at 2.44 per cent.

Bonuses

Tokyo, Shimane and Kochi recommended raising bonuses by 0.10 months' pay and the other 44 prefectures by 0.05 months. Annual bonuses would total 4.70 months in 43 prefectures, with Tokyo highest at 5.00 months and Tottori lowest at 4.50 months.

Annual pay

If the recommendations are adopted, Tokyo's administrative employees, with an average age of 40.9, would earn 7,611,000 yen a year on average, the highest. Kochi's, with an average age of 39.9, would earn 6,052,000 yen, the lowest.

Next steps

Governors and prefectural assemblies will now decide whether to carry out the recommendations.

The bigger picture

Local governments are competing with private employers for workers as the population shrinks, and many have struggled to fill technical posts such as civil engineers.

INTERNATIONAL

U.S. and Russia Near a Deal to Free Americans Held in Russia, Including a Former Teacher Who Lived in Japan for 25 Years

Trump says he asked Putin to release Stephen Hubbard, whose detention Washington calls wrongful: 'It's time to bring him back'

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

The United States and Russia are close to agreement on the release of several Americans held in Russia, the American broadcaster ABC reported on Tuesday, among them a former teacher who spent a quarter of a century in Japan.

The teacher

Among them is Stephen Hubbard, who lived in Japan for 25 years working as an English teacher and has children with his Japanese former wife. The State Department has designated his detention by Russia as wrongful.

Mr Hubbard was detained by Russian forces in eastern Ukraine in 2022 and was later sentenced to prison in Russia.

The negotiators

On the American side, the talks are reportedly being handled by Steve Witkoff, the special envoy for peace negotiations, and Jared Kushner, Mr Trump's son-in-law.

Trump's request

Speaking at the White House on Tuesday, Mr Trump confirmed that he had asked President Vladimir Putin to release Mr Hubbard. "It's time to bring him back," he said.

The terms

The report did not say what Russia would receive in return, or whether the deal would involve an exchange of prisoners, as previous releases have.

Past exchanges

Washington and Moscow carried out a large prisoner exchange in 2024 that freed the Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, and there have been smaller releases since Mr Trump returned to office.

A Japanese echo

The report came as Japan pressed Russia to allow consular access to a Hokkaido Shimbun reporter detained on espionage charges, a case that Washington has condemned.

INTERNATIONAL

Zelensky and Trump's Envoy Witkoff Meet in Oslo on Security Guarantees as Trump Says Someone Else Should Speak for Ukraine

The Ukrainian leader says Washington promised 'very strong' guarantees, written into a document Witkoff will take to Russia; Zelensky fears a U.S.-China-Russia summit could decide Ukraine's fate without it

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met Steve Witkoff, President Donald Trump's special envoy for peace talks, in Oslo on Tuesday to discuss the security guarantees Western countries would give Ukraine once the fighting with Russia ends.

It was their first face-to-face meeting since relations between Mr Zelensky and Mr Trump soured over the American leader's push for closer ties with Moscow.

'Very strong'

At a news conference, Mr Zelensky said he was grateful that the American side had made clear the guarantees would be very strong. He said they had already been written into a document, which Mr Witkoff would present to Russia.

Mr Witkoff was due to visit St. Petersburg on Wednesday to relay the discussions to the Russian side.

Trump's complaint

The meeting followed fresh criticism from Mr Trump. Speaking to reporters at the White House on Monday, he said it was time for someone else to represent Ukraine in the peace talks, and argued that peace would have come much sooner if Ukraine had followed his advice.

He said the United States continued to provide military intelligence to Ukraine, but complained that America did a great deal for the country while Ukraine did little in return.

Without us

Mr Trump has also expressed interest in a three-way summit with President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, although no date or venue has been set.

"I am concerned that things about us will be decided without us," Mr Zelensky told an Italian newspaper, referring to such a meeting.

The Black Sea

NATO said on Tuesday that it had strengthened its defences against drones in areas near Russia after repeated attacks on ships in the Black Sea, and the European Union's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, said six suspected Russian drone attacks there in 10 days were dangerous and unacceptable.

Seoul pulls back

South Korea, meanwhile, said it would withdraw some staff from its embassy in Kyiv amid a diplomatic dispute with Ukraine over the disclosure of the transfer of North Korean prisoners of war to South Korea. Seoul has already recalled its ambassador.

INTERNATIONAL



Riot police and protesters in a haze of tear gas on a Paris street, in a file image. France passed Monday night without major incidents under curfews, and Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu said more would be imposed wherever they were needed. (File photo: WPM Productions)

INTERNATIONAL

France Has a Quiet Night Under Curfews, and the Prime Minister Promises More of Them Wherever They Are Needed

About 2,500 people have been arrested and 149 jailed since Saturday; Limoges's 19th-century town hall lies gutted, and the government plans a massive police deployment for protests called for this weekend

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

France passed Monday night without major incidents after a weekend of rioting and looting, police said, and Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu said on Tuesday that new curfews would be imposed wherever they were needed.

Mr Lecornu said in a post on social media that prefects, the state's representatives in each department, would decide on curfews in coordination with local mayors. Targeted curfews, he said, had helped keep the peace overnight.

The toll

Justice Minister Gérald Darmanin said about 2,500 people had been arrested since Saturday, more than 800 had been brought before prosecutors and 149 had been jailed. He asked prosecutors to appeal against sentences they considered too lenient.

In Lille, three men aged 20 to 25 with no criminal records were each sentenced to 10 months in prison for looting a video game shop.

A landmark lost

Rioters broke into the town hall in Limoges over the weekend and set it on fire, bringing down its roof. The building was completed in 1883 and listed as a historic monument in 1975. The local prefect called the fire "a catastrophe for heritage." Police arrested a 40-year-old suspect, whom a police source described to Le Figaro as a far-left activist known to the authorities.

Admissions of failure

Mr Lecornu accused far-left and ultra-left groups in parliament of an "insurrectionary" plan and said criminals had joined in to loot and destroy. He acknowledged failures in intelligence, police deployments that were too static and a mistake in not

cancelling officers' leave.

Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez said he deeply regretted what had happened and accepted his share of responsibility. President Emmanuel Macron, who said there was "no place for violence in our republic," declined to accept his resignation.

Curfews

In Paris, police said order had been restored, but a curfew remains in force, and 200 investigators are working to identify looters. Marseille imposed a curfew from Tuesday evening that applies only to minors and only in shopping districts.

The weekend ahead

Protesters have called for further demonstrations on Saturday, although the main trade unions have not backed them. Mr Nuñez said some military forces would support the police, and Mr Lecornu promised a massive deployment. Marine Le Pen, whose National Rally leads the polls for next year's presidential election, is due to launch her campaign at a party congress in Orléans on Saturday and Sunday.

How it began

The weekend demonstrations, which drew more than half a million people across the country, grew out of anger over the cost of living and fuel prices and weeks of student protests over conditions in education, before turning to arson and looting in many cities.

or over.

You break it, you pay

The decree applies the principle that whoever causes damage must pay for it, and parents will have to pay for damage caused by their children.

Meloni's message

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said in a video on Instagram after the Cabinet meeting that the scenes were unacceptable and "cannot be played down or justified."

Milan

Italy's financial and fashion capital co-hosted the Winter Olympics with Cortina d'Ampezzo in February.

The opposition

Milan's centre-left mayor, Giuseppe Sala, said repression alone was not an adequate response.

A European pattern

The unrest in northern Italy coincided with weekend rioting across France, where about 2,500 people have been arrested, and governments in both countries are under pressure to show they can restore order without inflaming young people's anger.

The politics

Ms Meloni's right-wing government has made law and order one of its central themes, and has previously tightened penalties for blocking roads and occupying buildings.

INTERNATIONAL

NATO Strengthens Drone Defences Around the Black Sea After a Run of Attacks on Ships; the EU Accuses Russia of Using Food as a Weapon

Kaja Kallas says six suspected Russian drone attacks in ten days are dangerous and unacceptable; 90 per cent of Ukraine's grain exports pass through the sea

By the International Desk

NATO has strengthened its posture in areas close to Russia in response to a series of drone attacks on ships in the Black Sea and drone incursions into the airspace of member states on its coast, a spokesperson for the alliance said on Tuesday.

The alliance's ambassadors discussed security in the Black Sea at a meeting of the North Atlantic Council on Tuesday, the spokesperson said in a post on social media.

Counter-drone measures

Measures to counter drones have already been reinforced, and NATO plans further support to improve surveillance and reconnaissance in the region, the spokesperson said.

'Unacceptable'

Kaja Kallas, the European Union's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, told the European Parliament on Tuesday that six drone attacks in the Black Sea in ten days, believed to have been carried out by Russia, were dangerous and unacceptable.

Russia was "deliberately using food as a weapon and endangering global food security," she said.

A vital route

The Black Sea is the main export route for Ukraine's farm produce. According to Ms Kallas, Ukraine accounts for about 15 per cent of the world's corn exports, 10 per cent of wheat, 15 to 20 per cent of barley and 50 per cent of sunflower oil, and about 90 per cent of those exports pass through the Black Sea.

Why Japan watches

Attacks on shipping raise insurance costs and freight rates, adding to the pressure on food prices in importing countries, including Japan, which buys most of its wheat and corn from abroad.

The wider war

The attacks come as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met President Donald Trump's envoy in Oslo on Tuesday to discuss security guarantees for Ukraine after a ceasefire.

INTERNATIONAL

Death Toll From Houthi Missile Strike on Yemeni Security Facility Rises to 73; Britain Sends Typhoon Jets to Defend Saudi Arabia

Saudi jets hit targets across Yemen and the kingdom says it destroyed the launchers used against Riyadh; Middle Eastern and Islamic countries offer help with Saudi defences

By the International Desk

The death toll from a Houthi missile attack on a security facility of Yemen's Saudi-backed interim government has risen to 73, the government's authorities said on Tuesday, with people still missing.

The Houthis, an armed group aligned with Iran, claimed on Monday to have attacked the interim government's side. Many people were injured.

Strikes across Yemen

Saudi Arabia and the interim government are fighting the Houthis together. The Houthis said on Tuesday that Saudi fighter jets had struck targets across Yemen, and Saudi Arabia said it had destroyed the launch pads used to fire missiles at its capital, Riyadh.

Britain's jets

Britain's Ministry of Defence announced on Tuesday that it would send Typhoon fighter jets to Saudi Arabia to help defend its cities and infrastructure. It said the aircraft would not attack the Houthis directly. The Royal Air Force will continue providing air-to-air refuelling support to Saudi Arabia.

Friends in need

Middle Eastern and Islamic countries have one after another signalled that they will help defend Saudi Arabia, according to reports.

The wider war

The Houthis claimed on Monday to have attacked a facility linked to Saudi Aramco in Yanbu, on the Red

Sea, and the airport in Riyadh, pushing up oil prices. Yanbu is part of the route Saudi Arabia uses to send oil to market without passing through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has declared closed.

Oil eases

Crude prices in New York rose to around 110 dollars a barrel early on Tuesday on the attacks, but fell back to close lower on hopes of progress in talks between the United States and Iran.

The cost to civilians

Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country, has suffered one of the world's worst humanitarian crises since the war between the Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition began in 2015.

INTERNATIONAL

World in Brief: The Beatles Story Moves Home, Americans Name Their Fears, and Volkswagen Plans a Pay Freeze

By the International Desk

LIVERPOOL: A new official Beatles attraction, the Beatles Story, will open in the centre of Liverpool, the hometown of all four members, in 2028. The company that manages the band's rights will take over and move an existing attraction of the same name, using digital technology to recreate places linked to the group. Part of the ticket revenue will support local artists.

UNITED STATES: Corrupt government officials topped the list of Americans' fears for the 11th year in a row in Chapman University's annual survey, with 61.1 per cent saying they were afraid or very afraid. Fear of the United States being drawn into a world war came second, at 58.0 per cent, up from sixth last year. Artificial intelligence in the political process, asked about for the first time, came third, at 51.9 per cent.

INDIA: U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in Mumbai and planned to visit Reliance Industries' refinery at Jamnagar on Wednesday to promote energy cooperation. Relations soured over India's purchases of Russian oil but have since improved, with President Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi meeting in June.

CHINA: China has set up a state-owned company, the National Data Group, headquartered in the Xiongan New Area in Hebei Province, to use data resources to support the development of artificial intelligence. Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang said it would help China seize the chance to lead in AI.

UNITED STATES: An importer in New Jersey sued the Trump administration at the Court of International Trade, seeking a halt to the 50 per cent tariffs imposed in August on about 20 billion dollars of Canadian goods and refunds of duties paid. The administration says Canada discriminated against American goods, including by removing American alcohol from shop shelves.

GERMANY: The financial regulator fined Nomura Holdings 320,000 euros, about 57 million yen, for failing to report its voting rights in Commerzbank on time during UniCredit's takeover bid for the German bank in May and June.

VOLKSWAGEN: The German carmaker is planning to freeze pay for about 660,000 employees worldwide until 2030, according to the IG Metall union, which called the idea absurd and estimated it would mean a real pay cut of more than 10 per cent.

UKRAINE: The Ukrainian army said it had used an unmanned aircraft to lift a wounded soldier from the front line to safety, which it called a world first. Earlier rescues by unmanned systems relied on small ground vehicles. It did not say when or where the evacuation took place, but drones from both sides now make the zone near the front extremely dangerous for medics.

GENERAL MOTORS: The American carmaker's net profit for July-September rose about 2.5 times from a year earlier, to 3.3 billion dollars, on a rebound from last year's electric vehicle losses and strong sales of pickup trucks.

ICC: Kuniko Ozaki, a former judge of the International Criminal Court, told a symposium in Tokyo that the international community must share the universal value that mass atrocities such as massacres are unacceptable, as the court faces sanctions from Washington.

INTERNATIONAL



A news conference in the press room of the Prime Minister's Office, in a file photo. The government said on Tuesday that Russia's refusal to let Japanese diplomats see the detained Hokkaido Shimbun reporter was 'extremely regrettable.' (File photo: WPM Productions)

INTERNATIONAL

Japan Demands Russia Free the Hokkaido Shimbun Reporter at Once, Calling the Refusal of Consular Access 'Extremely Regrettable'

A week after his arrest in Sakhalin, diplomats have still not been allowed to see the journalist, held in Moscow's Lefortovo prison on espionage charges; Washington condemns the detention and backs Japan's denial

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Japan stepped up its demands on Tuesday for Russia to release a Hokkaido Shimbun reporter detained on suspicion of espionage, after Moscow failed to let Japanese diplomats see him a week after his arrest.

"It is extremely regrettable," Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara told a news conference at the Prime Minister's Office. "We strongly urge the Russian side to allow a consular visit as soon as possible, to release him immediately and to show humanitarian consideration."

The arrest

Russia's Federal Security Service detained the reporter in the Sakhalin region of the Russian Far East on October 13 and moved him to Moscow, where he is held at the Lefortovo detention centre. Russian authorities allege that, on the instructions of Japanese intelligence, he gathered information on the number of soldiers mobilised from the Northern Territories and the Kuril Islands for the war in Ukraine. Japan denies that he was engaged in espionage.

The four-day rule

Under the consular convention signed by Japan and the Soviet Union, which still applies to Russia, a detained national has the right to a consular visit within four days. Russia has not clearly explained why it has refused Japan's requests.

Japan's ambassador to Russia, Akira Muto, visited the Russian Foreign Ministry on Monday to ask for an early meeting so that diplomats could check the reporter's health. Russian officials said internal procedures were not yet in place, the embassy said.

INTERNATIONAL

What Consular Access Means, and Why Russia's Refusal to Let Japanese Diplomats See a Detained Reporter Matters

International agreements give a detained foreigner the right to see officials of his own country; a Japan-Soviet convention sets a limit of four days

By the International Desk

When a country detains a foreign national, the detainee's government usually asks for consular access, the right of its diplomats to visit the detainee, check on his health and treatment, and help arrange a lawyer.

The Vienna Convention

The main international rule is the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963. It requires the authorities to inform a detained foreigner without delay of his right to contact his consulate, and gives consular officers the right to visit him.

The four-day rule

Japan and Russia are also bound by a bilateral consular convention signed by Japan and the Soviet Union, which still applies to Russia. Under it, a detained national has the right to a consular visit within four days.

The reporter

Russia's Federal Security Service detained a Hokkaido Shimbun reporter in the Sakhalin region on

Talks between officials

The director-general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's European Affairs Bureau met the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Third Asian Department and demanded an early consular visit and the reporter's immediate release, a ministry official said on Wednesday.

Washington's support

A spokesman for the U.S. State Department condemned the detention on Monday, saying Washington condemned any attempt to intimidate, harass or punish journalists and people with independent views, and that the United States regards freedom of expression as a fundamental right. He also supported Japan's position that the reporter was not a spy.

The stakes

Espionage carries a sentence of up to 20 years in Russia. Atsuko Higashino, a professor at the University of Tsukuba, wrote in a commentary for Kyodo News that the reporter's early release should be Japan's overriding priority, and urged the government to keep to principled diplomacy.

A frozen relationship

The arrest came as relations sank to new lows. Russia suspended peace treaty talks after Japan joined Western sanctions over the invasion of Ukraine, and President Vladimir Putin visited the disputed island of Etorofu in August.

October 13 and moved him to the Lefortovo detention centre in Moscow. More than a week later, Japanese diplomats had not been allowed to see him, and Russia had not clearly explained why.

What a visit does

A consular visit allows diplomats to confirm that a detainee is alive and well, to pass on messages from his family, and to see whether he has a lawyer and understands the charges against him. It does not give the diplomats any power over the case itself.

The charges

Russian authorities accuse the reporter of gathering information on the number of soldiers mobilised from the Northern Territories and the Kuril Islands on the instructions of Japanese intelligence. Japan denies that he was engaged in espionage, which carries a sentence of up to 20 years in Russia.

Lefortovo

The Lefortovo detention centre in Moscow, run by the security service, has held many people accused of spying, including foreigners.

Japan's demands

Japan has demanded an early consular visit and the reporter's immediate release, through its ambassador in Moscow and in talks between senior officials of the two foreign ministries.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 18.

INTERNATIONAL

Musk Ordered Limits on Starlink That Grounded Ukraine's Interceptor Drones, Wall Street Journal Reports; He and Trump Deny Involvement

The cap on the speed at which moving equipment can stay connected is said to have made some drones unusable; accounts differ on whether the White House was consulted

By the International Desk

Elon Musk, who heads SpaceX, the operator of the Starlink satellite network, ordered restrictions last week on the use of Starlink by Ukraine's armed forces, The Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday, citing several American officials.

Ukrainian forces rely on Starlink for communications in the fighting against Russia.

A speed limit

According to the report, Mr Musk set a maximum speed at which moving equipment could stay connected to the network. As a result, Ukrainian interceptor drones and similar equipment were effectively rendered unusable.

The report did not give his reasons.

Denials

President Donald Trump and Mr Musk have both denied involvement in the restriction.

One American official told the newspaper that the restriction was Mr Musk's own decision and that Mr Trump had not given any specific order. Another source said Mr Musk had consulted Mr Trump and other senior officials before giving the instruction.

A call to the White House

After the restriction became known, a SpaceX representative called White House staff and asked them to put out a message saying that the company and the administration had coordinated the move in advance, the report said.

A familiar dispute

Starlink's role in Ukraine has been contentious since the early months of the war, when Mr Musk's company supplied terminals to keep the country connected after Russia's invasion.

SpaceX's other news

Separately, SpaceX and Tesla, the carmaker Mr Musk also runs, have set up special committees to discuss a possible combination of the two companies.

INTERNATIONAL

Pakistan's Army Chief Visits Tehran to Revive U.S.-Iran Talks, but Iran Says No Negotiations Until the Blockade of Its Ports Ends

Field Marshal Asim Munir meets President Pezeshkian and Speaker Ghalibaf; Tehran also says it will not let its highly enriched uranium leave the country, as Washington is reported to want

By the International Desk

Field Marshal Asim Munir, the head of Pakistan's army, visited Tehran on Tuesday in what was seen as an effort to restart stalled talks between the United States and Iran aimed at ending the fighting, Iran's Tasnim news agency reported.

Pakistan is one of the mediators in the talks, which have stalled over the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's nuclear programme.

The meetings

Field Marshal Munir met President Masoud Pezeshkian and the speaker of parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, separately, as well as the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

Iran's conditions

The security council secretary repeated Iran's position that it would not enter negotiations unless the United States ended its blockade of Iranian ports and met other conditions, according to Tasnim. He also said Iran would not allow its highly enriched uranium to be taken out of the country, as the United States is reported to be seeking.

The markets

Hopes of progress in the talks pushed oil prices down in New York on Tuesday. West Texas Intermediate crude for November delivery, which expired that day, fell 1.87 dollars to 101.79 dollars a barrel, its first fall in nine trading days.

A long lull

Major combat has been paused, but diplomacy has stalled. Iran's Revolutionary Guards have declared the Strait of Hormuz closed, while the U.S. military says it remains open under the control of the United States and its regional partners.

Why Japan watches

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

INTERNATIONAL

Drone Strike on a Market in the Disputed Abyei Region Kills at Least 153; South Sudan Blames Sudan's Army

Sudanese officials say the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces were operating in the area and had used a fuel depot inside the market that was hit

By the International Desk

A drone strike on a market in Abyei, a region on the border between Sudan and South Sudan that both countries claim, killed at least 153 people on Monday, Reuters reported, citing local officials.

South Sudan's Foreign Ministry said the attack had been carried out by the Sudanese army.

The fuel depot

Sudanese officials said the Rapid Support Forces, the paramilitary group fighting the army in Sudan's civil war, had been operating in part of Abyei. The strike hit a fuel storage depot inside the market, and there is information that the Rapid Support Forces had used it, the officials said.

An unresolved border

Abyei is an oil-producing area whose status has not been settled since South Sudan became independent from Sudan in 2011.

The civil war

Sudan's war between the army and the Rapid Support Forces began in April 2023 and has caused one of the world's largest humanitarian crises, with millions of people forced from their homes.

Drones over Africa

Armed drones have become a common weapon in conflicts across Africa. In Mali, where a military government is fighting armed groups, the army is accused of using drones to attack civilians indiscriminately, including medical facilities, according to a report this week.

No response yet

There was no immediate response from Sudan's army to South Sudan's accusation.

Peacekeepers

The United Nations has kept a peacekeeping force in Abyei since 2011 to monitor the disputed area.

INTERNATIONAL

Romania Ends Months of Caretaker Rule as Parliament Approves a Government Led by Former Diplomat Luca Niculescu

The independent, pro-EU prime minister says Romania must take an active part in European decisions and wants closer cooperation with the United States

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Romania's parliament approved a new government led by Luca Niculescu on Tuesday, ending months in which the country was run by a caretaker administration.

The government took office the same day after winning a majority vote.

The prime minister

Mr Niculescu, 55, is an independent and pro-European politician who had served as deputy foreign minister. A former journalist, he was Romania's ambassador to France from 2016 to 2022.

The ministers

His Cabinet is made up of ministers from the Social Democratic Party, the largest party in parliament.

Europe and America

In his speech to parliament, Mr Niculescu said Romania must take an active part in the European Union's decision-making, and said he wanted to strengthen cooperation with the United States.

INTERNATIONAL

How Romania got here

In May, parliament passed a motion of no confidence in the government of Ilie Bolojan, which had adopted austerity measures to cut a large budget deficit. President Nicusor Dan nominated a successor, but opposition parties blocked the nomination, and a caretaker government stayed in office.

Why it matters

Romania, which borders Ukraine, is home to a NATO base on the Black Sea and has been a crucial route for exports of Ukrainian grain.

The task ahead

The new government inherits a large budget deficit and public discontent over spending cuts.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump's Approval Falls to a Record Low of 31 Per Cent in a Reuters Poll, and Democrats Open a 12-Point Lead for the Midterms

More women say they will vote Democratic; Republican candidates are distancing themselves from the president two weeks before the November 3 elections

By the International Desk

President Donald Trump's approval rating has fallen to 31 per cent, the lowest of his current term, in a Reuters poll published on Monday.

The previous low, recorded two weeks earlier, was 32 per cent.

The survey

The online poll surveyed 1,679 adults across the United States, including 1,279 registered voters.

The midterms

Asked how they would vote if the congressional elections were held now, 47 per cent of registered voters chose a Democrat and 35 per cent a Republican, widening the Democrats' lead from 7 points two weeks earlier to 12. Reuters cited a rise in the share of women saying they would vote for the Democratic candidate.

Distance from the president

The midterm elections are on November 3. Republican candidates are reportedly distancing themselves further from Mr Trump.

The price of tariffs

Rising living costs have made affordability one of the central issues of the campaign. A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York published this month estimated that prices of consumer goods such as cars and household items would have fallen without the administration's high tariffs, rather than rising 2 per cent from a year earlier as they did in February.

The war

The war with Iran and its effect on fuel prices have also weighed on the president. Senator Bernie Sanders has urged him to end the war at once, citing the cost of fuel for Americans.

What it means for Japan

The results of the midterms will shape how freely Mr Trump can pursue his trade and security policies in his remaining two years, including tariffs on allies such as Japan.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump Rallies His Base in North Carolina, Where Republicans Trail in a Senate Race They Need, Two Weeks Before the Midterms

The president attacks Democrat Roy Cooper's record on crime as a Republican-aligned fund is reported to have given up on the seat

By the International Desk

President Donald Trump held a rally in Greenville, North Carolina, on Tuesday, two weeks before the midterm elections on November 3, as he tried to rouse his most fervent supporters in a state where his party is trailing in the race for a Senate seat it now holds.

The race

The Republican candidate, Michael Whatley, a former chairman of the Republican National Committee who is making his first run for office, is behind the Democratic candidate, Roy Cooper, a former governor of the state, in opinion polls.

A fundraising group aligned with the Republicans has reportedly withdrawn its support, judging that the party has little chance of winning.

The incumbent

The seat is held by Republican Senator Thom Tillis, who decided not to seek re-election after opposing Mr Trump's policies.

Trump's pitch

Mr Trump argued that Mr Cooper had been soft on criminals as governor and had made the state less safe, and urged voters to back Mr Whatley. Republicans said they would prevent the kind of large-scale rioting now under way in France.

The Senate arithmetic

Republicans hold 53 of the 100 seats in the Senate, so Democrats need a net gain of four seats to take control, because the vice-president, JD Vance, casts the deciding vote in a tie.

Why it matters

Democrats regard North Carolina as a state they can win, and taking the seat would be a step toward regaining a majority in the Senate. Mr Trump carried the state in all three of his presidential campaigns.

The national picture

A Reuters poll published on Monday put Mr Trump's approval rating at 31 per cent, the lowest of his current term, with Democrats holding a 12-point lead in voting intentions for the midterms.

For Japan

The outcome of the midterms will shape how much room the president has on trade and foreign policy, including the tariffs that have weighed on Japanese exporters.

INTERNATIONAL

Shouting Erupts at the United Nations as the U.S. Lobbies Against the Annual Vote Condemning Its Embargo on Cuba

Ambassador Mike Waltz accuses Havana of lying about the cause of its people's hardship; Cuba's envoy calls the meeting a farce

By the International Desk

A meeting called by the United States at United Nations headquarters in New York to condemn repression by Cuba's government descended into chaos on Monday, when Cuba's ambassador and his colleagues jeered the American ambassador, Mike Waltz, as he left.

The General Assembly is due to vote in late October on a resolution calling for an end to the American economic embargo on Cuba, and the meeting was intended to persuade countries to vote against it or abstain.

Waltz's case

At the meeting, where exiled Cubans spoke, Mr Waltz accused the Cuban government of lying by blaming the embargo for its people's suffering, and urged other countries to oppose the resolution or abstain.

Havana's reply

Cuba's ambassador, speaking to diplomats outside the room, called the meeting a farce meant to distract from what he described as the collective punishment of the Cuban people by the United States.

An annual ritual

The resolution has passed by overwhelming majorities every year for more than three decades. Last year, as the second Trump administration stepped up its lobbying, the number of countries voting in favour fell by about 20.

Japan's vote

Japan has voted in favour of the resolution in past years, alongside most members of the General Assembly.

The embargo

The United States imposed the embargo in the early 1960s, after Fidel Castro's revolution. Only Congress can lift it fully.

Washington's line

In most years only the United States and Israel have voted against the resolution. Since returning to office, the Trump administration has also put Cuba back on the American list of state sponsors of terrorism, from which the Biden administration had removed it days before leaving office.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 18.

Crossword, Page 24.

Champi at 900 hPa, Page 3.

INTERNATIONAL

Two Fires Minutes Apart in Seoul's Gangnam Injure 19; Police Detain a Man in His 70s on Suspicion of Arson

The blazes broke out in neighbouring office buildings in a district popular with foreign visitors; the Japanese Embassy says it has no reports of Japanese victims

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Fires broke out minutes apart in two buildings in the Gangnam district of Seoul on Tuesday, injuring 19 people, and police detained a man in his 70s on suspicion of serial arson, the Yonhap news agency reported.

The first fire

A fire broke out on the third floor of a seven-storey building at about 11:54 a.m. local time, injuring 11 people.

The second

About seven minutes later, at around 12:01 p.m., a fire started on the fourth floor of a 10-storey building nearby, injuring eight.

The injured

Five of the 19 people were seriously hurt, and the rest suffered minor injuries.

A patent office

One of the fires started in a patent attorneys' office, according to reports.

No motive yet

Police have not disclosed a motive.

Japanese safe

The Japanese Embassy in South Korea said it had no information that any Japanese nationals had been harmed. Gangnam is a busy business and shopping district frequently visited by foreign tourists, including many from Japan.

Investigation

Police were investigating whether the man set both fires.

INTERNATIONAL

Kim Jong Un Tours a Fashion Exhibition and Tells Factories That Better Design Means Better Business, and Patriotism

The North Korean leader, accompanied by his daughter, views clothing, shoes and bags from new regional factories and calls for designs featuring the national flag

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited an exhibition of domestically made clothing, shoes and bags in Pyongyang on Monday, state media reported on Tuesday.

The exhibition included products from factories newly built in the provinces, part of a policy of developing regional industry that Mr Kim has made one of his priorities.

Design matters

Mr Kim said that placing greater emphasis on design would raise the economic benefits and productivity of the industry, according to the reports.

The flag

He also encouraged designs featuring the national flag, to foster patriotism.

His daughter

He was accompanied by his daughter, who has appeared frequently at his side in recent years.

The regional push

Mr Kim has ordered factories to be built across the country to supply consumer goods, an effort to improve living standards outside the capital and to reduce shortages of everyday items.

The backdrop

The visit came as Kim Yo Jong, the leader's sister, warned recently that North Korea would respond to what it calls provocations along the border, and as Pyongyang continues its military cooperation with Russia.

Watching Seoul

South Korea is in a dispute with Ukraine over the disclosure of the transfer to South Korea of North Korean soldiers captured while fighting for Russia.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Tax cut debate opens, Page 5.

Security talks: subs and principles, Page 6.

INTERNATIONAL

China's Hong Kong-Based Mediation Body Turns One With 48 Members, Mostly From the Global South and None From the G7

Beijing presents the International Organization for Mediation as a peaceful way to settle disputes between states; it has resolved only a handful of cases, and much of its work is confidential

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

The International Organization for Mediation, a body set up in Hong Kong under China's leadership, has marked a year of operation with 48 signatory countries, Kyodo News reported on Tuesday.

That is up from 33 when its founding convention was signed in May last year, before it opened. Most of the growth has come from the Global South, and about half of the signatories are African countries.

No G7 members

None of the Group of Seven industrialised democracies has joined.

Open to all

The organisation's secretary-general said at a lecture in September that membership was not restricted and that she would approach more countries when the opportunity arose.

A handful of cases

She said the number of disputes it had resolved had risen to two or more, describing the total as only a handful. Confidentiality rules make the full scope of its work hard to see.

Beijing's pitch

China presents the body as a way to settle disputes between states peacefully and to improve the international order. Critics see it as part of an effort to build institutions that rival those created by Western countries after the Second World War.

The context

China has long rejected the authority of the international tribunal that ruled against its claims in the South China Sea in 2016, in a case brought by the Philippines.

Japan's position

Japan relies on the established international courts and has encouraged other countries to settle disputes under international law.

INTERNATIONAL

Huge Grassland Fire in Mongolia Linked to a Convoy Carrying Executives of KDDI's Local Unit; KDDI Says It Takes It 'Extremely Seriously'

Chinese state media say dry grass caught in a vehicle of the convoy ignited and spread through a nature reserve in Dornod Province

By the International Desk

A large grassland fire in a nature reserve in eastern Mongolia was caused by a convoy carrying executives of Mobicom, a subsidiary of the Japanese telecommunications company KDDI, China's official Xinhua news agency reported on Tuesday.

The fire broke out on October 8 in the reserve in Dornod Province, which borders China, according to Mongolia's state news agency, Montsame.

The suspected cause

According to Xinhua, dry grass became caught in part of a vehicle in the convoy, caught fire and spread across the grassland.

KDDI's response

KDDI confirmed to Kyodo News that Japanese executives of Mobicom had been in the reserve.

"We take it extremely seriously that a fire occurred in connection with Mobicom's activities and caused great damage to the natural environment," the company said.

The damage

The extent of the area burned was not reported.

Mobicom

Mobicom is one of Mongolia's major mobile phone operators. KDDI has invested in it for many years, and Japan is one of Mongolia's leading aid donors.

The steppe

Wildfires are a recurring hazard on Mongolia's grasslands in dry seasons, and they can spread quickly across open country driven by strong winds.

ECONOMY



The Tokyo Stock Exchange at Kabutocho. The Nikkei average fell 841.28 yen on Tuesday to 64,075.42 as chip stocks slid on doubts about the AI boom and a jump in oil prices added to the gloom. (Photo: TG2 (CC))

ECONOMY

Nikkei Slides 841 Yen as Doubts Over the AI Boom Hit Chipmakers and Oil's Climb Weighs; SoftBank Group Alone Drags the Index Down 200 Yen

The average falls more than 1,100 yen at one point before closing at 64,075; the broader Topix loses 58 points, its first fall in three days
By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

Tokyo stocks fell for a second straight day on Tuesday as investors sold semiconductor shares on concerns about the outlook for the artificial intelligence market and as a jump in crude oil prices added to the gloom.

The Nikkei Stock Average closed at 64,075.42, down 841.28 points, or about 1.3 per cent. At one point it was down more than 1,100 points.

The broader Topix index fell 58.27 points to 4,009.21, its first decline in three days. About 2.149 billion shares changed hands on the prime market.

The chip sell-off

Selling concentrated on semiconductor-related shares, which have led the market's rise this year on the back of the AI boom, as investors questioned how long demand for AI investment would keep growing.

SoftBank Group, a heavyweight in the index, alone pushed the Nikkei average down by more than 200 points, the Nikkei newspaper reported.

Oil

A surge in U.S. crude oil futures, driven by attacks by Yemen's Houthis on Saudi Arabia, also weighed on sentiment, raising concern about the effect of higher energy costs on Japan's economy.

ECONOMY

Japan's Trade Deficit Nearly Doubles to 2.8 Trillion Yen in the First Half, as War in the Middle East Drives Up the Cost of Crude

Imports for April-September rise 20.4 per cent to 66.3 trillion yen; it is the 11th straight half-year in the red
By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Japan ran a trade deficit of 2.8184 trillion yen in the first half of fiscal 2026, from April to September, up 98.8 per cent from a year earlier, preliminary figures from the Ministry of Finance showed on Wednesday. It was the 11th consecutive half-year deficit.

Oil's bill

Imports rose 20.4 per cent to 66.2754 trillion yen. The main reason was the soaring price of crude oil caused by the turmoil in the Middle East, the ministry said. Imports of electronic components also increased.

Exports

The figures imply exports of about 63.5 trillion yen for the half year.

The war's effect

Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the route for much of Japan's crude, has pushed up oil prices this year, with New York crude trading above 100 dollars a barrel this month. The government has released oil from national stockpiles and subsidised fuel prices to soften the blow.

The weak yen

A weak yen, trading at around 158 to the dollar, raises the yen cost of imports, adding to the deficit.

The morning

The average had already fallen 404 points by the end of the morning session, closing it at 64,512.

A volatile month

The market has swung sharply in October. On October 6, the Nikkei closed above 70,000 for the first time since July 1, before falling back on worries about the Middle East and the AI trade.

Wall Street steadies

Overnight in New York, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 529.85 points as oil prices eased on hopes of progress in talks between the United States and Iran, while the technology-heavy Nasdaq Composite closed almost unchanged.

The week ahead

Investors are waiting for the policy meetings of the U.S. Federal Reserve on October 27 and 28 and of the Bank of Japan on October 29 and 30. Governor Kazuo Ueda signalled last week that the Bank of Japan would keep raising interest rates.

Why it matters

A persistent trade deficit means more yen flowing out to pay for energy and raw materials, which economists say adds to downward pressure on the currency and squeezes household budgets.

Income from abroad

Japan still earns large sums from its investments overseas, which keep its broader current account in surplus even when trade is in deficit.

Next

Detailed figures for September, including the breakdown by country and product, were released alongside the half-year totals.

ECONOMY

Yen Firms Slightly to 158.07 as U.S. Rates Fall, After Early Selling on Fears That Houthi Attacks Would Fuel Inflation

Dealers remain wary of intervention by the government and the Bank of Japan; in New York the yen strengthens 35 sen as oil's rise pauses
By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

The yen edged higher against the dollar on Tuesday, recovering from early losses as falling U.S. interest rates drew attention to the narrowing gap between American and Japanese borrowing costs.

At 5 p.m. in Tokyo the dollar stood at 158.07 to 158.09 yen, down 9 sen from Monday. The euro was at 177.49 to 177.53 yen, up 53 sen.

The morning

The yen was sold in the morning after attacks by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis pushed up oil prices, raising concern that higher energy costs would add to inflation in Japan.

The afternoon

Later in the day, long-term interest rates in the United States fell, and buying of yen and selling of dollars took over as traders focused on a smaller gap between U.S. and Japanese rates.

Wary of intervention

"There is also wariness about currency intervention by the government and the Bank of Japan," a foreign exchange broker said.

New York

In New York at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, the dollar was at 158.12 to 158.22 yen, the yen 35 sen stronger than the previous day. A pause in the rise of oil prices eased concern about accelerating inflation, and falling U.S. long-term rates encouraged dollar selling.

The meetings

The Federal Reserve meets on October 27 and 28, and the Bank of Japan on October 29 and 30. Governor Kazuo Ueda said last week that the bank would continue to raise interest rates.

The prime minister's view

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi rejected criticism in the Diet on Monday that her policies had caused a "Takaichi weak yen," saying a strong economy would raise confidence in the currency.

Who feels it

The weak yen raises the cost of imported food, energy and raw materials, and has contributed to the widening trade deficit announced on Wednesday.

BUSINESS

SpaceX and Tesla Set Up Special Committees to Discuss Combining, Raising the Prospect of a Single Giant of Rockets, Cars and AI

Elon Musk, chief executive of both companies, disclosed the plans; no terms or timetable have been announced

By the Business Desk

SpaceX, the American rocket company, and Tesla, the electric carmaker, have each set up a special committee to discuss a possible combination of the two businesses, Elon Musk, the chief executive of both, disclosed on Tuesday.

No details

The terms of any deal, how the companies would be valued and when a decision might be made were not disclosed.

Why committees

Because Mr Musk leads both companies, committees of directors are used to represent the interests of each company's shareholders in any talks.

Two giants

SpaceX dominates the market for rocket launches with its reusable Falcon rockets and runs the Starlink satellite internet service, while Tesla is one of the world's most valuable carmakers and is investing heavily in self-driving technology and robots.

Shares for children

Mr Musk drew attention this week with a post saying he would give SpaceX shares to children across the United States free of charge, Kyodo News reported.

The questions

Any combination would raise questions about valuation and governance that regulators and shareholders are likely to scrutinise.

Japan's interest

Japanese companies and government agencies are customers of Starlink, which has been used in disaster areas in Japan when ground networks failed.

ECONOMY

Dow Rebounds 530 Points as Oil Snaps a Nine-Day Rise on Hopes of U.S.-Iran Talks; Housing Starts Fall for a Third Month

3M's results lift the market while Apple is sold; New York crude touched 110 dollars on Houthi attacks before closing lower

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

U.S. stocks rose on Tuesday, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average ending a three-day losing streak, as a pause in the rise of oil prices eased concerns about inflation.

The Dow closed at 52,495.88, up 529.85 points. The technology-heavy Nasdaq Composite edged down 6.07 points to 26,424.82.

The movers

Strong earnings from the industrial company 3M supported the market, and shares of the drugmaker Merck and the health insurer UnitedHealth Group were among the biggest gainers. Apple was sold.

Oil turns

West Texas Intermediate crude for November delivery, which expired on Tuesday, fell 1.87 dollars to 101.79 dollars a barrel, its first fall in nine trading days. The more actively traded December contract fell 72 cents to 97.82 dollars.

Prices had climbed into the 110-dollar range early in the day after the Houthis' attacks on Saudi Arabia, but expectations of progress in talks to end the fighting between the United States and Iran eased worries about supply.

Housing

U.S. housing starts fell 5.2 per cent in September from August to an annual rate of 1.221 million, the Commerce Department said, the third monthly decline in a row and well below the 1.305 million economists had expected.

Starts of single-family homes fell 4.6 per cent to 859,000. Building permits, a guide to future construction, slipped 0.2 per cent to about 1.4 million, better than expected.

Earnings season

Investors are working through third-quarter results. General Motors said its net profit for July-September rose about 2.5 times to 3.3 billion dollars, helped by sales of pickup trucks.

Tokyo's turn

Tokyo shares, which fell 841 yen on Tuesday, were expected to take some comfort from Wall Street's rise.

BUSINESS

Nidec Panel Finds Founder Nagamori and Five Former Presidents Liable for Failing to Fix Flawed Accounting, Leaving Damages to the Courts

The investigation committee says wrong accounting policies were adopted company-wide and old problems put off for years; it calls the founder's view that accounting should serve targets mistaken

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

A committee investigating the responsibility of executives at Nidec for the motor maker's accounting irregularities concluded that the company's founder and five former presidents had failed in their duties and could be held liable for damages, according to its report released on Tuesday.

The findings

The committee found that incorrect accounting policies had been adopted across the company and that problems inherited from the past had been put off for many years. Executives, including the former presidents, failed to correct the flawed policies, leading to improper accounting.

The founder

The report said Shigenobu Nagamori, Nidec's founder, had held the mistaken view that accounting should put meeting performance targets first. It said Hiroshi Kobe, a co-founder, had held the same view.

The former presidents

The committee found that the five former presidents, including Mitsuya Kishida, had neglected their duties.

How much

The committee said it was difficult to determine the extent of the damage each former president had caused, and that the question should be left to the courts.

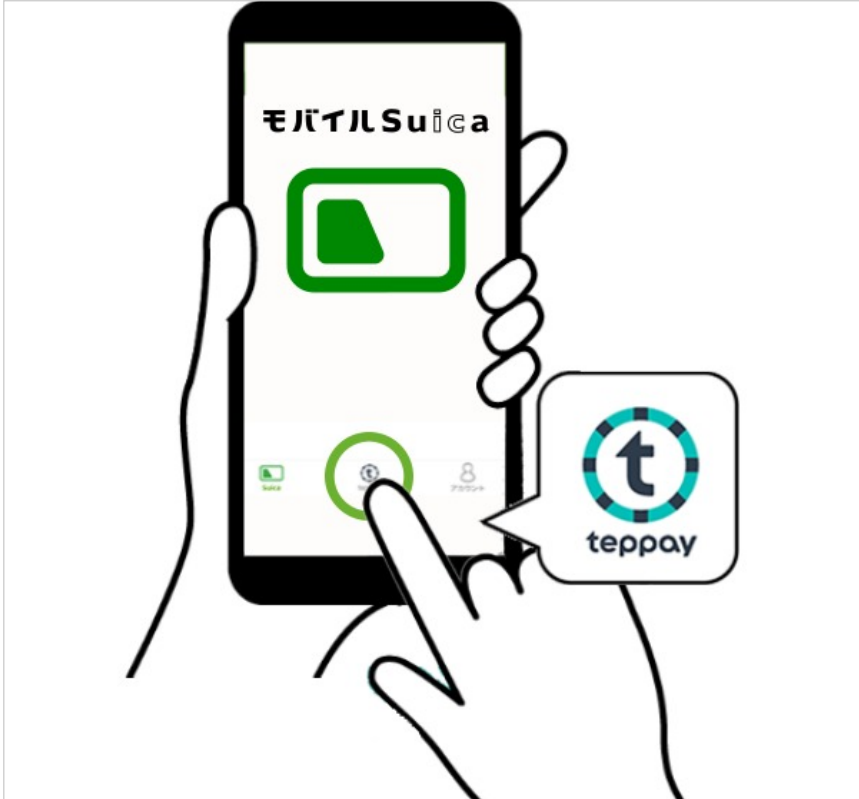
A powerful founder

Mr Nagamori built Nidec from a small company founded in 1973 into one of the world's largest makers of electric motors, used in everything from hard disk drives to electric vehicles. He was known for demanding targets and for repeatedly appointing and then replacing successors.

The question of damages

Under Japanese company law, directors who neglect their duties can be held liable to the company for the losses that result, and shareholders can sue on the company's behalf if it does not act.

BUSINESS



An illustration of teppay, the code-payment service that JR East added to its Mobile Suica smartphone app on Tuesday, in a file image. (File image: WPM Productions)

BUSINESS

JR East Launches 'teppay,' Turning the Mobile Suica App Into a Code-Payment Wallet With a 300,000-Yen Limit and a 20 Per Cent Rebate Campaign

The service, available at JR East facilities and more than 1.7 million shops accepting Smart Code, takes on PayPay; the rebate runs from November 4 to December 25

By the Business Desk

East Japan Railway Co., known as JR East, launched teppay, a code-payment service built into its Mobile Suica smartphone app, on Tuesday, adding QR and barcode payments to the electronic money used by millions of commuters.

The feature was added automatically to the Mobile Suica app from 11 a.m. on Tuesday, rolling out in stages. Existing users need only agree to the terms of service.

Bigger payments

With identity verification, users can make payments of up to 300,000 yen, topping up from their bank accounts. Suica on its own is limited to a balance of 20,000 yen.

Users who link one of the group's View Card credit cards can also pay directly up to the card's limit without topping up in advance.

Send and spend

The teppay balance can be sent to family and friends, moved into Mobile Suica or used to buy commuter passes.

Where it works

teppay can be used at JR East group commercial facilities and at more than 1.7 million locations across the country that accept Smart Code, including convenience stores, supermarkets, department stores, restaurants and electronics shops.

The rebate

From November 4 to December 25, users who sign up for the campaign and make code payments of 500 yen or more will receive 20 per cent back in teppay

points, up to 5,000 points per person. Points can be exchanged for JRE POINT, the group's loyalty points.

Buying a Mobile Suica commuter pass with a teppay balance from November 4 to January 29 earns 2,000 points.

For shops

New merchants that sign up for the method in which customers scan the shop's code pay no payment fees for up to 12 months, under a campaign that runs until March 31.

The competition

teppay enters a crowded market led by PayPay, the code-payment service that has signed up a large share of Japanese smartphone users. JR East's advantage is the reach of Suica, which millions use every day to ride trains and buses.

A quarter of a century of Suica

JR East introduced the Suica card in November 2001 as a contactless ticket for its Tokyo area lines, and Mobile Suica, which puts the card in a phone, followed in 2006. Suica later became electronic money accepted in shops, and cards issued by other railway and bus companies across Japan can now be used interchangeably with it.

ECONOMY

New Condominiums in Greater Tokyo Average 114.9 Million Yen, Topping 100 Million for a Half-Year for the First Time

Prices in Tokyo's 23 wards jump 34.7 per cent to 179 million yen as building costs soar; supply falls to the second-lowest level for a first half

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The average price of a new condominium in the Tokyo metropolitan area rose 21.1 per cent from a year earlier to 114.94 million yen in the April-September half of fiscal 2026, the Real Estate Economic Institute said on Tuesday.

It was the first time the average had exceeded 100 million yen for a first half, and the fourth straight record.

Tokyo's wards

In Tokyo's 23 wards, the average jumped 34.7 per cent to 179.25 million yen, the biggest increase of any area.

The rest of the region

The average in Chiba Prefecture rose 24.1 per cent to 73.76 million yen, and in Tokyo outside the 23 wards it rose 15.9 per cent to 79.78 million yen. Prices fell in Saitama Prefecture, by 2.1 per cent to 64.57 million yen, and in Kanagawa Prefecture, by 1.6 per cent to 77.16 million yen.

Fewer homes

The number of new units supplied fell 6.0 per cent to 8,601, the second-lowest for a first half after fiscal 2024.

Why prices are rising

Building costs have soared because of higher prices for materials and a shortage of construction workers. Supply has been held back because buyers have not been able to keep up with the higher prices.

Further to go?

"Prices could rise further," an official at the institute said. Prices fell in September, however, leaving open whether the rise will continue.

Who can afford it

The figures underline how far new homes in the capital have moved beyond the reach of many salaried families.

BUSINESS

Given Money Saved by the Food Tax Cut, a Quarter of People Would Put It in the Bank, an Intage Survey Finds; Travel and Investment Follow

The market research firm says the answers show deep anxiety about the future alongside a wish to make daily life a little richer

By the Business Desk

Saving was the most popular answer when people were asked how they would use the money they would save if the consumption tax on food were cut to 1 per cent, according to a survey by the market research company Intage released on Tuesday.

The results

Respondents could choose more than one answer. Savings came first, chosen by 25.7 per cent. Travel, drives and leisure were second, at 15.1 per cent, and investment third, at 10.4 per cent. Health followed at 9.3 per cent and hobbies at 8.4 per cent.

The survey

The online survey, conducted from August 28 to September 1, covered 3,052 people aged 15 to 79 across the country.

Two faces

An Intage representative said the results revealed "a duality: deep-rooted anxiety about the future, and a positive hope of making life even a little richer."

Why it matters

The government hopes the tax cut will ease the burden of rising food prices and support consumption. If much of the money is saved, the boost to the economy would be smaller, a point opposition parties have raised in the Diet.

The debate

The lower house began debating the bill on Tuesday. In a Sankei Shimbun and FNN poll at the weekend, 52.2 per cent of respondents said the cut would have little or no effect against rising prices.

The timing

The survey was conducted before the bill was submitted, when the government's plans were already widely reported.

BUSINESS

Panasonic Will Mass-Produce Glass Perovskite Solar Panels in Shiga From 2029, Turning Office Windows and Walls Into Power Plants

The 'ENEFACE' panels, 1.8 by 1.2 metres, are printed onto building glass and can be designed to order; Panasonic targets commercial buildings and public facilities

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Panasonic Holdings said on Tuesday that it would begin full-scale mass production of next-generation perovskite solar cells in April 2029 at a new production base in Nagahama, Shiga Prefecture.

Glass that generates power

The cells are thinner than conventional solar panels and are built into building glass, so they can be installed on the windows and walls of buildings.

They are made by applying materials to sheets of glass in a process similar to printing with ink, and the design can be changed to suit customers.

ENEFACE

The product to be made from 2029 measures 1.8 metres by 1.2 metres and will be sold under the name ENEFACE.

The market

Panasonic aims to sell the panels for commercial buildings and public facilities, and will step up sales to property developers and local governments.

Why perovskite

Perovskite solar cells can be made light, thin and flexible, which allows them to be installed in places where heavy silicon panels cannot go. One of their main ingredients, iodine, is produced in large quantities in Japan, which is one of the world's leading producers.

Government backing

The government sees the technology, invented in Japan, as a way to expand renewable energy in a country with little flat land for solar farms, and has set targets for its adoption.

The challenge

Perovskite cells have been less durable than silicon panels, and companies around the world, including in China, are racing to make them last longer and cost less.

BUSINESS

Toyota Plans Driver Assistance That Warns of Hazards Ahead, Such as Debris or an Accident Scene, From 2028

The carmaker presents its roadmap for automated driving linked to road infrastructure at the ITS World Congress in South Korea, saying no single company can do it alone

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Toyota Motor Corp. said on Tuesday that it planned to introduce a driver-assistance function in 2028 that anticipates when a car may be approaching a hazard, such as fallen objects on the road or the scene of an accident, and warns the driver in advance.

The company disclosed the plan as part of a roadmap for automated-driving technology coordinated with traffic infrastructure, at the ITS World Congress in Gangneung, South Korea.

Learning from drivers

Toyota trains artificial intelligence on a wide range of driving data collected from users around the world, with the goal of eliminating traffic accidents.

Society-wide

"There are limits to what an individual company can do," Keiji Yamamoto, who heads Toyota's digital information and communication division, told reporters. "By releasing a roadmap, we want to foster an atmosphere in which society as a whole discusses this."

Why infrastructure matters

Cars that can receive information from roads, traffic signals and other vehicles can know about dangers beyond what their own sensors can see, such as an accident around a blind corner.

BUSINESS

The details

Toyota did not say which models would get the function or how the hazard information would be delivered to cars.

The context

The announcement comes as Japan prepares to require systems that detect distracted or drowsy drivers in new models from 2031, and as carmakers race to develop software that can be updated after a vehicle is sold.

Competition

Chinese and American rivals are moving quickly in automated driving, and Japanese carmakers have been criticised for falling behind in software.

BUSINESS

Fair Trade Commission Raids Pet Food Importer Suspected of Stopping Shops From Discounting Its 'Select Balance' Dog and Cat Food

Vets Choice Japan of Kasugai, Aichi Prefecture, is alleged to have set minimum prices and limited point rewards for years, possibly to protect a premium brand

By the Business Desk

The Japan Fair Trade Commission carried out an on-site inspection on Tuesday of Vets Choice Japan, an importer and seller of pet supplies based in Kasugai, Aichi Prefecture, on suspicion of violating the Antimonopoly Act, according to people familiar with the case.

The commission suspects the company of resale price maintenance, the practice of stopping retailers from selling below a set price.

The allegation

For at least several years, the company is alleged to have asked retailers to sell its Select Balance series of dog and cat food at or above a specified price, preventing large discounts.

It is also alleged to have asked retailers not to give buyers too many reward points.

The products

The company's website describes the Select Balance products as low in fat and free of grain.

A possible motive

The company may have wanted to prevent prices from collapsing in order to protect the image of its brand, according to the reports. Premium pet food has grown as owners spend more on their animals.

The law

Under the Antimonopoly Act, manufacturers and suppliers generally may not dictate the prices at which retailers sell their products, because doing so deprives consumers of the benefits of competition. Violations can lead to cease-and-desist orders and surcharges.

Past cases

The commission has taken action against resale price maintenance in a variety of industries in the past.

BUSINESS

Board of Audit Finds Flat 35 Mortgages Worth 3 Billion Yen Used for Private Lodging, Shops and Offices in Breach of the Rules

The long-term fixed-rate loans are meant for homes that borrowers live in; in some cases the borrower worked for the company running the lodging business

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The Board of Audit has found 64 improper loan contracts under Flat 35, the long-term fixed-rate mortgage offered by the Japan Housing Finance Agency with private lenders, worth about 3.04 billion yen in total, it was learned on Tuesday.

In those cases the homes were used for business rather than as homes for the borrowers or their relatives, as the programme requires.

The sample

The board examined 10,925 contracts for detached houses in urban areas taken out in fiscal 2023 and 2024, and looked closely at 135 in which improper use was suspected.

Lodging and shops

Of those, 25 homes were being used as minpaku private lodging or inns, and 39 were being used in part as shops, such as a ramen restaurant and a hair salon, or as offices. The parts of such homes used for

business are not eligible for the loans.

Inside connections

In 12 of the 25 lodging cases, the borrower worked for the company operating the lodging business, or the home had already been registered as private lodging when the loan was applied for.

The agency's response

"The improper use is extremely regrettable," the agency told Kyodo News. "We have dealt with it strictly, including by demanding repayment of the remaining balance in full."

Why it matters

Flat 35 is supported by public money and offers low fixed rates to help people buy homes. Using it to finance businesses gives borrowers an advantage the programme was not designed to provide.

The tourism boom

Private lodging has spread with the surge in foreign visitors, and some investors have bought homes to rent out to tourists.

BUSINESS

Consumer Agency Orders a Tokyo Seller to Stop Claiming Its Futon Dryers Kill Dust Mites, and Finds It Used Stealth Marketing

Giobai could not show a reasonable basis for its claims that hot air reached every corner of a futon to kill mites and sterilise it

By the Business Desk

The Consumer Affairs Agency issued a cease-and-desist order on Tuesday to Giobai, a sales company based in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo, over claims about its futon dryers that it said misled consumers.

The claims

On its website, the company said that hot air spread to every corner of the futon, killing dust mites and providing a sterilising effect. The claims appeared from July to September 2024 and in December 2024.

No basis

The agency found that the materials the company submitted did not provide a reasonable basis for the test methods or results behind the claims, which it said amounted to misleading representations of quality under the Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations.

Stealth marketing

The agency also found that the company had engaged in stealth marketing, advertising disguised as independent opinion, which the law prohibits.

The order

The company must take steps to prevent a recurrence, among other measures.

Why it matters

Futon dryers are a popular household appliance in Japan, where many people sleep on futons, and mite control is one of their main selling points.

The rules on stealth marketing

Japan banned stealth marketing in October 2023, requiring advertisements that appear to be the opinions of influencers or ordinary users to be labelled clearly.

BUSINESS

Netflix Profit Jumps 44 Per Cent on Price Rises, but Its Shares Slide as It Forecasts Slower Growth

Revenue for July-September rises 12 per cent to 12.87 billion dollars; competition from YouTube and TikTok for viewers' time intensifies

By the Business Desk

Netflix said on Tuesday that its net profit for the July-September quarter rose 44 per cent from a year earlier to 3.66 billion dollars, about 580 billion yen, helped by price increases and growth in paid memberships around the world.

Revenue rose 12 per cent to 12.87 billion dollars.

Slower ahead

The company expects revenue growth to slow for a fourth consecutive quarter in October to December. Its forecast for net profit in the current quarter fell short of market expectations, according to Reuters.

The market's verdict

Netflix shares fell nearly 7 per cent at one point in after-hours trading as investors worried about slowing growth.

Competition

The streaming company faces intense competition for viewers' time from YouTube and TikTok.

Price rises

Netflix has raised subscription prices in many markets in recent years, and the higher fees have lifted revenue even as the growth in new members has slowed.

In Japan

Netflix has invested heavily in Japanese animation and drama, which travel well to audiences abroad.

The figures

Net profit: 3.664 billion dollars, up 44 per cent.
Revenue: 12.874 billion dollars, up 12 per cent.

TECHNOLOGY

Police Staff Details From Tochigi, Gunma and Fukuoka May Have Leaked Through Arcadia's Safety-Check System; Seven Forces Affected

The Osaka company that runs emergency email systems told police of an intrusion on October 13; names, departments and email addresses of more than 30,000 officers and staff are involved

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The personal information of police officers and staff in several prefectures may have leaked after unauthorised access to systems run by Arcadia, a company based in Minoh, Osaka Prefecture, the forces said on Tuesday.

Arcadia operates systems that send mass emails to staff during disasters to confirm that they are safe.

Tochigi

The Tochigi Prefectural Police said the details of about 3,900 officers and staff, all of its personnel, may have leaked, including names, departments and email addresses. Arcadia informed the force by email on October 13, and it stopped using the system the same day.

Gunma

Information on about 3,700 staff of the Gunma Prefectural Police, which also uses Arcadia's system, may also have leaked, according to investigative sources. Its system is suspended.

Fukuoka

The Fukuoka Prefectural Police said the names, departments and personal email addresses of about 11,000 officers and staff may have leaked. It has told its departments to use other methods to confirm staff safety during disasters, and said operations were not affected.

Seven forces

The Asahi Shimbun reported that information on employees of seven prefectural police forces, in Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Kanagawa, Aichi, Fukuoka and Kagoshima, may have leaked, including about 16,000 people in Kanagawa. The Saitama force said on Monday that the details of about 13,000 officers and staff may have leaked.

No misuse yet

The forces said no misuse of the information had been confirmed.

The risk

Lists of police officers' names and contact details could be valuable to criminals and to those seeking to target or impersonate officers, which is why security specialists say leaks of staff data at public bodies are particularly serious.

Arcadia

The company, which also provides disaster-prevention apps to local governments and companies, has not said how the intruders gained access.

TECHNOLOGY

Cyberattack Places Unwanted Buy and Sell Orders in Seven Iwai Cosmo Securities Accounts, the First Confirmed Damage in Finance

Five of the orders were executed; the broker has restored the accounts and says customers bear no loss; the intrusion was at TradeWorks, the contractor that runs its online trading system

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Iwai Cosmo Securities, an Osaka-based brokerage, said on Tuesday that a cyberattack on its trading management system had resulted in unintended buy and sell orders being placed in seven customer

accounts, five of which were executed.

Accounts restored

The firm said it had already returned the affected accounts to their state before the trades. "Our customers have not suffered any burden," it said.

Names and emails

As of Tuesday, it had confirmed that the names and email addresses of 4,975 people had leaked. It said the data did not include the PIN numbers used for online trading.

The contractor

The unauthorised access occurred in the systems of TradeWorks, the company that operates and maintains Iwai Cosmo's online trading system. TradeWorks designs, develops and maintains online trading systems for financial institutions, including securities firms, foreign exchange margin traders and cryptocurrency businesses.

Similar damage has not been confirmed at other financial institutions, according to Kyodo News.

A first

The incident may be the first confirmed case of actual damage in the finance and securities sector from the wave of attacks targeting Japanese companies in recent weeks.

Why it matters

Unauthorised trading goes beyond stolen data. Last year, criminals who took over online brokerage accounts in Japan used them to buy shares in thinly traded companies, a scheme that prompted the industry to tighten authentication.

The advice

Brokerages urge customers to use two-factor authentication, to check their account activity regularly and to avoid logging in through links in emails or text messages.

TECHNOLOGY

LDP Calls the Wave of Cyberattacks a 'Grave Crisis' and Urges a Response Headquarters at the Prime Minister's Office

The party's cyber security panel wants faster capability building for the Self-Defense Forces and police, a change in executives' thinking and more specialists, with budgets and laws to follow at once

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The Liberal Democratic Party's headquarters on national cyber security strategy compiled a draft of emergency proposals on Tuesday, describing the series of personal data leaks caused by unauthorised access at companies across Japan as a grave crisis.

The draft, approved at a meeting at party headquarters, calls on the government to treat countermeasures as "the nation's top priority."

A headquarters for the response

It calls for a response headquarters led by the Prime Minister's Office.

Three pillars

The main measures for strengthening cyber defence are to speed up capability building for the Self-Defense Forces and the police, to change the awareness of executives, starting with those of listed companies, and to train and secure cyber specialists.

Ministries

The draft also includes separate recommendations for the relevant ministries, and urges the government to start immediately on the necessary budget measures and legal reviews.

Active cyber defence

The proposals come weeks after the law on active cyber defence took effect on October 1, allowing the authorities to act against servers used in attacks. Monitoring of communications under the law is due to begin next autumn.

Telecoms panel

The Internal Affairs Ministry's expert panel on strengthening cyber security at telecommunications carriers holds its first meeting on Thursday, with amendments to the Telecommunications Business Act also under consideration.

The scale

Companies have disclosed breaches almost daily this month, and on Tuesday alone they included the hometown tax portal Furusato Choice, a securities firm and three prefectural police forces.

TECHNOLOGY



MMX - Launch Successful: Oct 19/20, 2026 | Currently En Route | Mars Orbit: Aug 2027 | Phobos Sample Collection: 2030 | Sample Return to Earth: 2031 (approx. 5 years)

An artist's impression of the MMX probe with Mars and its moon Phobos, in a file image; the timeline printed on the image is part of the illustration. JAXA plans for MMX to enter orbit around Mars in August 2027 and to bring samples from Phobos back to Earth in July 2031. (File image: WPM Productions)

TECHNOLOGY

'We Kept Our Promise': MMX Begins Its Long Cruise to Mars as JAXA Plans to Hand H3 Launches to Mitsubishi Heavy From 2027

The rocket's project manager speaks of relief two years after the first H3's failure delayed the mission; the launch left glowing clouds over Tanegashima, and the probe's controllers in Sagamihara settle in for a voyage of almost five years

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

A day after an H3 rocket sent the Martian Moons eXploration probe, MMX, on its way to Mars, the engineers who built the rocket spoke of relief, and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said it was preparing to hand H3 launches over to the private sector.

"We were able to keep our promise," Makoto Arita, the H3 project manager, told a news conference at the Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima Prefecture on Tuesday. "I feel relieved, and at the same time a weight has been lifted from my shoulders."

Two years late

MMX had been due to launch in 2024. The mission was postponed after the failure of the first H3 rocket in March 2023, and the successful launch on Tuesday came two years later than planned.

The rocket lifted off at 4:41:03 a.m., and JAXA confirmed that the probe had separated about 71 minutes and 13 seconds after liftoff and had been placed on its planned path toward Mars.

On a big ship

Yasuhiro Kawakatsu, the MMX project manager, watched from the control room. As the flight went on, he said, he gradually came to feel as if he were aboard a large, steady ship. After the probe separated, he said, he felt the weight of his own responsibility more keenly.

Who will launch

JAXA President Hiroshi Yamakawa said at a news conference after the launch that the agency aimed to move launches to private-sector leadership as soon as possible. According to people familiar with the plan, launch operations could be transferred to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, which builds the H3, as early as 2027.

The H3's predecessor, the H2A, was transferred to private operation from its 13th flight in 2007.

TECHNOLOGY

MMX: After the Launch

By the Technology Desk

LIFTOFF: 4:41:03 a.m., Tuesday, October 20, H3 Flight 10, Tanegashima.

SEPARATION: About 71 minutes 13 seconds after liftoff, onto the planned path toward Mars.

THE ROCKET: H3-24L, flown as planned, JAXA says.

CONTROL: The MMX control room at JAXA's Sagamihara Campus, staffed around the clock at key milestones.

AUGUST 2027: Arrival in the Mars system and entry into orbit around Mars.

2027-2030: Observation of Mars, Phobos and Deimos; two landings on Phobos to collect at least 10 grams.

2030: Departure from the Mars system.

JULY 2031: The return capsule lands in Australia.

THE CAMERAS: An 8K camera and a 4K camera from NHK, taking a still image every 10 seconds.

Glowing clouds

After the launch, streaks of cloud glowing pink, blue and white appeared over the space centre in the early morning sky. They were probably noctilucent clouds, which form about 80 kilometres up, the highest altitude at which clouds can form. Such clouds are usually seen at high latitudes in summer, but gas and fine particles from a rocket's exhaust can help them form.

The voyage ahead

MMX is controlled from a new control room at JAXA's Sagamihara Campus in Kanagawa Prefecture, which runs around the clock at key moments such as launch and arrival at Mars. The probe is due to reach the Mars system in August 2027.

It is to spend about three years there, observing Mars and its moons, landing twice on Phobos to collect at least 10 grams of material and flying past the smaller moon, Deimos, before leaving in 2030. Its return capsule is due to land in Australia in July 2031.

Pictures to come

Two cameras developed by the public broadcaster NHK with JAXA, one recording in 8K facing the direction of travel and one in 4K facing sideways, will take a still image every 10 seconds at key moments. The first images, including views of the stars, are planned during the outbound cruise in fiscal 2026 and 2027.

A first if it works

No mission has yet brought back material from Mars or its moons. If MMX succeeds, Japan will be the first.

NEXT FOR THE H3: Launch operations may pass from JAXA to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries as early as 2027.

SOURCE: JAXA, Kyodo News.

TECHNOLOGY

Furusato Choice Confirms Leak of About 4.45 Million Users' Records, Including Their Estimated Tax Deductions for Hometown Donations

TrustBank, which runs one of Japan's biggest hometown tax portals, suspended the service on Monday and says the count may change; no date has been set for it to reopen

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

TrustBank, the Tokyo company that operates Furusato Choice, a portal for Japan's hometown tax donation system, said on Tuesday that the personal information of about 4.45 million users had leaked through unauthorised access to its systems.

The leaked data includes names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses, as well as users' estimated tax deductions for their donations, the company said.

Suspended on Monday

TrustBank said on Monday that it suspected unauthorised access and suspended the service. On Tuesday it announced that its investigation had confirmed the leak.

"The number and contents may change as the investigation continues," the company said, adding that it had not decided when the service would resume.

Outside experts

The company is investigating the cause with outside experts. It did not say how the intruders gained access.

How the system works

Under the hometown tax system, known as furusato nozei, people donate to local governments of their choice and receive deductions from their income and resident taxes, along with gifts from the municipalities such as local produce. Portals such as Furusato Choice list the gifts and handle the donations.

A sensitive season

The leak comes as the busiest season for donations approaches. Many people make their donations toward the end of the year, before the deadline for that year's tax deductions.

What users should do

Security specialists advise anyone who may be affected to watch for phishing emails and messages that use their personal details, to change passwords used on other sites and to be wary of calls claiming to come from the company or from municipalities.

One of many

The leak is one of a series of breaches at Japanese companies and organisations in recent weeks, which security companies have linked in part to attackers using automated tools, including artificial intelligence.

TECHNOLOGY

Tuesday's Breach Disclosures

By the Technology Desk

FURUSATO CHOICE (TRUSTBANK): About 4.45 million users' names, addresses, phone numbers, emails and estimated tax deductions leaked.

IWAI COSMO SECURITIES: Unwanted orders in seven accounts, five executed; 4,975 names and emails leaked, via contractor TradeWorks.

TOCHIGI POLICE: About 3,900 officers' and staff members' details may have leaked through contractor Arcadia.

GUNMA POLICE: About 3,700 staff, same system, according to investigative sources.

FUKUOKA POLICE: About 11,000 officers and staff, same system.

HOUSING ENERGY CONSERVATION 2024 CAMPAIGN: Contact details of 23,918 people at 16,950 registered businesses may have leaked from the system run by its secretariat, Hakuhodo; no consumers' data, the land ministry says.

STUDIO: The Tokyo website-building service says data on all its customers may have leaked, including names, emails, passwords and authentication details for linked services.

TOHO GAS: About 100 people's details from a new business may have leaked through a cloud service run by Studio.

KANAGAWA POLICE: About 16,000 employees' details may have leaked through the same system, the Asahi Shimbun reported.

SOURCE: Company, police and government announcements reported by Kyodo News, and the Asahi Shimbun.

TECHNOLOGY

U.S. Orders Federal Agencies to Remove DeepSeek's Chinese AI From Their Systems, Citing the Risk of Data Flowing to Beijing

A Homeland Security directive bars the products from procurement and requires agencies to delete those already in use

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The Trump administration has decided to remove products and services from DeepSeek, the Chinese artificial intelligence company, from the systems of federal government agencies, Kyodo News reported from Washington.

The Department of Homeland Security issued the decision in a directive dated October 20.

What it requires

The directive bars DeepSeek's products from federal procurement and requires agencies to delete any that they already use.

The reason

The department cited security threats, including the risk that information could leak to China. It said Chinese law allows the government to gain access to the infrastructure of private companies, which could expose sensitive information about American government employees.

The race

Competition with China for leadership in AI is also seen as a factor behind the decision.

DeepSeek's rise

DeepSeek drew worldwide attention early last year when it released AI models that it said performed comparably to leading American systems at a fraction of the cost, unsettling investors in American technology companies.

Japan's caution

Japan's government has also warned ministries and agencies about using DeepSeek, citing concerns about how data is stored and handled. Several other countries have restricted its use on government devices.

A wider pattern

The move comes as concern grows over AI tools from China being misused in cyberattacks. A private security company's analysis reported on Tuesday found that about 80 companies in Japan had been targeted in attacks that may have used Chinese-made AI software.

TECHNOLOGY

G7 Digital Ministers Agree to Share More Information on the Risks of Advanced AI, but Their Views Still Differ

Japan's internal affairs minister tells the online meeting that AI development must not outrun efforts to manage its dangers

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Digital ministers from the Group of Seven held an online meeting on Tuesday to discuss how to prevent accidents and misuse caused by the most advanced artificial intelligence.

Hisayuki Fujii, Japan's internal affairs minister, represented Japan.

Sharing information

The ministers confirmed the need to strengthen the sharing of information on AI risks and agreed that cooperation with countries outside the G7 was important.

Japan's message

The Japanese side stressed that the development of AI must not get ahead of efforts to manage its risks. It also raised as a challenge the need for research into methods that allow people other than developers to assess those risks.

Differences remain

Views on the risks of advanced AI vary among the G7 countries, and the meeting appears to have gone no further than confirming basic principles, according to Kyodo News.

The Hiroshima process

Japan led the G7's Hiroshima AI Process in 2023, which produced international guiding principles and a code of conduct for developers of advanced AI systems.

Why now

The meeting came amid concern that AI tools are being used to automate cyberattacks, and as Japanese companies report breaches almost daily.

Japan's institute

Japan set up its own AI Safety Institute in 2024 to study methods for evaluating the safety of AI systems.

The members

The G7 is made up of Japan, the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Canada, with the European Union also taking part.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Gymnasts keep world title, Page 23.

TECHNOLOGY

My Number Card on Android Phones Can Now Be Used to Prove Identity and Age in Person, Without Carrying the Card

Users add the card to Google Wallet; checks for opening bank accounts, signing phone contracts and buying alcohol or tobacco will roll out in stages
By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The functions of the My Number identity card were expanded on Android smartphones on Tuesday, allowing users to prove their identity and age in person without carrying the physical card.

Users add the card to Google Wallet, an app that also stores credit cards.

What's new

Android users could already use the card's functions for online government applications. The new features add identity checks and age checks made face to face.

In stages

Some uses will roll out in stages, including identity checks when opening bank accounts or signing mobile phone contracts, and age checks when buying alcohol or tobacco.

Who uses it

About 1.02 million people were using services based on the card's electronic certificate on Android devices at the end of September, according to the Digital Agency.

The iPhone

Similar functions became available on Apple's iPhones in 2025, when the card was added to the iPhone's wallet app.

The card

The My Number card carries a 12-digit number assigned to every resident and is used for taxes, social security and, since December 2024, as the main health insurance card.

Privacy

The card has been dogged by data-linking errors and privacy concerns, and the government has sought to win back trust by making it more convenient to use.

Tokyo Court Rules a 23-Second Owl Video Is a Creative Work and Orders Google to Stop a Copy Being Shown on YouTube

The judge says the choice of subject and composition showed the maker's individuality; another user had reused part of it in a 59-second compilation with narration
By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The Tokyo District Court ruled on Tuesday that a short video of an owl posted to YouTube was protected by copyright, and ordered Google, which operates YouTube, to take measures to prevent another user's video that infringed it from being displayed.

The original

The plaintiff's video, posted in August 2024, is 23 seconds long and shows an owl on a perch stretching its legs toward a human hand.

The copy

Another user posted a 59-second video that combined footage of several owls, using part of the plaintiff's video with added narration and other material.

Creative expression

Presiding Judge Katsumi Shibuya found that the plaintiff's video was protected and that its rights had been infringed. The choice of subject and the composition showed creative effort, he said, describing the video as "creative expression in which the maker's individuality appears."

The order

The court ordered Google to take measures to prevent the infringing video from being displayed.

Why it matters

The ruling is a reminder that short clips of animals and everyday scenes, widely shared and reused online, can be protected by copyright when they show the maker's own choices.

Appeal

It was not immediately clear whether either side would appeal.

1824: A Leeds Bricklayer Patents 'Portland Cement,' the Binder That Would Become the Most Used Building Material on Earth

Joseph Aspdin named his artificial stone after the limestone of the Isle of Portland; two centuries later, concrete shapes cities and carries a heavy carbon cost
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 21, 1824, Joseph Aspdin, a bricklayer from Leeds in the north of England, was granted a British patent for "an improvement in the mode of producing an artificial stone," which he called Portland cement.

He chose the name because the hardened material resembled Portland stone, the pale limestone quarried on the Isle of Portland in Dorset and prized for buildings such as St Paul's Cathedral.

How it was made

Aspdin's process involved burning a mixture of finely ground limestone and clay and grinding the result into a powder that set hard when mixed with water.

The modern recipe

His product was not quite the cement used today. Modern Portland cement, burned at much higher temperatures to form a material known as clinker, emerged over the following decades through the work of others, including his son William Aspdin and the manufacturer Isaac Charles Johnson.

Concrete everywhere

Cement is the glue in concrete, which is used in greater quantities than any other manufactured material, from the foundations of houses to dams, bridges and skyscrapers.

Japan's first

Japan began making Portland cement in 1875, at a government-run plant in Fukagawa, Tokyo, as the Meiji government built the infrastructure of a modern state.

The carbon problem

Making cement releases large amounts of carbon dioxide, both from the fuel burned in kilns and from the chemical reaction that turns limestone into lime. The industry accounts for roughly 8 per cent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions, and companies are racing to develop low-carbon alternatives.

Still the standard

Two centuries after Aspdin's patent, Portland cement remains the basis of most of the concrete poured around the world.

1833: Alfred Nobel Is Born; the Inventor of Dynamite Left His Fortune to Reward Science, Literature and Peace

The Swedish chemist held 355 patents and built an industrial empire on explosives; the prizes he endowed have been awarded since 1901, and this year's chemistry laureate spoke in Tokyo on Tuesday
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Alfred Nobel was born in Stockholm on October 21, 1833, the son of an engineer and inventor, Immanuel Nobel, whose business took the family to St. Petersburg in Russia when Alfred was a boy.

He was educated by private tutors, studied chemistry, and became fascinated by nitroglycerin, a powerful but dangerously unstable explosive.

A family tragedy

In 1864 an explosion at the family's workshop in Stockholm killed several people, among them his younger brother, Emil. Nobel pressed on, searching for a way to make the explosive safe to handle.

Dynamite

His answer, patented in 1867, was dynamite: nitroglycerin absorbed into a porous material, kieselguhr, which could be shaped into sticks and transported far more safely. With a detonator he also developed, it transformed mining, tunnelling and construction.

An industrialist

Nobel built factories in many countries and held 355 patents. Late in life he bought the Swedish ironworks Bofors and turned it toward making arms.

The will

He died in Sanremo, Italy, on December 10, 1896. His will left most of his fortune to establish prizes for

those who had conferred the greatest benefit on humankind in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace. The first were awarded in 1901, and the ceremonies are still held on December 10, the anniversary of his death.

A later addition

The prize in economic sciences was established by Sweden's central bank in his memory in 1968.

Today's laureate

On Tuesday, Kenso Soai, professor emeritus at the Tokyo University of Science and a winner of this year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry, spoke at a Chemical Society of Japan event in Tokyo's Edogawa Ward and said that more researchers were what Japan needed most to keep producing results in chemistry.

1879: Edison's Carbon-Filament Lamp Glows Through the Night at Menlo Park, and Kyoto Bamboo Soon Makes It Last

The date became the traditional birthday of the practical electric light; a bamboo from Yawata later gave Edison's bulbs filaments that burned for more than 1,000 hours
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

October 21, 1879, is the date traditionally celebrated as the birth of Thomas Edison's practical incandescent electric lamp.

At his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey, Edison and his team tested a lamp with a filament of carbonised cotton thread sealed inside a glass bulb from which most of the air had been pumped. It glowed for about 13 and a half hours, far longer than earlier attempts.

Not the first

Edison did not invent electric light. Arc lamps were already in use, and inventors including Joseph Swan in Britain had been working on incandescent bulbs for years. Edison's achievement was a lamp with a high-resistance filament that could last, together with a system of generators and wiring to supply electricity to homes and businesses.

The patent

He filed his patent for the carbon-filament lamp in November 1879, and it was granted in January 1880.

Bamboo from Japan

Edison's team then tested thousands of materials in search of a longer-lasting filament. They found that carbonised bamboo worked best, and bamboo from Yawata, near Kyoto, around the Iwashimizu Hachimangu shrine, produced filaments that lasted for more than 1,000 hours. It was used in Edison lamps for years, and a monument to Edison stands at the shrine today.

Light's Golden Jubilee

On October 21, 1929, Henry Ford staged a celebration of the lamp's 50th anniversary, Light's Golden Jubilee, at his museum village in Michigan, with Edison recreating the moment of 1879.

Japan's own date

Japan marks March 25 as Electricity Day, recalling an arc lamp lit in Tokyo on that day in 1878 at the Imperial College of Engineering, a forerunner of the University of Tokyo's engineering faculty.

1958: Andre Geim Is Born; the Physicist Who Peeled Graphene Off Graphite With Sticky Tape Also Made a Frog Float

His Nobel Prize in 2010 for the world's thinnest material made him the first person to have won both a Nobel and an Ig Nobel
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Andre Geim was born on October 21, 1958, in Sochi, in what was then the Soviet Union. He studied physics in Moscow and worked in Russia, Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands before settling at the University of Manchester.

Friday night experiments

Geim was known for spending time on unconventional experiments outside his main research. One of them, in the late 1990s, used a powerful magnet to levitate a live frog, exploiting the weak magnetism of water in its body. It earned him an Ig Nobel Prize, the award for research that first makes people laugh and then makes them think, in 2000.

Graphene

In 2004 Geim and his colleague Konstantin Novoselov reported that they had isolated graphene, a sheet of carbon just one atom thick, by repeatedly peeling layers from a block of graphite with adhesive tape.

Scientists had long debated whether such a material could exist on its own. It turned out to be extraordinarily strong, flexible, transparent and an excellent conductor of electricity and heat.

The Nobel

Geim and Novoselov shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2010 for their work on graphene. Geim became the first person to have won both a Nobel and an Ig Nobel.

The promise

Graphene and related two-dimensional materials are being studied for use in electronics, batteries, sensors and composites, although turning them into mass-produced products has proved slow.

Japan's carbon pioneers

Japanese scientists have been leaders in carbon materials. Sumio Iijima of NEC reported carbon nanotubes in 1991, a discovery that helped launch the field of nanotechnology.

1959: The Guggenheim Museum Opens in New York, Frank Lloyd Wright's Spiral Built Six Months After His Death

The architect spent 16 years on the design; in Japan, his Imperial Hotel famously survived the Great Kanto Earthquake, and its lobby now stands at Meiji Mura
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum opened on Fifth Avenue in New York on October 21, 1959, with a building unlike any museum before it.

Its architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, did not live to see it open. He died in April 1959, six months before the opening.

The spiral

Wright designed the museum as a single continuous ramp spiralling up around a central atrium beneath a glass dome, so that visitors could take a lift to the top and walk gently down past the art. The exterior widens as it rises, like an inverted ziggurat.

Sixteen years

The commission came in 1943, and Wright worked on it for 16 years through changes of site, cost and building rules. Critics and artists argued over whether the sloping walls suited paintings, but the building became an icon of modern architecture.

World Heritage

In 2019 the museum was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List with seven other buildings by Wright.

Wright in Japan

Wright also left his mark on Japan. His Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, completed in 1923, survived the Great Kanto Earthquake of September 1 that year with relatively little damage, adding to his fame. The building was demolished in the 1960s, but its main entrance and lobby were moved to the Meiji Mura open-air museum in Inuyama, Aichi Prefecture.

Other works

His Jiyu Gakuen Myonichikan school building in Tokyo and the Yodoko Guest House in Ashiya, Hyogo Prefecture, also survive, and both are designated Important Cultural Properties.

An influence

Wright was himself influenced by Japanese art and architecture, collecting woodblock prints and admiring the openness of traditional Japanese interiors.

1959: Eisenhower Agrees to Move Wernher von Braun's Rocket Team From the Army to NASA, the Team That Would Build the Saturn V

The decision gave the young space agency the engineers it needed to send astronauts to the Moon
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 21, 1959, President Dwight Eisenhower approved the transfer of the U.S. Army's space activities, including the rocket team led by Wernher von Braun, to the National Aeronautics and Space

TECHNOLOGY

Administration.

NASA had been created only a year earlier, in October 1958, in response to the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik.

The team

Von Braun and many of his engineers had developed rockets in Germany during the Second World War and were brought to the United States afterwards. Working for the Army in Huntsville, Alabama, they built the Redstone and Jupiter rockets, and in 1958 a modified Jupiter-C rocket launched Explorer 1, the first American satellite.

Marshall

The transfer took effect in 1960, and the team became the core of NASA's new George C. Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, with von Braun as its first director.

To the Moon

There the team developed the Saturn rockets, including the Saturn V, which carried the Apollo astronauts to the Moon from 1968 to 1972. It remains one of the most powerful rockets ever flown.

A complicated legacy

Von Braun's wartime work for Nazi Germany, including the V-2 missile built with forced labour, has made his legacy the subject of continuing debate.

Japan's rockets

Japan's own rocket programme began in 1955 with Hideo Itokawa's tiny Pencil rocket. Seven decades later, on Tuesday, an H3 rocket sent the MMX probe on its way to Mars.

TECHNOLOGY

1965: Comet Ikeya-Seki, Found by Two Japanese Amateurs, Grazes the Sun and Becomes One of the Brightest Comets in a Thousand Years

Kaoru Ikeya and Tsutomu Seki spotted it within minutes of each other; it passed about 450,000 kilometres above the Sun's surface

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 21, 1965, Comet Ikeya-Seki swept around the Sun at its closest approach, passing only about 450,000 kilometres above the solar surface, and blazed into one of the brightest comets seen in the past thousand years.

Two amateurs

The comet was discovered on September 18, 1965, independently and almost simultaneously, by two Japanese amateur astronomers: Kaoru Ikeya in Shizuoka Prefecture and Tsutomu Seki in Kochi. Under the rules for naming comets, it bears both their names.

A sungrazer

Ikeya-Seki belongs to the Kreutz sungrazers, a family of comets thought to be fragments of a single large comet that broke apart centuries ago, whose orbits carry them extremely close to the Sun.

Visible by day

Around its closest approach the comet was bright enough to be seen in daylight near the Sun. Afterwards, observers in the early morning sky saw a long, brilliant tail stretching across the heavens.

Broken apart

The intense heat and tidal forces near the Sun broke the comet's nucleus into pieces, which astronomers watched separate as it moved away.

Hunters of comets

Both men went on to discover more comets. Seki, who worked from Kochi for decades, found several comets and many asteroids, and Ikeya later co-discovered Comet Ikeya-Zhang in 2002.

Japan's amateur tradition

Their discovery is remembered as a high point of Japan's strong tradition of amateur astronomy, in which patient observers with modest telescopes have found comets, novae and supernovae.

Before dawn

In the weeks after its closest approach the comet was seen before dawn in the east, its tail stretching high above the horizon. Its fragments are not expected to return for close to a thousand years.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Tax cut debate opens, Page 5.

Security talks: subs and principles, Page 6.

TECHNOLOGY

1966: A Coal Waste Tip Slides Onto the Welsh Village of Aberfan, Burying a School and Killing 144 People, 116 of Them Children

An inquiry blamed the National Coal Board; the disaster changed the law on mine waste and the way engineers think about slopes

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On the morning of October 21, 1966, a tip of coal mining waste on the hillside above Aberfan, a village in south Wales, collapsed and slid down into the village after days of heavy rain.

The slurry engulfed Pantglas Junior School, where lessons had just begun, and nearby houses.

The toll

In all, 144 people were killed, 116 of them children. Many of the dead were pupils in their classrooms on the last day before the half-term holiday.

The cause

The tip had been built over springs, and water had weakened the waste until it gave way. Residents had raised concerns about the tips before the disaster.

The inquiry

A tribunal of inquiry concluded that the disaster could and should have been prevented, and placed the blame on the National Coal Board, the state body that ran Britain's coal industry, for its failure to manage the tips safely.

The law

The disaster led to the Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act of 1969, which tightened the rules on the design and inspection of mine waste tips.

A lasting lesson

Aberfan is studied by engineers as an example of how ground saturated with water can lose its strength suddenly, the same process behind many of the landslides that follow heavy rain.

Japan's slopes

Japan, with its steep terrain and heavy rains, has designated hundreds of thousands of areas as being at risk of landslides and debris flows, and prefectures issue sediment disaster alerts when rain loosens the ground.

TECHNOLOGY

1983: The Metre Is Redefined by the Speed of Light, Ending the Reign of Metal Bars and Krypton Lamps

The new definition fixed the speed of light at exactly 299,792,458 metres a second; it paved the way for the 2019 overhaul of the world's units

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

In October 1983 the General Conference on Weights and Measures, the body that oversees the international system of units, adopted a new definition of the metre: the length of the path travelled by light in a vacuum in 1/299,792,458 of a second.

The definition fixed the speed of light at exactly 299,792,458 metres a second.

From the Earth to a bar

The metre was born in revolutionary France in the 1790s as one ten-millionth of the distance from the North Pole to the equator. From 1889 it was defined by a bar of platinum and iridium kept near Paris, of which copies were sent around the world, including to Japan.

A krypton lamp

In 1960 the bar was replaced by a definition based on the wavelength of light emitted by atoms of krypton-86.

Why light

By the 1980s, lasers and atomic clocks allowed time to be measured with extraordinary precision, so defining length through time and the speed of light gave the most accurate and universally reproducible standard.

The 2019 overhaul

The same approach was extended in 2019, when the kilogram, the ampere, the kelvin and the mole were redefined in terms of fixed values of physical constants, retiring the last physical artefact, a platinum-iridium cylinder that had defined the kilogram.

Time itself

The conference has also turned to time. In 2022 it decided to stop adding leap seconds, which keep atomic time in step with the Earth's rotation, by 2035.

Japan's role

Japan's National Metrology Institute, part of the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology, maintains the country's measurement standards, and Japanese laboratories have developed optical lattice clocks that are among the most precise ever built.

TECHNOLOGY

1994: Seoul's Seongsu Bridge Collapses Into the Han River at Rush Hour, Killing 32 and Exposing Shoddy Construction

Faulty welds and poor inspection were blamed; months later, the collapse of the Sampoong Department Store killed 502 people

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On the morning of October 21, 1994, a section of the Seongsu Bridge across the Han River in Seoul collapsed during the rush hour, sending a bus and several cars plunging into the river.

Thirty-two people were killed, many of them students and office workers on their way to school and work.

About 48 metres

A span of about 48 metres between two piers fell away when the steel structure supporting it failed.

The cause

Investigators found faulty welding in the steel trusses and inadequate inspection and maintenance since the bridge opened in 1979. The bridge also carried far heavier traffic than it had been designed for.

A national reckoning

The collapse shocked a country proud of its rapid development, and led to calls for an end to cutting corners in construction.

Sampoong

Eight months later, in June 1995, the Sampoong Department Store in Seoul collapsed, killing 502 people, in South Korea's deadliest peacetime disaster. Both disasters led to tougher rules on building safety and inspection.

Rebuilt

The Seongsu Bridge was rebuilt and reopened in 1997.

Ageing infrastructure

The lessons apply in Japan too, where many bridges and tunnels built during the high-growth decades are now more than 50 years old, and the government has required regular close inspections since the collapse of the ceiling of the Sasago Tunnel in 2012.

TECHNOLOGY

October 21 in Science and Technology

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1797: The U.S. Navy frigate Constitution, later nicknamed Old Ironsides, is launched in Boston.

1824: Joseph Aspdin patents Portland cement.

1833: Alfred Nobel is born in Stockholm.

1854: Florence Nightingale and her nurses are sent to the Crimean War.

1877: Oswald Avery, whose experiments in the 1940s showed that DNA carries hereditary information, is born.

1879: Edison's carbon-filament lamp glows for about 13 and a half hours at Menlo Park.

1923: The first Zeiss planetarium projector is demonstrated at the Deutsches Museum in Munich.

1958: Andre Geim, co-discoverer of graphene, is born.

1959: The Guggenheim Museum opens in New York; Eisenhower approves moving von Braun's rocket team to NASA.

1965: Comet Ikeya-Seki reaches its closest point to the Sun.

1966: The Aberfan disaster in Wales kills 144 people.

1983: The metre is redefined in terms of the speed of light.

1994: The Seongsu Bridge collapses in Seoul.

2003: Astronomers take the images that later reveal the dwarf planet Eris.

SOCIETY

Very Intense Rain Hits Wakayama as the Atmosphere Turns Unstable, and the Weather Agency Warns Hokuriku of Downpours Today

More than 50 mm fell in an hour in Kozagawa; a rapidly developing low could bring rain heavy enough for warnings on Wednesday

By the Weather Desk

The atmosphere over Japan turned very unstable on Tuesday as a low and its front brought heavy rain to many areas, and more than 50 millimetres of rain fell in an hour in the town of Kozagawa in Wakayama Prefecture.

Wajima in Ishikawa Prefecture and Sukumo in Kochi Prefecture also had heavy rain, with more than 100 millimetres falling in each in the 24 hours to Tuesday afternoon.

What caused it

According to the Japan Meteorological Agency, a low moving east over the waters near the Kuril Islands, off Hokkaido, pushed a front northward, and warm, moist air flowed into it.

Today

Another low, developing rapidly, could bring rain heavy enough for warnings to Hokuriku and other areas on Wednesday, the agency said, and it urged people to watch for landslides and rising rivers.

On the map

The weather map supplied for this edition shows rain in Kanazawa turning heavy this afternoon after a warm, dry start, and heavy rain at times in Akita.

Wajima

Wajima, on the Noto Peninsula, was devastated by the earthquake on January 1, 2024, and by torrential rain in September that year.

How intense

The agency calls rain of 50 to 80 millimetres an hour "very intense," and describes it as falling like a waterfall.

SOCIETY

Weather Agency Expects a Warm Start to Winter, With Above-Normal Temperatures Nationwide Through January

Global warming and El Nino will keep cold air away from Japan, while lows bring more rain to the Pacific side of eastern Japan, western Japan and Okinawa

By the Weather Desk

Temperatures are likely to be higher than normal across Japan from November through January, the Japan Meteorological Agency said on Tuesday in its three-month outlook.

Average temperatures are expected to be above normal in every region: northern Japan, which covers Hokkaido and Tohoku; eastern Japan, which covers Kanto-Koshin, Hokuriku and Tokai; western Japan, which covers Kinki, Chugoku, Shikoku and Kyushu; and Okinawa and Amami.

Less cold air

Because of global warming and the El Nino phenomenon, the influence of cold air around Japan will be weaker, the agency said.

El Nino is a warming of the sea surface over the eastern equatorial Pacific that can shift weather patterns around the world. In Japan, it has tended to bring milder winters.

More rain

Warm, moist air from the south is expected to flow in, making the country more susceptible to low-pressure systems. Precipitation is expected to be above normal on the Pacific side of eastern Japan, in western Japan, and in Okinawa and Amami.

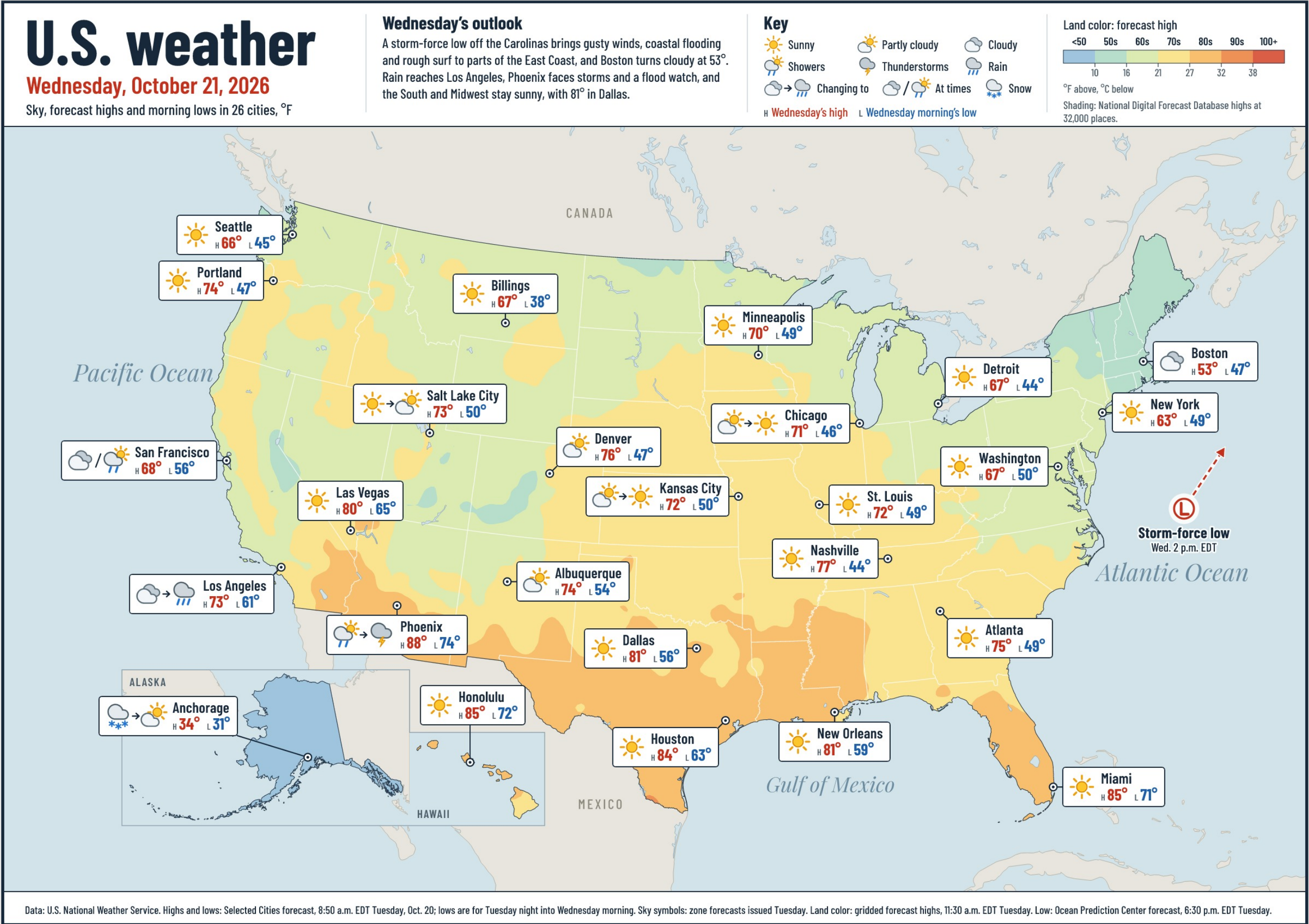
Still warm now

October has yet to cool down in much of the country. Highs of 30 degrees or more are forecast today in Nagoya, Osaka, Takamatsu, Kochi, Kagoshima and Naha, according to the weather map supplied for this edition.

How the outlook works

The agency issues its three-month outlook every month, giving the chances of temperatures and precipitation being above, near or below normal.

WEATHER ABROAD



SOCIETY

A Storm-Force Low Brings Gusty Winds and Coastal Flooding to the East Coast, While Rain Reaches Los Angeles and Phoenix Faces Storms

Boston turns cloudy and stays at 53F; most of the South and Midwest is sunny, with 81F in Dallas, and Phoenix, at 88F, is under a flood watch
By the Weather Desk

A powerful low off the Carolinas brings gusty winds, coastal flooding and rough surf to parts of the East Coast of the United States on Wednesday, according to the American weather map supplied for this edition, which uses forecasts from the National Weather Service.

The map's outlook says Boston turns cloudy at 53 degrees Fahrenheit, rain reaches Los Angeles, and Phoenix faces storms and a flood watch, while the South and Midwest stay sunny, with 81 degrees in Dallas.

The low

The map marks a storm-force low, positioned from the Ocean Prediction Center's forecast for 2 p.m. Eastern time on Wednesday, off the Carolina coast with an arrow pointing north-east, out to sea.

The West

Los Angeles starts cloudy and turns rainy, with a high of 73 and a low of 61, and San Francisco is cloudy with showers at times. In Phoenix, showers give way to thunderstorms; its high of 88 makes it the warmest city on the map, and its low of 74 is the mildest.

Sunshine in the middle

Of the 26 cities on the map, 16 are sunny all day, from Seattle and Portland in the Northwest to Minneapolis, St. Louis and Detroit in the Midwest, New York, Washington and Atlanta in the East, and Dallas, Houston, New Orleans and Miami in the South. Chicago and Kansas City start partly cloudy and turn sunny, while Salt Lake City turns partly cloudy later. Denver and Albuquerque are partly cloudy.

Hot and cool

After Phoenix, the warmest cities are Honolulu and Miami at 85, Houston at 84, and Dallas and New Orleans at 81. In the lower 48 states, Boston's high of 53 is the lowest, and Billings in Montana has the coldest morning, at 38.

Anchorage is the coldest city on the map, with snow turning to partly cloudy skies, a high of 34 and a low of 31. Nashville has the widest swing, from a low of 44 to a high of 77.

The colours

The shading on the map, from the agency's gridded forecast highs, shows the 80s across the desert Southwest, Texas, the lower Mississippi valley and Florida. The 70s cover much of the South, the Plains and California's interior, the 60s the Northwest, the northern Plains, the Great Lakes and the

mid-Atlantic, and the 50s northern New England and patches of the high Rockies, with Alaska below 50.

Compared with Tuesday

Boston is 7 degrees cooler than on Tuesday's map and Anchorage 6 degrees cooler, while Los Angeles and Phoenix are 4 degrees cooler. Seattle is 5 degrees warmer at 66, and Denver 4 degrees warmer at 76.

For travellers

Japan is 13 hours ahead of New York and 16 hours ahead of Los Angeles. Converted, Phoenix's 88F is about 31C, Boston's 53F about 12C and Anchorage's 34F about 1C.

SOCIETY

The U.S. Map at a Glance

By the Weather Desk

HOTTEST: Phoenix, 88F (about 31C), showers then thunderstorms; flood watch.

COOLEST: Anchorage, 34F, snow then partly cloudy.

COLDEST MORNING IN THE LOWER 48: Billings, 38F.

MILDEST NIGHTS: Phoenix, 74F; Honolulu, 72F; Miami, 71F.

EAST COAST: Boston 53/47, cloudy; New York 63/49, Washington 67/50, Atlanta 75/49 and Miami 85/71, sunny.

THE LOW: A storm-force low off the Carolinas brings gusty winds, coastal flooding and rough surf to parts of the East Coast.

MIDWEST: Chicago 71/46 and Kansas City 72/50, turning sunny; Detroit 67/44, Minneapolis 70/49 and St. Louis 72/49, sunny.

WEST: Seattle 66/45, Portland 74/47, Billings 67/38 and Las Vegas 80/65, sunny; Salt Lake City 73/50, turning partly cloudy; Denver 76/47, partly cloudy; San Francisco 68/56, cloudy with showers; Los Angeles 73/61, cloudy then rain.

SOUTH: Dallas 81/56, Houston 84/63, New Orleans 81/59 and Nashville 77/44, sunny; Albuquerque 74/54, partly cloudy.

PACIFIC: Honolulu 85/72, sunny.

SOURCE: U.S. National Weather Service, Selected Cities forecast issued at 8:50 a.m. EDT on Tuesday; lows for Tuesday night into Wednesday morning.

SOCIETY

The U.S. Map in Celsius

By the Weather Desk

SEATTLE 66/45F, 19/7C; PORTLAND 74/47F, 23/8C.

BILLINGS 67/38F, 19/3C; MINNEAPOLIS 70/49F, 21/9C.

BOSTON 53/47F, 12/8C; DETROIT 67/44F, 19/7C.

NEW YORK 63/49F, 17/9C; CHICAGO 71/46F, 22/8C.

SALT LAKE CITY 73/50F, 23/10C; DENVER 76/47F, 24/8C.

SAN FRANCISCO 68/56F, 20/13C; WASHINGTON 67/50F, 19/10C.

KANSAS CITY 72/50F, 22/10C; ST. LOUIS 72/49F, 22/9C.

LAS VEGAS 80/65F, 27/18C; NASHVILLE 77/44F, 25/7C.

ALBUQUERQUE 74/54F, 23/12C; LOS ANGELES 73/61F, 23/16C.

PHOENIX 88/74F, 31/23C; DALLAS 81/56F, 27/13C.

ATLANTA 75/49F, 24/9C; ANCHORAGE 34/31F, 1/-1C.

HONOLULU 85/72F, 29/22C; HOUSTON 84/63F, 29/17C.

NEW ORLEANS 81/59F, 27/15C; MIAMI 85/71F, 29/22C.

HOW: Subtract 32 from the Fahrenheit figure and multiply by five-ninths; results rounded to the nearest degree.

SOCIETY

Reading the Map's Storm Words

By the Weather Desk

STORM-FORCE LOW: The U.S. Ocean Prediction Center labels a low by the strongest winds it is forecast to produce at sea. Storm force means sustained winds of 48 to 63 knots, about 55 to 73 mph.

IN METRES A SECOND: 48 knots is about 25 m/s, close to the 25 m/s that Japan's weather agency uses to mark a typhoon's storm-wind area.

GALE FORCE: 34 to 47 knots, about 39 to 54 mph. Japan's gale-force area, shown on the typhoon map, starts lower, at 15 m/s, about 29 knots.

HURRICANE FORCE: 64 knots or more, about 74 mph, the same threshold as a hurricane. A Japanese typhoon is graded "strong" from 33 m/s, which is also 64 knots.

SOCIETY

COASTAL FLOODING: Flooding of normally dry land by sea water, usually when strong onshore winds pile water against the coast at high tide.

FLOOD WATCH: Conditions are favourable for flooding; be prepared.

FLOOD WARNING: Flooding is happening or about to happen; act.

THUNDERSTORMS IN PHOENIX: Short, heavy downpours in the desert can flood dry washes and underpasses quickly.

KNOTS: One knot is one nautical mile an hour, about 1.85 km/h.

WHERE TO CHECK: The National Weather Service issues watches and warnings for each county.

SOCIETY

A Month After Typhoon No. 25 Killed 15, a Chiba Rail Line Is Still Cut and Families in Yotsukaido Cannot Go Home

Landslides caused most of the deaths in Chiba and Kanagawa; the JR Uchibo Line between Anegasaki and Nagaura needs about two more months of repairs

By the Society Desk

Wednesday marks one month since Typhoon No. 25 brought record rain to Chiba and Kanagawa prefectures, killing 15 people, and its effects are still being felt.

Ten people died in Chiba and five in Kanagawa, most of them in landslides. Across the two prefectures, five people were seriously injured and 36 suffered minor injuries.

Still disrupted

In Chiba, train services remain suspended and roads closed, and some residents are still living away from their homes.

The Uchibo Line

On the JR Uchibo Line, soil that flowed onto the tracks has kept services suspended between Anegasaki Station in Ichihara and Nagaura Station in Sodegaura. Restoration is expected to take about two more months.

Replacement buses are running and shared bicycles are being lent free of charge, but journeys are taking considerably longer.

Soil at the door

In a residential area of Yotsukaido, where a landslide struck, residents have been told that their evacuation order will last a long time. Seven households, 20 people in all, are staying at the city's welfare centre, Waroubeno Sato, where life in the shelter is expected to continue until the end of November.

Some homes are structurally sound, but soil has piled up right in front of them, so they are not yet safe. Some evacuees go home to do their laundry, despite the risk. Some residents expect recovery to take "two to three years."

A family's choice

A 43-year-old man sheltering there with his family of four said that soil had stopped just short of his front door. He has been told he can stay in the shelter until repairs are finished or rent an apartment, but he worries about the children's schooling.

"Because we have children, an apartment outside the school district would make getting to school hard, and they might even have to change schools," he said. He plans to return home once emergency work is done, and worries about the children catching colds as winter approaches. "I want something done soon," he said.

Help for households

On Monday, Chiba Governor Toshihito Kumagai said the prefecture would pay its own support money to households whose homes were half destroyed by August's heavy rain and the typhoon, filling a gap in the national system, which covers only more serious damage. The money will be included in a supplementary budget in December.

A double blow

The typhoon followed heavy rain in August, when floodwater stranded vehicles in Chiba and lingered for a long time in low-lying areas such as the town of Shisui. Both disasters are covered by the prefecture's new support.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Nikkei sheds 841 yen, Page 12.

MMX on its way to Mars, Page 15.

SOCIETY

Former Truck Driver Gets the Maximum Seven Years for a Shin-Meishin Crash That Killed Six While Watching a Video

The Tsu District Court says the defendant took their eyes off the road for about 13 seconds; the victims 'were in no way at fault'

By Aiko Tanaka | Society Correspondent

The Tsu District Court on Tuesday sentenced a former truck driver to seven years in prison, the maximum allowed by law, over a crash on the Shin-Meishin Expressway in Mie Prefecture in March that killed six people.

The 55-year-old defendant, from Akitakata in Hiroshima Prefecture, caused a multi-vehicle pile-up in the city of Kameyama while driving a large truck and looking at a smartphone, the court found. The charge was negligent driving resulting in death, under the law on punishing dangerous driving.

The sentence was the same as prosecutors had sought.

'Grave negligence'

"It was an extremely careless way to drive, and the negligence was grave. It deserves severe condemnation," Presiding Judge Hiroaki Deguchi said. "The victims were in no way at fault, and their suffering and regret are beyond imagining."

Comparing the case with past rulings, the judge placed it in the most serious category, deserving the statutory maximum.

Thirteen seconds

At the trial, which opened in June, prosecutors said the defendant had been watching a cooking video on TikTok while driving and had also tried to fill in a driving log, and as a result had looked away from the road ahead for about 13 seconds.

An apology

The defendant admitted the charge. "I have caused great trouble to all the bereaved families, and I am truly sorry," the former driver told the court in a final statement.

The crash

The crash happened on March 20. Six people were killed, five of them from one family.

Phones at the wheel

Japan toughened the penalties for using a phone while driving in December 2019. Holding and using a phone at the wheel is now punishable by up to six months in prison, or up to a year if it causes danger.

A new kind of sentence

The defendant was sentenced to kokinkei, the single form of prison sentence introduced in June last year in place of the old distinction between imprisonment with and without labour.

The appeal period

Either side has two weeks to appeal.

SOCIETY

Husband Gets 12 Years and Six Months, More Than Prosecutors Sought, for His Wife's Death Though Her Body Was Never Found

An Osaka lay-judge court rejects the defence's call for acquittal, citing screams, bloodstains and burned bones found at the home of a man who helped move the body

By Aiko Tanaka | Society Correspondent

The Osaka District Court on Tuesday sentenced a 36-year-old man to 12 years and six months in prison for fatally injuring his wife and disposing of her body, a heavier sentence than the 12 years prosecutors had sought, even though her body has never been found.

The unemployed man denied the charges of inflicting injury resulting in death and abandoning a corpse, and his lawyers had asked for an acquittal, arguing that the evidence did not prove a crime.

Screams and bloodstains

In the lay judge trial, Presiding Judge Akira Karashima noted that screams had been heard from the couple's home, where only the defendant and his wife were present, and that her blood had been found there. There was no reasonable doubt that a violent assault had caused her injuries, he said.

The body

A man who allegedly helped carry the body, and who has since died, had told others that it had been burned and dumped. The court found his account credible, noting that burned human bones had been found at his home. On that basis it concluded that the defendant had transported and hidden the body.

'No remorse'

"He relentlessly continued to assault his wife as she desperately begged him to stop. It was extremely malicious, and he has shown no remorse whatsoever," the judge said.

Of the disposal of the body, he said: "The manner of the crime shows a strong will. It was a malicious act utterly lacking in reverence for the dead."

Proving a death

With no body, prosecutors had to prove the death through testimony and physical evidence, including the bloodstains at the home and the bones found elsewhere.

Above the demand

Inflicting injury resulting in death carries a prison term of three to 20 years, and abandoning a corpse a term of up to three years. The defence can appeal to the Osaka High Court within two weeks.

Sentences heavier than prosecutors seek are unusual but not unknown in lay judge trials, in which six citizens sit with three professional judges to decide guilt and the sentence in cases involving serious crimes. The system was introduced in 2009.

A stabbing near the court

Earlier on Tuesday, a 60-year-old company executive from Sakai was stabbed in the neck on the pavement on the north side of the same court building in Kita Ward, Osaka. His life is not in danger. A 67-year-old self-employed man who knew him gave himself up at a nearby police station and was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder; he told police the cause was "money trouble" and that he had brought a folding knife from home to threaten the man.

SOCIETY

Health Ministry Will Subsidise Factories So Japan Can Make Infectious Disease Drugs From Start to Finish at Home

Up to 80 per cent of the cost of new plants would be covered, as dependence on Chinese and Indian ingredients raises fears of shortages in the next pandemic

By the Society Desk

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has decided to subsidise the building of facilities so that drugs to treat infectious diseases can be made entirely in Japan, from their active ingredients to the finished product, to keep supplies flowing if a global pandemic breaks out.

Japan relies heavily on other countries for active pharmaceutical ingredients, and the ministry fears that buying enough from abroad could become difficult in a pandemic.

The subsidies

The ministry plans to cover 50 to 80 per cent of the cost of new factories or new equipment for drugmakers and chemical manufacturers. The plan is included in its budget request for fiscal 2027, though no separate amount was given for ingredient production. The request sets aside 84 billion yen for treatments and vaccines.

Which diseases

The diseases to be covered have not been decided. "We want to make sure medical care can be maintained even when an infectious disease crisis occurs," a ministry official said.

China and India

Drugmakers depend largely on cheaper ingredients from China and India, and shortages occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many factories are also ageing, and rising prices make renovating them difficult.

Generic shortages

Japan has also struggled with shortages of generic drugs since 2020 and 2021, when quality-control violations at several manufacturers led to business suspension orders and supply disruptions that took years to ease.

The strategy

In March, the Cabinet approved a national strategy to strengthen the development and production of drugs

for infectious disease crises, including diagnostics, treatments and vaccines.

Economic security

The government has already designated antimicrobial drugs as critical materials under the economic security law passed in 2022, and has supported the domestic production of their ingredients.

A change of words

Also on Tuesday, the Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology told Health Minister Kenichiro Ueno that it would in principle stop using the term "abnormal delivery" when explaining care to pregnant women. The term covers caesarean sections and deliveries by vacuum or forceps, and does not necessarily mean that mother or baby had a medical problem, the society said; it wants doctors to name the method or procedure instead. In a survey of 1,383 members, 33.9 per cent said they sometimes used the term with patients.

SOCIETY

Nobel Chemist Kenso Soai Tells an Audience of 2,000 That More Researchers Are What Japan Needs Most

The professor emeritus explains how a reaction in which mirror-image molecules make copies of themselves may shed light on the origin of life

By the Science Desk

Kenso Soai, a professor emeritus at the Tokyo University of Science and a winner of this year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry, spoke on Tuesday at an event held by the Chemical Society of Japan in Tokyo's Edogawa Ward, attended by about 2,000 people in person and online.

Mr Soai, 76, explained how he came to discover the reaction for which he was honoured, in which molecules of one particular "handedness" act as catalysts to make more of themselves, and its connection with the origin of life.

Making copies

In the reaction, known as asymmetric autocatalysis, the product of the reaction is also its catalyst. Describing the advantages, he said: "The amount of catalyst does not go down, and there is no need to separate it afterwards."

Left and right hands

Many molecules exist in two forms that are mirror images of each other, like a pair of hands. Living things use almost exclusively one form: the amino acids in proteins are left-handed and the sugars in DNA right-handed. Why life chose one hand is one of the great puzzles of science.

The Soai reaction

In a paper in the journal Nature in 1995, Mr Soai and his colleagues reported that a tiny excess of one form of a chiral pyrimidyl alkanol could be amplified as the molecule catalysed its own formation, until the product was almost entirely of one hand. The reaction has since become known as the Soai reaction.

Fundamental questions

"I was interested in fundamental themes, and I thought that combining them with the origin of life would make for interesting research," he said, calling his work "a very unique reaction, and research with originality."

More people

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Mr Soai said that for Japan to keep producing results in chemistry, "I think the most important thing is for the number of people, of researchers, to increase."

Why handedness matters

The two mirror forms of a molecule can behave very differently. The two forms of carvone, for example, smell of spearmint and of caraway, and drugmakers take care over which form of a medicine they produce.

Two years running

Japanese scientists have now won the chemistry prize in two successive years, after Susumu Kitagawa of Kyoto University shared the 2025 prize for his work on metal-organic frameworks. Ryoji Noyori shared the prize in 2001 for chirally catalysed reactions, a field close to Mr Soai's.

December

The prizes will be presented in Stockholm on December 10, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death.

SOCIETY



A sign warning of bears, in Japanese and English, in a file image. The Environment Ministry has chosen 11 local governments, from Noboribetsu in Hokkaido to the village of Shinjo in Okayama Prefecture, for a project in which experts will help them prepare for bears. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SOCIETY

Experts Will Help 11 Local Governments Prepare for Bears, From Noboribetsu in Hokkaido to a Mountain Village in Okayama

The Environment Ministry pilot targets places with little experience of bears as well as areas where sightings are frequent; results are due within the fiscal year

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The Environment Ministry said on Tuesday that it had chosen 11 local governments for a pilot project in which experts will help authorities with little experience of bears to prepare for them, as the animals turn up more and more often in towns.

Under the project, the ministry will form teams that include experts, tailored to the problems of each area. The teams will test and evaluate each local government's plans for dealing with bears, and the ministry intends to compile a report on progress within this fiscal year, which ends in March.

The 11

Those chosen are Noboribetsu in Hokkaido; Miyagi Prefecture; Fukushima City; the town of Yokoze in Saitama Prefecture; Oyabe in Toyama Prefecture; Kofu; the town of Obuse in Nagano Prefecture; Owase in Mie Prefecture; Hikone in Shiga Prefecture; the town of Minabe in Wakayama Prefecture; and the village of Shinjo in Okayama Prefecture.

Two kinds of need

The ministry said it had considered two groups in making its choice. One is made up of areas where bears are rarely seen and where officials have little know-how in dealing with them. The other is made up of areas where sightings are frequent, such as Hokkaido and the Tohoku region, that are considering stronger measures in residential districts.

Bears in town

Bears have been wandering out of the mountains into farmland and residential areas more often in recent years. Experts point to poor harvests of beech nuts and acorns, their main food in autumn, and to the decline of farming and forestry in hill country that once kept people and bears apart.

The emergency rules

Since September last year, municipalities have been able to authorise hunters to shoot bears that come into residential areas when certain conditions are met,

SOCIETY

If You Are in Bear Country

By the Society Desk

BEFORE YOU GO: Check the municipality's information on recent sightings.

MAKE NOISE: Carry a bell or a radio so that bears know you are there.

TIMING: Avoid dawn and dusk, when bears are most active.

COMPANY: Do not go into the hills alone.

FOOD: Do not leave food waste, pet food or unpicked fruit outdoors.

IF YOU SEE ONE: Stay calm, do not run, and back away slowly while keeping the bear in sight.

CUBS: A cub nearby means its mother is close; leave the area at once.

IF ATTACKED: Lie face down and protect your head and neck with your arms.

SPRAY: Bear spray can deter an attack at close

including that there is no other way to deal quickly with the animal and that residents will not be put at risk. Before the change, firing guns in populated areas was generally prohibited.

The change gave local governments new responsibilities, and many have few staff who know how to handle wildlife. The ministry's project is meant to fill that gap with outside expertise.

Last year's alarm

Attacks by bears reached record levels last year. In the autumn, the Self-Defense Forces helped Akita Prefecture carry and set traps, and the government allowed police to use rifles against bears in emergencies.

This year

Environment Ministry figures show that 68 people had been killed or injured by bears as of September, six of them fatally.

Bells at the ballot box

The worry has reached even the polls. For Sunday's governor election in Fukushima Prefecture, Koriyama is equipping polling stations with bear bells, and 47 of them with firecrackers, while Fukushima City, one of the 11 places chosen for the pilot, will close voting two hours early.

The season of danger

Autumn, when bears eat heavily before their winter sleep, is the season of greatest danger. Officials advise people in areas where bears have been seen to carry bells or radios, to avoid walking alone at dawn and dusk, and not to leave food waste or unpicked fruit outdoors.

range.

REPORT: Tell the police or the municipality about any sighting.

AUTUMN FRUIT: Unpicked persimmons and chestnuts draw bears into villages; harvest them or remove them.

FENCES: Electric fences can keep bears out of fields, orchards and rubbish stores.

DOGS: Keep dogs on a lead in the hills.

SOCIETY

Typhoon No. 25, One Month On

By the Society Desk

DEAD: 15, ten in Chiba Prefecture and five in Kanagawa Prefecture.

THE CAUSE: Most of the deaths were caused by landslides.

INJURED: Five seriously and 36 slightly, across the two prefectures.

THE DATE: Wednesday, October 21, marks one month since the record rain.

THE RAILWAY: The JR Uchibo Line is suspended between Anegasaki, in Ichihara, and Nagaura, in Sodegaura.

REPAIRS: About two more months.

GETTING AROUND: Replacement buses, and shared bicycles lent free of charge.

YOTSUKAIDO: Seven households, 20 people, are staying at the Warubeno Sato welfare centre.

HOW LONG: Life in the shelter is expected to last until the end of November.

SUPPORT: Chiba will pay its own support money to households whose homes were half destroyed, in a supplementary budget in December.

SOCIETY

Around the Nation

By the Society Desk

AICHI: A man in his 50s using a white cane was slightly injured on Tuesday morning when he walked into the rear of a bus carrying 32 primary school pupils and two teachers to the Asian Para Games, at a crossing without signals in Mizuho Ward, Nagoya; the bus had stopped for him and was moving off slowly. No pupils were hurt.

AICHI: Nagoya's official car carrying Mayor Ichiro Hirosawa made a prohibited U-turn in Kita Ward on Monday while he travelled on Para Games business; police issued the contracted driver a ticket, and the city said the driver had missed the sign.

KYOTO: Prefectural police arrested the president of an eel business in Fushimi Ward on suspicion of serving Chinese eel at a branch near Fushimi Inari while claiming it came from Isshiki in Aichi Prefecture. He denies the charge.

FUKUOKA: Police rearrested four people, including the suspected leader of a group of callers based in Cambodia, on suspicion of fraud by posing as police officers; 38 cases in 16 prefectures using the same methods involve about 150 million yen.

OSAKA: The alumni association of Minoh Jiyu Gakuen, a private school group, said a former president in his 60s had taken about 87 million yen of members' fees in 30 transfers from 2022 to May this year, and that it had filed a complaint with police.

HOKKAIDO: All 17 crew of the Tenryu Maru, a 111-ton bonito boat from Kochi Prefecture, escaped to life rafts and were picked up by another fishing boat after an engine-room fire about 600 km east-south-east of Cape Erimo. No one was hurt.

YAMANASHI: Fan events for Osamu Dazai, whose work still strikes a chord with young readers, continue at the Tenka Chaya teahouse at Fujikawaguchiko, where the writer stayed in 1938.

FUKUOKA: Saiseikai Yahata General Hospital in Kitakyushu apologised after videos apparently showing a patient crawling across a ward floor spread on X; it suspects a member of staff filmed them on a night shift and is investigating.

KANAGAWA: The father of a 20-year-old woman killed in Kawasaki after she had reported stalking by a former partner met Governor Yuji Kuroiwa and agreed to work with the prefecture on support for victims. He founded a support group in July, named after the sunflowers she loved. TOKYO: Haku-hodo, which runs the secretariat for a national programme of subsidies for energy-saving home renovations, reported unauthorised access that may have exposed data on 23,918 people at 16,950 registered businesses; the land ministry said no consumers' data had leaked.

AICHI: Toho Gas said data on about 100 people, including people who had asked about its Shine Muscat grape-growing business, may have leaked after unauthorised access at Studio, a Tokyo web production company whose cloud service it used; its gas and electricity customers are not affected.

KANAGAWA: The body of a newborn boy, wrapped in cloth with the umbilical cord still attached, was found by a refuse collector at a rubbish collection point in Aoba Ward, Yokohama, on Tuesday morning. Police are investigating the case as the abandonment of a body.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Tax cut debate opens, Page 5.

Security talks: subs and principles, Page 6.

Russia holds reporter, Page 10.

Nikkei sheds 841 yen, Page 12.

MMX on its way to Mars, Page 15.

SOCIETY

Kobe Shooting Suspect Speaks of 'Trouble Over a Real Estate Deal' as Police Prepare a Murder Charge

The 79-year-old former gang boss is said to have told investigators he fired four shots at a company executive sitting in a car

By the Society Desk

A 79-year-old former gang boss arrested over a series of shootings in Kobe last month has told police that he and one of the victims had a dispute over a real estate deal, investigative sources said on Tuesday.

Hyogo Prefectural Police plan to rearrest the man, who is unemployed and was first arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, on suspicion of murder on Wednesday.

The shooting

He is suspected of shooting a 58-year-old company executive from Kobe's Higashinada Ward in a car in Chuo Ward on September 30. The victim died of haemorrhagic shock.

'Four shots'

"We had trouble over a real estate transaction," the suspect has told investigators, according to the sources. He is also said to have told them, "I fired four shots."

Two men

Two men were killed or wounded in the series of shootings in the city in September.

Rare gunfire

Shootings are rare in Japan, which has some of the strictest gun laws in the world, and many of those that do occur are linked to organised crime.

A homemade gun

Separately on Tuesday, police in Tokyo and Hyogo rearrested a 51-year-old company employee from Amagasaki on suspicion of making a handgun capable of killing at his home and elsewhere, and of converting three other guns, including model guns, to fire live ammunition. He is also suspected of making 26 bullets, and told investigators that he had bought the materials online and at 100-yen shops.

SOCIETY

A Wasp Filmed on a Mantis Egg Case and Posted Online Turns Out to Be the First of Its Kind Recorded in Japan

A Kyushu University student's 2021 video led researchers to a species previously known from a single record in China

By the Science Desk

A video that a Kyushu University agriculture student posted on social media in 2021 has led to the first confirmed record in Japan of a wasp that is rare worldwide, a research team at the university said.

The student, Shogo Noguchi, now a 28-year-old graduate student, was in a forest on the university's Ito campus in Fukuoka in April 2021 to observe spiders, his speciality, when he saw a wasp perched on the egg case of a praying mantis.

Not knowing what it was, he filmed it and posted the video online to ask for experts' opinions.

A curator's curiosity

A research associate at the Kyushu University Museum took an interest in the post and appealed on social media for more information. Photographs of the same species taken in Kanagawa Prefecture were sent in, as were specimens collected in Fukuoka City.

The verdict

Analysis showed the wasp to be a species of the genus Eupelmus, in the family Eupelmidae, that had never been confirmed in Japan. Only one earlier record of it existed anywhere, from China.

'Surprised'

"I'm surprised that something I filmed as a change of pace has led to a new discovery," Mr Noguchi said.

Tiny parasites

Most members of the family are parasitoids: tiny wasps, often only a few millimetres long, that lay their eggs on or in the eggs, larvae or pupae of other insects.

Many eyes

Photographs posted by amateurs on social media and nature-sharing apps are increasingly helping researchers around the world find species in places where they had not been recorded.

SOCIETY



A Nozomi train on the Tokaido Shinkansen, which carries many of Kyoto's visitors to the city. Kyoto plans to charge non-residents 360 yen and residents 200 yen on its city buses from fiscal 2027. (Photo: Akihiko Maeda)

SOCIETY

Kyoto Will Ask Its Assembly to Approve Cheaper Bus Fares for Residents Than for Visitors, a First for Public Transport in Japan

Mayor Koji Matsui says a bill will go to the November session; residents would pay 200 yen and everyone else 360, against 230 now

By the Society Desk

Kyoto will submit a bill to the city assembly in November to introduce dual pricing on its municipal buses, charging residents and non-residents different fares, Mayor Koji Matsui said on Tuesday.

The city says it would be the first such system on public transport in Japan. Mr Matsui told the assembly's special committee on the settlement of accounts that the city aims to introduce it during fiscal 2027, which runs from April 2027 to March 2028.

The fares

The adult fare within the city's flat-fare zone is now 230 yen. Mr Matsui has previously said that non-residents would pay 360 yen and residents 200 yen.

Why November

Mr Matsui explained that the bill had to be submitted in November so that there would be enough time to inform residents about the new system. The city is also considering calling the residents' fare a "citizen price."

Residents, not nationality

The fares would distinguish between people who live in the city and people who do not, rather than between Japanese and foreign visitors, so tourists from elsewhere in Japan would also pay the higher fare.

SOCIETY

The Emperor and Empress Call on the Empress Emerita for Her 92nd Birthday, After Princess Aiko Visits Ahead of Them

Celebrations at the Sento Imperial Palace were kept simpler than last year in consideration of her age; the Emperor waves to well-wishers from the car

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Emperor and Empress visited the Sento Imperial Palace in the Akasaka Imperial Grounds in Motoakasaka, Tokyo, on Tuesday to congratulate Empress Emerita Michiko on her 92nd birthday.

As their car passed through the main gate, the Emperor opened the rear window and smiled and waved to people who had gathered outside.

Shortly before, their daughter, Princess Aiko, called at the palace to offer her congratulations.

Greetings from the household

The Empress Emerita and Emperor Emeritus Akihito also received birthday greetings from the aides who serve them, led by the grand chamberlain to the Emperor Emeritus, and from officials of the Imperial Household Agency, including its grand steward, Takeichiro Kuroda.

A simpler celebration

In consideration of her age, the birthday events were kept simpler than last year.

Her health

For her birthday, the agency said that her physical strength had declined with age and that she tired more easily than before, although her overall condition had not changed significantly. The couple's

Overtourism

The plan is part of the city's measures against overtourism. Residents have long complained that buses to popular sights are so crowded with tourists and their luggage that they cannot get on.

Earlier steps

The city has already taken several steps to ease the crowding. It stopped selling its one-day bus pass in 2023, and in June 2024 it launched sightseeing express buses with a fare of 500 yen linking Kyoto Station with Kiyomizudera and Ginkakuji.

In March this year Kyoto also raised its accommodation tax, with a top rate of 10,000 yen a night for the most expensive rooms.

Himeji's castle

Other cities have adopted dual pricing for attractions. Since March, visitors from outside Himeji in Hyogo Prefecture have paid 2,500 yen to enter Himeji Castle, while residents of the city pay 1,000 yen.

What comes next

The fare change requires the assembly to amend the ordinance that sets the city's bus fares.

summer stays at the imperial villa in Nasu, Tochigi Prefecture, and in Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture, were cancelled this year because of the record heat and concern for her health.

At home in Akasaka

The couple moved to the Sento Imperial Palace in 2022. The Empress Emerita keeps up with events through newspapers and television, and has recently followed news of earthquakes, damage from heavy rain, and the effects of climate change on farming and fishing.

A busy granddaughter

Princess Aiko, 24, works at the Japanese Red Cross Society and has been taking on more official duties. She was in Tottori Prefecture over the weekend and on Monday for a national event on disaster preparedness, where she saw the Tottori Sand Dunes for the first time.

The Emperor Emeritus

The Emperor Emeritus turns 93 in December. The couple married in 1959, and she was Empress from 1989 until his abdication in 2019.

SOCIETY

Okayama's 500-Year-Old Naked Festival Calls Off Next Year's Scramble for Sacred Sticks After Two Men Died

The Saidaiji Eyo will go ahead in 2027 without the shingi scramble or the procession before it; outside experts are due to advise on its future around December

By the Society Desk

The Saidaiji Eyo, a naked festival in Okayama with a history of more than 500 years, will not hold its famous scramble for sacred wooden sticks next year

after two participants died in February, its organisers decided on Tuesday.

The Saidaiji Eyo Hosankai, the association that organises the festival, decided at a meeting of its officers to cancel the 2027 scramble for the shingi, the sacred sticks that are thrown down to a crowd of men in loincloths, and the jioshi, the procession through the temple grounds that comes before it.

The festival itself will still be held in 2027, according to Saidaiji Kannon-in, the temple that hosts it.

'Extremely difficult'

"Two people lost their lives, and we take that very seriously. Carrying out the event with safety first is extremely difficult," said Minoru Omori, the association's chairman, who called the decision regrettable.

The association said that it would be difficult to put full safety measures in place before outside experts had completed their recommendations.

The experts

The association set up a committee of outside experts in the summer to consider the festival's future from 2028 onward. It held its first meeting on July 9, and its recommendations are expected around December.

How the decision came

Later in July, three options for the 2027 festival were reported to be under consideration, with a decision expected in October. On October 7 the committee presented the results of surveys and other findings on the accident.

February's deaths

The two men died after a crush during the scramble on the night of February 21, when participants fell on top of one another.

The festival

Held each February at Saidaiji Kannon-in in Okayama's Higashi Ward, the Eyo draws thousands of men in loincloths who jostle in the darkness of the main hall to grab the sticks. Whoever holds one at the end is said to be blessed with good fortune for the year. The festival is designated an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property.

Crowd safety

Japan's deadliest crowd crush in recent decades happened on a pedestrian bridge after a fireworks display in Akashi, Hyogo Prefecture, in 2001, when 11 people were killed.

SOCIETY

Live Snake Found Under the Carpet of a Commuter Plane at Fukuoka Airport, the First Case the Airline Knows Of

The 40-centimetre young Japanese striped snake was spotted in the cabin on Monday, grounding a flight to Kagoshima, and caught the next day

By the Society Desk

Japan Air Commuter, a regional carrier in the Japan Airlines group, said on Tuesday that a live snake about 40 centimetres long had been found aboard one of its aircraft at Fukuoka Airport.

The snake had been spotted in the cabin on Monday as the plane, an ATR 42 turboprop, was being prepared for a flight to Kagoshima. The flight was cancelled.

Under the carpet

At about 1 p.m. on Tuesday, a maintenance worker lifted the carpet at the rear of the cabin and found the snake. A pest control company caught it, and an expert identified it from a photograph as a young Japanese striped snake.

Where it came from

The aircraft had arrived at Fukuoka from Izumo Airport in Shimane Prefecture on Monday and was due to leave for Kagoshima at 12:50 p.m. How the snake got aboard is not known.

A first

"As far as we can confirm, there has been no previous case of a snake getting into an aircraft cabin," the airline said.

Harmless

The Japanese striped snake, or shimahebi, is a non-venomous species found only in Japan. Adults commonly grow to more than a metre, and young ones are reddish brown with dark bands rather than the stripes that give the species its name.

Monday's report

On Monday the airline had said only that a small animal had been found in the cabin, affecting about 40 passengers.

SOCIETY

Kumamon Brings Thanks, and Fried Chicken With Black Garlic Oil, to the Weather Agency's Cafeteria

Kumamoto's bear mascot, who missed the agency's summer open day because of July's earthquake, makes up for it in Tokyo

By the Society Desk

Kumamon, the black bear mascot of Kumamoto Prefecture, visited the Japan Meteorological Agency in Minato Ward, Tokyo, on Tuesday and bowed in thanks for the support sent from around the country after an earthquake in July.

The visit was arranged because the earthquake had kept him from appearing at the agency's summer open day for children.

Lunchtime

Diners in the agency's cafeteria applauded when Kumamon arrived around noon. The day's special was a fried chicken set meal flavoured with black garlic oil, popular in Kumamoto ramen, and he introduced the dish.

He also posed for a commemorative photo with Harerun, the agency's own mascot.

The oil

Black garlic oil, made by frying garlic slowly until it turns black, gives Kumamoto ramen its distinctive bitter, smoky flavour.

The open day

The agency's summer open day invites children during the school holidays to learn how its forecasts and warnings are made.

'Support'

"I hope the feeling of support reaches Kumamoto Prefecture," the agency's director general, Ryuichi Nomura, told reporters.

A famous bear

Kumamon was created in 2010 to promote the prefecture ahead of the full opening of the Kyushu Shinkansen in 2011, and has become one of the best-known mascots in Japan.

SPORTS

Hanshin's Haruto Takahashi Becomes the First Central League Player to Win Four Monthly MVP Awards in One Season

Teammate Yusuke Oyama takes the batting prize; Rakuten's Kota Shoji and SoftBank's Kensuke Kondo win in the Pacific League

By the Sports Desk

Haruto Takahashi of the Hanshin Tigers was named the Central League's monthly MVP among pitchers for September and October on Tuesday, his fourth award of the season and a first for any Central League player, pitcher or batter.

Takahashi also won the award for March and April, for May and for June. In September and October he tied for the league lead with four wins and had an earned run average of 1.93.

Oyama

Yusuke Oyama, also of Hanshin, won the batting award for the first time after hitting .330 with five home runs and 17 runs batted in.

Pacific League

In the Pacific League, Rakuten's Kota Shoji won the pitching award for the first time. He won three games, including his first career complete-game shutout, with an ERA of 1.00 and 41 strikeouts.

SoftBank's Kensuke Kondo won the batting award for the sixth time, hitting .321 with seven home runs.

Hanshin's season

Hanshin won the Central League pennant for the second year in a row, the first time the club had done so, but were knocked out of the Climax Series by DeNA.

The award

The monthly MVP awards are chosen for each league's best pitcher and batter. The final award of the season combines September and October.

SPORTS



Shugo Maki of the Yokohama DeNA BayStars, in a file photo. Maki, who homered in the Climax Series, took part in batting practice at Yokohama Stadium on Tuesday as DeNA prepared for the Japan Series against SoftBank, which opens there on Saturday. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

Two Former Hawks Relish Their Shot at SoftBank as DeNA Prepare at Yokohama Stadium for Saturday's Japan Series Opener

'I want to be the best in Japan,' says Ogata, who gave up four runs to DeNA two years ago; Mimori, whose ninth-inning hit beat Hanshin, says the team will face their opponents together

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Yokohama DeNA BayStars held a full team practice at Yokohama Stadium on Tuesday as they prepared for the Japan Series against the Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks, which opens there on Saturday, and two players who once wore Hawks uniforms said they could not wait to face their former club.

"I want to be the best in Japan," said Ogata, a pitcher who joined DeNA in a trade in May.

A painful memory

Two years ago, when the same clubs met in the Japan Series, Ogata pitched for SoftBank. In Game 4 he came on as the second pitcher and gave up four runs, including a home run.

"I've used that to drive myself and worked hard," he said. "I hope we can put on the best possible fight."

The Climax Series hero

Mimori, an infielder who played for SoftBank until 2024, hit a go-ahead two-run single in the ninth inning against Hanshin on the 17th, the hit that helped carry DeNA through the Climax Series.

"If we all face them together, I think we can put up a good fight," he said.

Hot bats

Players who homered in the Climax Series, including Shugo Maki and Ryusei Watarai, took part in batting practice and other drills.

How DeNA got here

DeNA finished third in the Central League but swept through the Climax Series without losing a game,

beating Hanshin, the league champions, four straight in the final stage.

The opponents

SoftBank won the Pacific League for the third season in a row and beat Hanshin in last year's Japan Series. They have been training at their home, Mizuho PayPay Dome in Fukuoka, where manager Hiroki Kokubo said on Monday that the team had taken the lessons of 2024 to heart.

2024

In the 2024 series, SoftBank won the first two games before DeNA won four in a row to take their first Japan Series title in 26 years.

The schedule

Games 1 and 2 are at Yokohama Stadium, where Central League rules mean there is no designated hitter, before the series moves to Fukuoka for the middle games. Any sixth and seventh games will be back in Yokohama.

Kondo's form

SoftBank's Kensuke Kondo arrives in form: on Tuesday he was named the Pacific League's monthly MVP among batters for September and October, after hitting .321 with seven home runs.

Britain's early lead

Great Britain led after three rotations, helped by Harry Hepworth on the rings and vault and Jake Jarman on vault, and extended their lead in the fourth. Errors on the parallel bars and high bar then dropped them out of the medals, and they finished fourth with 247.395.

Russia's return

Russia climbed to third after five rotations with strong high bar routines and secured silver with a good final rotation on floor. It was their first world team medal since they won the title in 2019. Russian gymnasts have not competed under their own flag since the invasion of Ukraine.

China's mistakes

Zou Jingyuan scored 15.366 on the parallel bars for China, but mistakes on vault, high bar and floor cost them the gold.

The rest of the field

Switzerland were fifth with 246.497, the United States sixth with 245.161, the host nation, the Netherlands, seventh with 241.294, and Colombia eighth with 240.093.

Two years after Paris

Japan also won the team gold at the Paris Olympics in 2024, where they overcame a deficit to edge China.

The women

Japan's women qualified fifth for their team final, which takes place on Wednesday in Rotterdam, with 161.630. China topped qualifying with 164.996, ahead of the United States, Russia and Italy. Rina Kishi was 13th in the all-around qualifying.

What comes next

The championships continue with the all-around and apparatus finals.

SPORTS

Tokito Oda Opens With a 6-0, 6-0 Win as Japan Add Golds in Table Tennis, the Pool and the Velodrome at the Asian Para Games

Iwabuchi and Funayama win singles titles, Suzuki wins again in the pool and Kimura is fastest in the 1 km time trial in Aichi

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Tokito Oda, the world No. 1 in men's wheelchair tennis, won his opening match at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games 6-0, 6-0 against an opponent from Kazakhstan on Tuesday, the third day of the Games, and moved into the quarterfinals.

Yui Kamiji reached the semifinals of the women's singles.

Table tennis

Yukihiro Iwabuchi won the men's singles in class 9, and Masahiro Funayama, a student at Waseda University, took the class 10 title. Japan also won the women's singles for players with intellectual impairments.

Swimming

In the pool, Takayuki Suzuki won the men's 50 metres breaststroke SB3, Akito Minai the men's 200 metres individual medley SM10, and Genki Saito the men's 100 metres breaststroke SB13, a class for swimmers with visual impairments.

Aira Kinoshita finished first in the women's 100 metres backstroke for swimmers with intellectual impairments, a day after winning the 200 metres freestyle.

A veteran

Suzuki, 39, is a Paralympic champion who has competed at the Games since 2004.

Cycling

Kazuhei Kimura won the men's 1,000 metres time trial for visually impaired cyclists.

Athletics

In the men's 100 metres T13, for runners with visual impairments, Ryota Fukunaga took silver, and Japan also won the bronze.

Celebrations in the city

On Tuesday evening, medallists including Shizuka Hangai, who won judo gold in the women's 52 kilograms for visually impaired athletes, greeted cheering crowds at a fan event in central Nagoya, which runs until Friday. "I'm amazed by a reality that feels unbelievable. Thank you for your support," Hangai said.

A 9-year-old fan from Nagoya who received a signed shirt said: "I was able to hand a letter to the athlete I support, and I was happy to meet them."

The Games

The Asian Para Games follow the Asian Games, which Aichi Prefecture and Nagoya hosted in September and October, and continue until Saturday.

SPORTS

Seibu's Kaima Taira Wants to Start in the Majors, and Says His Agent Is Negotiating a Posting With the Club

'The final decision is the club's,' says the right-hander; Kona Takahashi, now eligible for overseas free agency, weighs 'many options'

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Kaima Taira of the Seibu Lions said on Tuesday that his agent was negotiating with the club over a move to Major League Baseball through the posting system, and that he wanted to pitch as a starter in the majors.

"The final decision is the club's," Taira told reporters in Tokorozawa, Saitama Prefecture. "I want to go to the majors as a starter. I'm confident."

A chance meeting

After Seibu were knocked out of the Climax Series, Taira happened to meet Koji Hiroike, the head of the club's baseball operations, and told him he wanted to

move to the majors, he said.

"I want to play where the best players in the world are gathered," he said, adding that terms would also be part of the talks.

Takahashi's choice

Kona Takahashi, a right-hander who has qualified for overseas free agency, said: "I have a lot of options, so I want to prepare to make a good choice."

How posting works

Under the posting system, a Japanese club can allow a player who does not yet have free agency to negotiate with major league teams, and receives a transfer fee based on the value of the contract he signs.

Closer and starter

Taira, 26, has been used by Seibu both as a closer and as a starter, and was a member of Japan's team that won gold at the Tokyo Olympics.

Sato

On Monday Hanshin agreed to post Teruaki Sato, the Central League's Triple Crown winner.

CULTURE

Natsuo Kirino, Kinya Kitaoji, Emmanuel Todd, Ryoko Yamagishi and Sanrio's Founder Win This Year's Kikuchi Kan Prize

The award honours a crime writer, a star of period drama, a French demographer, a manga pioneer and the man behind Hello Kitty

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The novelist Natsuo Kirino, the actor Kinya Kitaoji, the French historian and demographer Emmanuel Todd, the manga artist Ryoko Yamagishi and Shintaro Tsuji, the founder of Sanrio, will receive the 74th Kikuchi Kan Prize, the Society for the Promotion of Japanese Literature announced on Tuesday.

The prize honours outstanding achievements in culture. Each winner receives 1 million yen, and the award ceremony, by invitation only, will be held in December.

Kirino

Kirino was recognised for depicting women living in an absurd world and the darker sides of society. She was also the first woman to lead the Japan P.E.N. Club, where she worked on gender issues. Her novel "Out," about women working the night shift at a boxed-lunch factory, was published in English and nominated for the Edgar Award.

Kitaoji

Kitaoji, an actor for decades in film, television drama and theatre, was honoured for keeping the culture of period drama alive and advancing visual entertainment. Many viewers also know his voice as the white dog father in SoftBank's long-running television commercials.

Todd

Todd was recognised for anticipating events such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, which he foresaw in a book published in 1976, and for giving Japanese readers a way to make sense of world affairs through his many books, which sell widely in Japan.

Yamagishi

Yamagishi was honoured for portraying universal themes with exceptional artistry and storytelling in many celebrated works, and for raising shojo manga, comics for girls, "to the level of artistic culture." Her works include "Hi Izuru Tokoro no Tenshi," about Prince Shotoku, and the ballet manga "Arabesque."

Tsuji

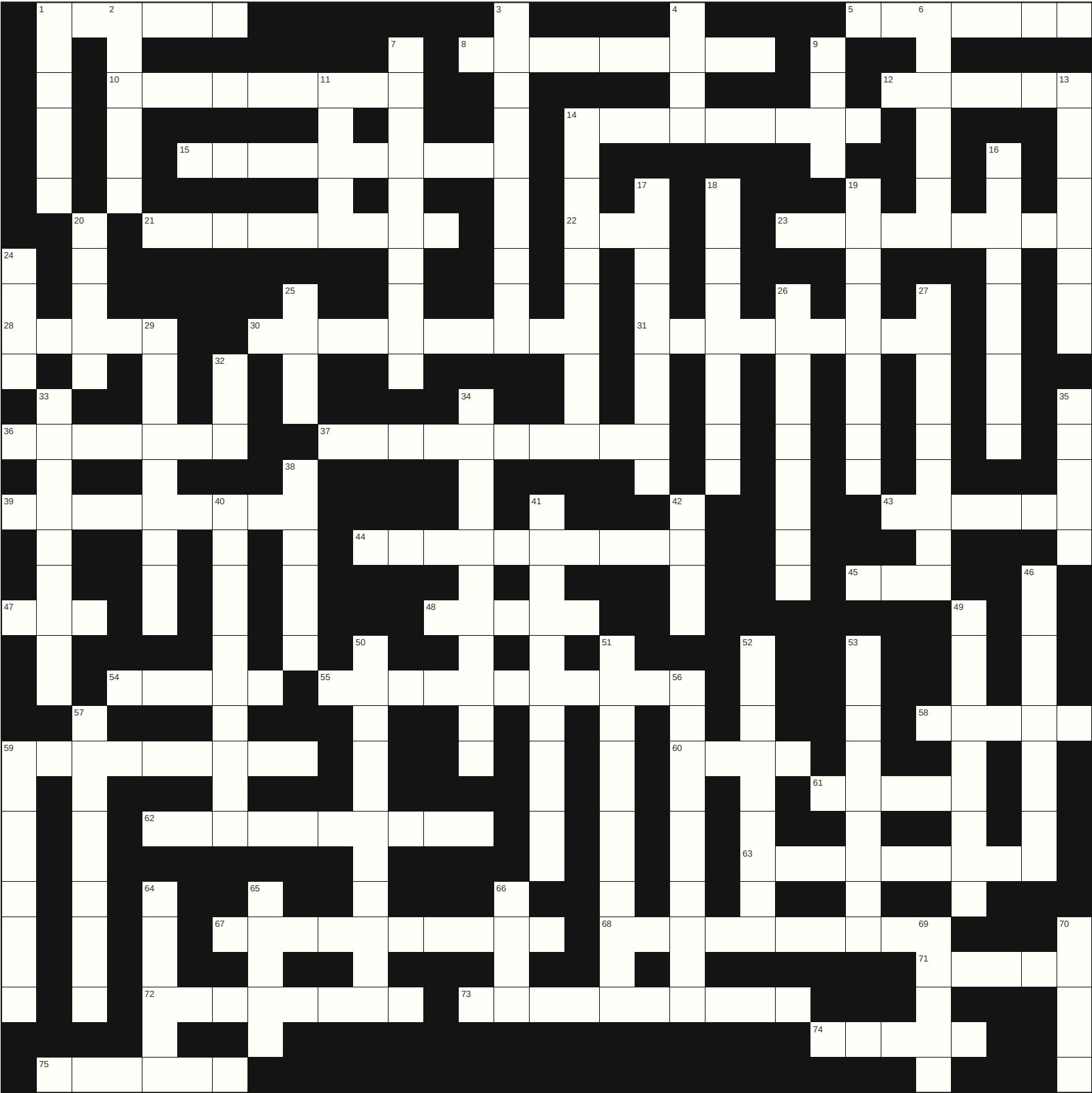
Tsuji, shaped by his wartime experiences, holds to the belief of "minna nakayoku," or "everyone getting along," and has sent messages of peace and love through characters, the citation said. He founded the company that became Sanrio in 1960, and Hello Kitty first appeared in 1974.

The prize

The prize is named after Kan Kikuchi, the writer who founded the publisher Bungeishunju and established the Akutagawa and Naoki prizes, Japan's best-known literary awards, in 1935. Kikuchi, who died in 1948, set up a prize in his own name in 1938; it was relaunched in 1953 to honour achievements across culture, and this year's awards are the 74th.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 78 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional.

SPORTS

Scoreboard

By the Sports Desk

GYMNASTICS: World Championships, Rotterdam, men's team final: 1 Japan 251.928; 2 Russia (competing as WG2) 250.329; 3 China 249.193; 4 Britain 247.395; 5 Switzerland 246.497; 6 United States 245.161; 7 Netherlands 241.294; 8 Colombia 240.093. Women's team qualifying: 1 China 164.996; 5 Japan 161.630.

MLB: American League Championship Series, Game 6: Rays 7, Guardians 3 (Rays win series 4-2). World Series: Rays v Brewers, Game 1 in Milwaukee on Friday night, U.S. time.

ASIAN PARA GAMES, DAY 3 GOLDS FOR JAPAN: Yukihiro Iwabuchi (table tennis, men's singles class 9); Masahiro Funayama (men's singles class 10); women's singles, intellectual impairment; Takayuki Suzuki (swimming, men's 50 m breaststroke SB3); Akito Minai (men's 200 m individual medley SM10); Genki Saito (men's 100 m breaststroke SB13); Aira Kinoshita (women's 100 m backstroke, intellectual impairment); Kazuhei Kimura (cycling, men's 1 km time trial, visually impaired).

WHEELCHAIR TENNIS: Tokito Oda beat a Kazakh opponent 6-0, 6-0 to reach the quarterfinals; Yui Kamiji reached the women's semifinals.

TENNIS: Japan Open (Osaka), women's singles first round: Moyuka Uchijima beat Ena Shibahara 6-4, 6-7, 6-3; Katie Boulter (Britain, 8th seed) beat Himeno Sakatsume 6-3, 6-1.

SOCCER: Champions League: Porto 0, PSV 1 (Kodai Sano played the full match); Paris Saint-Germain 4, Barcelona 2; Liverpool 4, Villarreal 3; Manchester City 5, AEK Athens 1; Napoli 4, Bodø/Glimt 3; Roma 4, Slovan Bratislava 0; Stuttgart 1, Atlético Madrid 1; Fenerbahçe 2, Slavia Prague 2; Sabah 1, Borussia Dortmund 2.

NPB MONTHLY MVPs, SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER: Central League: Haruto Takahashi (Hanshin, pitcher), Yusuke Oyama (Hanshin, batter). Pacific League: Kota Shoji (Rakuten, pitcher), Kensuke Kondo (SoftBank, batter).

BASKETBALL: B.League licenses 25 clubs for the 2028-29 B Premier season; Osaka's case continues on October 28.

NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL: Closed in

Aomori; Tokyo won the Emperor's Cup and the Empress's Cup.

GO: Tengen title match, Game 2 (Sapporo): Ryo Ichiriki beat Yuta Iyama (series 1-1).

COMING UP: Professional baseball draft, Thursday. Japan Series, Game 1, Saturday at Yokohama Stadium.

SPORTS

Rays Beat the Guardians 7-3 to Win Their First Pennant in Six Years and Set Up a World Series Against the Brewers

Caminero and Diaz hit two-run homers and Freddy Peralta, a former Brewer, pitches into the sixth; Game 1 is in Milwaukee on Friday night, Saturday morning in Japan

By the Sports Desk

The Tampa Bay Rays won the American League pennant on Monday night, U.S. time, beating the Cleveland Guardians 7-3 at home in Game 6 of the American League Championship Series to take the series four games to two.

The Rays will face the Milwaukee Brewers, the National League champions, in the World Series, which opens in Milwaukee on Friday night, U.S. time, 9 a.m. on Saturday in Japan.

How it went

Tampa Bay scored twice in the second inning and once in the third. Cleveland got a run back in the sixth, but the Rays added two runs in the seventh and two more in the eighth, when the Guardians also scored twice.

Junior Caminero and Yandy Diaz each hit a two-run home run, and Richie Palacios hit a two-run double.

The box score

Each side had seven hits and neither made an error. Caminero went two for four with a walk and scored twice, and Palacios also had two hits. For Cleveland, Chase DeLauter had two hits and scored twice, and Nathaniel Lowe drove in a run with two hits.

On the mound

Freddy Peralta, who pitched for the Brewers before joining the Rays, started and gave up one run over five and a third innings to earn the win, and five relievers finished the game. Shawn Armstrong took the loss for Cleveland.

The series

The teams split the first two games in Tampa Bay, Cleveland won Game 3 at home, and the Rays won

Games 4 and 5 in Cleveland before closing out the series at home.

A third pennant

It was the Rays' third American League title, after 2008 and 2020. They lost the World Series both times.

A first title either way

The Brewers have also never won the World Series. Their only previous appearance was in 1982, when they lost to the St. Louis Cardinals. Whichever team wins, it will be a first championship.

Cleveland's wait

Cleveland have not won the World Series since 1948, the longest drought among current major league clubs.

Peralta's reunion

Peralta, a right-hander from the Dominican Republic, will face the club with which he made his major league debut.

SPORTS

World Series Guide: Rays v Brewers

By the Sports Desk

FORMAT: Best of seven.

GAME 1: Friday, October 23, in Milwaukee; 9 a.m. on Saturday in Japan.

GAME 2: Saturday, October 24, in Milwaukee; 9 a.m. on Sunday in Japan.

GAMES 3 TO 5: Monday to Wednesday, October 26 to 28, at the Rays' home, Game 5 only if needed; 9 a.m. the following day in Japan.

GAMES 6 AND 7: Back in Milwaukee, if needed.

THE RAYS: American League champions for the third time, after 2008 and 2020; they lost the World Series both times.

THE BREWERS: National League champions; their only previous World Series, in 1982, ended in defeat by the St. Louis Cardinals.

A FIRST EITHER WAY: Neither club has won the World Series.

THE REUNION: Freddy Peralta, who won Game 6 of the ALCS for Tampa Bay, made his major league debut with Milwaukee.

HOW TAMPA BAY GOT THERE: Beat Cleveland four games to two in the American League Championship Series.

ACROSS

- App showing the video the driver watched (6)
- Possible successor who left the Cabinet (7)
- Moscow jail holding the Hokkaido Shimbun reporter (9)
- Tokyo all-around champion in the winning team (9)
- How Takaichi beat Koizumi for the party leadership (6)
- Company planning glass solar panels (9)
- ___ rivals, the Yomiuri's description (10)
- Romania's new prime minister (9)
- Wheelchair tennis No. 1 who won 6-0, 6-0 (3)
- Goods whose tax rate would fall to 1 per cent (9)
- Unit of storm-force winds at sea (5)
- Drone whose wreckage was found off Tottori (10)
- Japanese striped snake (9)
- City that honoured its novelist (7)
- Spiral museum that opened in 1959 (10)
- Manga artist who raised shojo to art (9)
- Club fined for low attendance (6)
- Seibu's home city (10)
- Bird in a 23-second video protected by copyright (3)
- Dutch club that won in Porto (3)
- U.S. ambassador jeered at the United Nations (5)
- Nagano town in the bear project (5)
- House where the coalition is four seats short (11)
- Beaten 1-0 at home (5)
- Swimmer who won again (9)
- Official who delivered the request to the University of Tokyo (4)
- Writer who stayed at Tenka Chaya (5)
- Bonito boat that caught fire (10)
- Enho's stable (9)
- ___ offer, now \$23.15 million (10)
- Contractor behind Iwai Cosmo's trading system (10)
- Cape off which the fishing boat burned (5)
- Shiga city of the new solar plant (8)
- Chiba city where evacuees cannot go home (10)
- Former Hawk who joined DeNA in May (5)
- Leeds bricklayer who patented Portland cement (6)

DOWN

- New agriculture minister (6)
- Chief cabinet secretary who kept his post (6)
- Battle of 1600 won by Ieyasu (10)
- Okinawa's new governor (4)
- Site ordered to block the copied owl video (7)
- Three ___ principles under review (10)
- Physicist who levitated a frog (4)
- Mie city in the bear project (5)
- ___ Choice, portal hit by a leak (8)
- Kind of solar cell Panasonic will make in Shiga (10)
- Doubles star beaten in three sets (9)
- Osaka judge who exceeded the demand (9)
- Party ___, 7.88 billion yen paid on Tuesday (9)
- City of the gymnastics world championships (9)
- Bedding dried by the disputed machines (5)
- DeNA slugger in the Climax Series (4)
- National symbol now protected by a new law (4)
- Korean city of the ITS World Congress (9)
- Home of the new Beatles Story (9)
- Where the cartoon's rivals are kept (9)
- Paris all-around champion in the winning team (3)
- Rival reappointed as party policy chief (9)
- Unit of the typhoon's 900 (11)
- City where young people looted shops (5)
- Shiga city in the bear project (6)
- Imperial question the special session addressed (10)
- Kind of glowing cloud seen after the launch (11)
- Agriculture minister replaced on October 15 (4)
- Ishin's first Cabinet minister (9)
- States off which a storm-force low lies (9)
- Home whose Tokyo average passed 114 million yen (11)
- Hokkaido city in the bear project (11)
- What the February election was for the Liberal Democrats (9)
- Battle of October 21, 1805 (9)
- Home of MMX's control room (10)
- Coldest city on the U.S. map (9)
- Gymnast who fell on the high bar (8)
- Mongolian province where the fire broke out (6)
- City of Game 3 (5)
- Small wrestler who has married (4)
- ___ Imperial Palace, home of the Empress Emerita (5)
- Broader index, down 58 points (5)

SPORTS

Major League Qualifying Offer Rises to \$23.15 Million, and the Cubs Could Make One to Seiya Suzuki

The one-year offer, set at the average of the 125 highest salaries, is up 5.1 per cent; Shota Imanaga accepted one from Chicago last year

By the Sports Desk

The qualifying offer that major league clubs can make to players about to become free agents has been set at \$23.15 million for this off-season, about 3.66 billion yen and 5.1 per cent more than last year, the Associated Press reported.

What it is

The qualifying offer is a one-year contract whose value is the average salary of the 125 highest-paid players. If a player turns it down and signs with another club, his former team receives a draft pick as compensation.

Suzuki

Seiya Suzuki of the Chicago Cubs, whose five-year contract ends this season, could receive an offer from the club.

Suzuki joined the Cubs from the Hiroshima Carp in 2022 on a five-year contract worth \$85 million.

Imanaga's choice

Last year Shota Imanaga accepted a qualifying offer from the Cubs and stayed in Chicago.

The timing

Clubs make qualifying offers shortly after the World Series ends, and players then have a limited time to accept or reject them.

SPORTS

Kodai Sano Plays the Full Match as PSV Win in Porto for Their First Champions League Victory of the Season

A 57th-minute goal settles it; Paris Saint-Germain beat Barcelona 4-2 and Liverpool edge Villarreal 4-3

By the Sports Desk

Kodai Sano played the full 90 minutes in midfield as PSV Eindhoven won 1-0 at Porto on Tuesday for their first victory in this season's Champions League.

The only goal came in the 57th minute. PSV had 60 per cent of the possession and 16 shots to Porto's 15. The win took them to four points.

SPORTS

A footballing family

Sano is the younger brother of Kaishu Sano, a Japan international midfielder.

Around Europe

Paris Saint-Germain beat Barcelona 4-2, Liverpool beat Villarreal 4-3, Manchester City beat AEK Athens 5-1, Napoli beat Bodø/Glimt 4-3, and Roma beat Slovan Bratislava 4-0.

Stuttgart drew 1-1 with Atlético Madrid, Fenerbahçe drew 2-2 with Slavia Prague, and Borussia Dortmund won 2-1 away to Sabah of Azerbaijan.

Wednesday

The round continues on Wednesday, European time, when Bayern Munich host Arsenal, Real Madrid play RB Leipzig and Inter face Shakhtar Donetsk.

The format

The league phase has 36 clubs, each playing eight matches against different opponents. The top eight go straight to the round of 16, and the clubs placed ninth to 24th enter a play-off round.

SPORTS

Uchijima Outlasts Shibahara in Three Sets to Reach the Second Round of the Japan Open; Sakatsume Falls to Boulter

The all-Japanese first-round match in Osaka goes the distance after Shibahara takes the second set
By the Sports Desk

Moyuka Uchijima beat Ena Shibahara 6-4, 6-7, 6-3 in an all-Japanese first-round match at the Kinoshita Group Japan Open in Osaka on Tuesday to reach the second round.

Himeno Sakatsume lost to the eighth seed, Katie Boulter of Britain, 6-3, 6-1.

How it went

Uchijima took the first set 6-4, Shibahara won the second on a tie-break, and Uchijima pulled away to take the deciding set 6-3.

Straight sets

Boulter needed only two sets to see off Sakatsume.

A doubles star

Shibahara is best known as a doubles player, and has been ranked among the world's top doubles players.

Monday

On the opening day, Mayu Hontama lost to Viktorija Golubic of Switzerland 6-3, 6-1.

The venue

The tournament is being played at the Utsubo Tennis Center in Osaka.

SPORTS

B.League Licenses 25 Clubs for the Third Season of B Premier but Holds Back Osaka Over Its Arena

The board will look at Osaka again on October 28; Toyama is fined 15 million yen for falling short on attendance
By the Sports Desk

The B.League board on Tuesday granted licences to 25 clubs for the 2028-29 season of B Premier, the new top division of Japanese basketball, but deferred a decision on Osaka.

B Premier began in September with 26 clubs. The 2028-29 season will be its third.

Osaka

"Osaka needs continued deliberation on matters relating to its arena," Commissioner Shinji Shimada said. The board will take up the club's case again at its meeting on October 28.

The key question is whether Osaka can secure an arena with more than 5,000 seats and VIP seating by the start of the 2028-29 season.

Toyama's fine

Toyama was fined 15 million yen for missing the B Premier standard for average attendance in the 2025-26 season. Under the rules, a club is relegated only after missing the standard three seasons in a row.

The standards

To play in B Premier, clubs must meet requirements for attendance, revenue and arenas, including annual sales of 1.2 billion yen.

Why it matters

The league created B Premier to build a top division with bigger arenas and stronger finances.

SPORTS

Tokyo Win Both Cups as the National Sports Festival Closes in Aomori; Miyazaki Hosts Next Year

Princess Kako attends the closing ceremony at Maeda Arena; the Emperor's Cup is Tokyo's 19th, and its first in two years
By the Sports Desk

The National Sports Festival in Aomori Prefecture closed on Tuesday with a ceremony at Maeda Arena in Aomori City attended by Princess Kako, the second daughter of Crown Prince Akishino.

Tokyo won the Emperor's Cup for the best overall performance by a prefecture, its 19th, and its first in two years. It also won the Empress's Cup for the best performance in women's events.

The next host

Next year's festival will be held in Miyazaki Prefecture from September 26 to October 6.

Aomori's second

Aomori hosted the festival for the second time, 49 years after the first.

A new name

The event, known for decades as the Kokutai, was renamed the Kokumin Sports Taikai, or National Sports Festival, in 2024.

On the track

On Monday, Ko Ochiai of Shiga won the men's 800 metres in 1:45.21, and Ayano Shiomi of Kyoto set a meet record of 2:01.50 in the women's 800 metres.

Next in Aomori

The National Sports Festival for People with Disabilities follows in Aomori Prefecture, as it does each year in the host prefecture.

SPORTS

Enho, the Pint-Sized Favourite Who Fought Back From a Neck Injury, Announces His Marriage

The 32-year-old juryo wrestler promises to devote himself 'all the more' to sumo with the responsibility of a family
By the Sports Desk

Enho, the small but popular wrestler of the Isegahama stable, has married, the stable announced on social media on Tuesday.

"From now on I will keep the responsibility of being the head of a family close to my heart and devote myself all the more to the way of sumo," the 32-year-old said in a statement. He is expected to hold a news conference soon.

A fighter's record

Enho, whose real name is Tomoya Nakamura, is from Ishikawa Prefecture. He stands 167 centimetres and weighs 107 kilograms, small by the standards of sumo, and won the technique prize at the Nagoya tournament in 2019.

The comeback

A serious neck injury kept him out of seven consecutive tournaments and he fell to jonokuchi, the lowest division. He returned to the salaried ranks of juryo at the summer tournament in May this year.

September

At the autumn tournament in September, ranked East Juryo No. 9, he finished with seven wins and eight losses.

Speed against size

Enho has long been one of the lightest men in sumo's top two divisions, relying on speed and technique against much heavier opponents.

Next

The Kyushu tournament opens in Fukuoka on November 8.

SPORTS

Shizuoka Blue Revs Part Ways With Kwagga Smith, the Double World Cup Winner Who Spent Eight Years in Japan

The South Africa forward joined in the Top League era and was named in the league's best fifteen five times
By the Sports Desk

The Shizuoka Blue Revs of rugby's Japan Rugby League One said on Tuesday that their contract with Kwagga Smith, the South Africa forward, had ended.

Smith, 33, was a member of the South Africa squads that won the Rugby World Cup in 2019, in Japan, and again in 2023 in France.

Eight years in Shizuoka

He joined the club in 2018, when Japan's top competition was still the Top League, and was selected five times for the league's best fifteen.

No reason given

The club did not say why the contract had ended.

The player

A back-row forward known for his speed and work at the breakdown, Smith became one of the best-known foreign players in Japanese rugby.

The club

The Blue Revs, based in Iwata, Shizuoka Prefecture, were known as Yamaha Motor Jubilo before the launch of League One in 2022.

The 2019 World Cup

South Africa beat England in the final in Yokohama to win the 2019 tournament, the first World Cup held in Asia.

SPORTS

Sports in Brief

By the Sports Desk

GOLF: Miyu Yamashita stays fourth in the women's world ranking; Shiho Kuwaki is 12th, Akie Iwai 18th, Mao Saigo 21st and Nasa Hataoka 22nd. Nelly Korda leads, ahead of Jeeno Thitikul and Haeran Ryu.

GYMNASTICS: The women's team final at the World Championships is on Wednesday in Rotterdam.

BASEBALL: The professional baseball draft is on Thursday.

JAPAN SERIES: DeNA v SoftBank, Game 1, Saturday at Yokohama Stadium.

MLB: The World Series, Rays v Brewers, opens in Milwaukee on Friday night, 9 a.m. Saturday in Japan.

PARA SPORTS: The Asian Para Games continue in Aichi and Nagoya until Saturday.

SOCCER: Champions League: Bayern Munich v Arsenal and Real Madrid v RB Leipzig on Wednesday night, European time.

TENNIS: The Japan Open continues in Osaka, with Moyuka Uchijima in the second round.

SUMO: The Kyushu tournament opens in Fukuoka on November 8.

BASKETBALL: The B.League board takes up Osaka's B Premier licence again on October 28.

GO: The third game of the Tengen title match is on November 22 in Busan.

CULTURE

Ichiriki Levels the Tengen Series Against Iyama With a Win in Sapporo; Game 3 Moves to Busan

The holder of three titles wins by resignation in 214 moves playing white; the best-of-five match stands at one game each
By the Culture Desk

Ryo Ichiriki, who holds the Tengen title along with the Meijin and Oza, beat the challenger, Yuta Iyama, in the second game of the 52nd Tengen title match in Sapporo on Tuesday, levelling the best-of-five series at one game each.

Playing white, Ichiriki won by resignation after 214 moves. Iyama, who holds the Gosei title, won the first game.

Two to go

Each player now needs two more wins: Iyama to take the title, Ichiriki to keep it.

Busan

The third game will be played on November 22 in Busan, South Korea.

Two generations

Iyama, 37, became the first player to hold all seven of the major go titles at once in 2016, and repeated the feat the following year. In 2018 he and the shogi player Yoshiharu Habu received the People's Honour Award.

Ichiriki, 29, won the Ing Cup, one of the game's leading international tournaments, in 2023.

The Tengen

The Tengen is one of the seven major titles in Japanese go, alongside the Kisei, Meijin, Honinbo, Oza, Judan and Gosei.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Crossword, Page 24.

CULTURE

Akutagawa Prize Winner Chito Kosagawa Receives Morioka's Honour Award and Hopes to Set a Novel in Her Home City

'I want to repay people by continuing to write,' says the author of 'Zombie Kaishufu'; the mayor says she has brought residents hope and energy
By the Culture Desk

Chito Kosagawa, who won the 175th Akutagawa Prize, received Morioka's citizens' honour award at the city hall on Tuesday afternoon.

Mayor Shigeru Uchidate presented the award. Kosagawa was born in Morioka and lived there until she finished junior high school.

The prize

She won the Akutagawa Prize, the country's best-known award for new literary fiction, for "Zombie Kaishufu," published by Kodansha, on her third nomination. She made her debut in 2022.

Twice a year

The Akutagawa Prize is awarded twice a year, with winners announced in January and July, by the Society for the Promotion of Japanese Literature.

'Repay'

"I have received so many warm responses from people in Morioka," she said. "I want to repay them by continuing to write novels."

The mayor said she had "brought hope and energy to residents."

Snow scenes

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Kosagawa said: "I love writing about winter, such as scenes of falling snow. Someday I'd like to try a novel set in Morioka."

A literary city

Morioka has long literary ties. The poet Takuboku Ishikawa went to school in the city, and the writer Kenji Miyazawa studied there.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Quotes of the Day

By the Copy Desk

"We are not considering a postponement on economic grounds, so I do not envisage seeking the people's judgment." Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, on restoring the food tax rate after two years.

"The biggest problem is that it would turn into a big tax increase for the middle class." Yuichiro Tamaki, leader of the Democratic Party for the People.

"It is extremely regrettable." Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara, on Russia's refusal to let Japanese diplomats see a detained reporter.

"Basically, I am against it." Keidanren chairman Yoshinobu Tsutsui, on a further corporate tax rise for defence.

"We were able to keep our promise." Makoto Arita, the H3 project manager, after MMX's launch.

"Carrying out the event with safety first is extremely difficult." Minoru Omori, chairman of the association that runs the Saidaiji Eyo.

"I think the most important thing is for the number of people, of researchers, to increase." Kenso Soai, Nobel laureate in chemistry.

"I want to be the best in Japan." DeNA's Ogata, before facing his former club, SoftBank.

"I want to go to the majors as a starter. I'm confident." Seibu's Kaima Taira.

"I'm surprised that something I filmed as a change of pace has led to a new discovery." Shogo Noguchi, whose video led to the first record of a rare wasp in Japan.

"People need an environment where they can work with peace of mind." Atsumi Harasawa, Yokohama's new mayor.

"It went by in no time." Hiroshi Nakatsuka, Ishin's first Cabinet minister, on his first month in the job.

"Not being able to follow the rules is a big problem." Makoto Nishida, Komeito's secretary-general, on Education Minister Yoshihiro Seki.

"Osaka needs continued deliberation on matters relating to its arena." Shinji Shimada, the B.League's commissioner.



Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki for The Japan Morning Post.

EDITORIAL

A Year of Consolidation Has Given Takaichi a Strong Hand. Year Two Must Show It Is Being Played for the Country

Taro Suzuki's cartoon shows a prime minister filing her rivals away in padlocked boxes while the food tax cut lies open on her desk. Stability has real value for Japan and for its alliance, but the bill for the tax cut, the security documents and the quality of her appointments will decide how this year is judged

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki has drawn the prime minister at work, and she looks like a woman who knows exactly where everything belongs. In his cartoon on this page, Sanae Takaichi stands behind a heavy wooden desk in a navy suit, a small badge on her lapel. With both hands she is setting a framed portrait of a grey-haired man in spectacles into a strongbox. Two more portraits of older men are already propped in the boxes beside her. The boxes are padlocked, and their labels read CONTAINING RIVALS and PARTY BASE.

On the desk lies an open book whose pages are headed FOOD TAX CUT 8 TO 1 PERCENT, CABINET RESHUFFLE and PERSONNEL CHANGES. Behind her, bundles of paper fill the shelves, marked LDP POLICY PAPERS, LDP STRATEGY DOCUMENTS and LDP SUPPORT BASE REPORTS. Higher up, a pair of brass scales holds two weights, STABILITY and CHALLENGE, in perfect balance, next to a desk calendar turned to 2025, the year it all began. The Hinomaru stands on one side of the desk and the Stars and Stripes on the other. A brass plate on the front of the desk says ONE YEAR, and the caption sums it up: ONE YEAR. RIVALS CONTAINED. BASE SOLID. TAX CUT ADVANCES.

It is a fair summary of the past 12 months, and in its way a generous one. The cartoonist does not name the men in the frames, and he does not need to. Anyone who has followed politics this year can guess at least two of them. What matters is the gesture. This is a prime minister who is not afraid of her rivals, because she has found a place for each of them, and the place has a lock.

From fragile to formidable

It was not always so. A year ago today, Ms Takaichi became the first woman to lead a Japanese government, and few prime ministers have started from a weaker position. Earlier that month she had beaten Shinjiro Koizumi in a runoff for the leadership

of the Liberal Democratic Party, only for Komeito to walk out of its 26-year partnership with the Liberal Democrats days later. She needed a new partner, the Japan Innovation Party, simply to win the vote in the Diet that made her prime minister. Her government looked like a stopgap.

In January she took the boldest decision of her year and dissolved the House of Representatives at the opening of the ordinary session. On February 8 the Liberal Democrats won 316 seats, counting candidates endorsed after the vote, and with Ishin's 36 the coalition took 352 of the 465 seats, about three-quarters of the chamber. The Centrist Reform Alliance, which the Constitutional Democrats and Komeito had formed to stop her, won 49 and has since come apart. Its Constitutional Democratic wing has become the Democratic Reform Association, and Komeito has restarted as a party of its own. On February 18 the Diet re-elected her as the 105th prime minister.

That is what the strongbox labelled PARTY BASE contains. A leader who wins a majority of that size in her own name owes her position to the voters rather than to the factions, and the party knows it. Whatever one thinks of her politics, the election settled a question that had hung over Japanese government for several years: whether anyone could lead it with authority. A country facing the security environment Japan faces cannot afford a revolving door at the Prime Minister's Office, and for the past year it has not had one.

Using the majority

She has used the majority, and for the most part we believe she has used it well. In the special session after the election the coalition revised the Imperial House Law to create a system for adopting male descendants, in the male line, of former branches of the imperial family into the imperial family. We supported that change. The line of succession has dwindled to three men, only one of them young, and

a way to secure a stable succession that respects the tradition of male-line descent was long overdue. Successive governments studied the question and set it aside. This one acted.

The coalition also passed a law making it a crime to damage the national flag. Several democracies, Germany among them, protect their national symbols in law, and it is reasonable for Japan to do the same. Critics say the law could infringe on freedom of expression, and that concern should be taken seriously in the way it is enforced. Police and prosecutors should reserve it for deliberate acts of contempt and never stretch it to cover satire, journalism or art. A nation confident in its flag has no need to make martyrs.

Both laws were enacted over the objections of the opposition parties. A large majority makes that possible. It does not make it wise as a habit. Kyodo News described Ms Takaichi's method as using "the power of numbers," and she has signalled that she means to press on with policies on the economy and security that divide opinion. The numbers will carry her a long way in the lower house. They will not carry her through the upper house, where her coalition is four seats short of a majority, and they will not persuade the half of the country that did not vote for her. Persuasion is the work of year two.

The rivals in the boxes

The cartoon's sharpest image is the one that gives it its caption. Last month's reshuffle kept the prime minister's main rivals close. Mr Koizumi, now 45, stayed on as defence minister. Takayuki Kobayashi, another candidate in last year's leadership race, was reappointed chairman of the party's Policy Research Council. Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara, Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama and Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi kept their posts. Yoshimasa Hayashi, who served as internal affairs minister and is seen as a possible successor, left the Cabinet. The Yomiuri Shimbun called the strategy "containing rivals" on its front page on Wednesday.

This is an old method, and a sensible one. Shinzo Abe made Shigeru Ishiba, the man he had beaten for the party leadership in 2012, his secretary-general and later a minister. A rival with a portfolio shares in the credit and the blame for what the government does. A rival on the back benches shares in neither, and is free to wait for the government to stumble. Mr

Koizumi's record will now be tied to the rewriting of Japan's security documents, and Mr Kobayashi's to the question of how the food tax cut is paid for. Both are serious jobs, and both men are capable of doing them well.

But padlocks are not loyalty, and a box is not a bond. Ms Takaichi was elected to complete Shigeru Ishiba's term as party president, which ends in September next year. To stay on, she must win a leadership election in which the party's Diet members and its rank-and-file members carry equal weight. Mr Hayashi, outside the Cabinet, now has more freedom than he has had for years. Every rival will be watching two things: her poll numbers and her mistakes.

Containment is a tactic. It is not a strategy, and it is not a succession plan. A governing party that is serious about the long term needs more than one person who could plausibly lead it, and the best way for a prime minister to secure her own future is to make the government's results so clear that a challenge looks pointless. That brings us to the parts of the cartoon that are open rather than locked.

The page headed PERSONNEL CHANGES

The open book on the desk has a page headed PERSONNEL CHANGES, and it is where her year has been weakest. Kazuo Yana, appointed agriculture minister in the reshuffle at the prime minister's own initiative, was replaced on October 15, less than a month later, after remarks about cutting road budgets for local governments and a suspected violation of the Public Offices Election Law. Arata Takebe, a former senior vice minister for agriculture, has taken his place. Education Minister Yoshihiro Seki, meanwhile, is under fire for holding a fundraising party in a House of Representatives members' office building, in breach of the chamber's own rules.

Both men were disciplined by the party over the factions' slush-fund scandal, the affair that did so much to damage public trust in the Liberal Democrats. Appointing them was a choice, and a poor one. The public has noticed. In the Sankei Shimbun and FNN poll taken at the weekend, 85 per cent said Mr Yana's resignation was appropriate, but 51.2 per cent said the prime minister had not dealt with it at the right time, and 69.3 per cent said he should go on explaining himself.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

A leader with 352 seats can afford a stumble. She cannot afford a pattern. Mr Seki should explain himself fully in the Diet, and the prime minister should make clear that the next round of appointments will be vetted with the care the public has a right to expect. The strongest prime ministers are those who never give their opponents a scandal to talk about instead of policy.

The page headed FOOD TAX CUT

The first page of the book is the one that will define year two. On Tuesday the lower house began debating the bill to cut the consumption tax on food and non-alcoholic drinks from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027. It would be the first cut since the tax was introduced in 1989, at 3 per cent. Ms Takaichi calls it her long-held wish. The cost is put at about 10 trillion yen.

We have had doubts about this policy from the start, and they have not gone away. The consumption tax is earmarked for pensions, medical care, nursing care and child-rearing, the commitments that an ageing country can least afford to weaken. A cut that applies to everything on the supermarket shelf helps the wealthy household that fills its trolley with expensive produce as much as, or more than, the pensioner counting coins. And temporary tax cuts have a way of becoming permanent, because no government enjoys raising taxes.

The government's answers so far are incomplete. The bill says the government will not rely on special deficit-covering bonds, which is right, but it does not say where the 10 trillion yen will come from. The bill also promises a new benefit linked to income, to be introduced early in fiscal 2027, but who will receive it is undecided; the prime minister described annual incomes of 1 million to 3.5 million yen as one point of reference. Voters can see the gap. In the weekend poll, 62.6 per cent supported the cut, but 80.9 per cent said the government should clearly show how it would be funded, and 52.2 per cent doubted it would do much against rising prices. A survey by the research company Intage found that the most common plan for the money saved was simply to put it in the bank.

To her credit, Ms Takaichi has been clear about one thing. Asked whether she would call an election if she decided to put off restoring the rate, as Shinzo Abe did when he postponed a tax increase in 2014, she said she was not considering a postponement on economic grounds and would see the return of the rate through to the end. The bill contains no clause allowing the cut to be extended. She should hold to that, whatever the pressure in 2029.

Four seats short

The upper house is where the bill will be tested, and that is no bad thing. The Democratic Party for the People has submitted its own bill built on cuts in income and resident taxes and payments to people on low incomes, and its leader, Yuichiro Tamaki, has put his finger on a real weakness: when the two years end and the rate goes back to 8 per cent, "it would turn into a big tax increase for the middle class." The Democratic Reform Association wants a payment of 40,000 yen to every resident now, followed by a benefit linked to income, and says no tax cut would then be needed.

The government should treat these proposals as material to improve its bill rather than obstacles to be outvoted. The prime minister needs opposition votes in the upper house; the opposition needs to show that it can shape policy rather than merely oppose it. A deal that names the funding, designs the income-linked benefit properly and protects middle-income households from the cliff in 2029 would be a better law than the one now before the lower house. The coalition should aim to enact it before the session ends on December 12, but not at the price of leaving the hard questions for later.

The scales of stability and challenge

The scales on the cartoonist's shelf are level, and the economy is where they could tip. The yen has hovered around 158 to the dollar. Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the route for much of Japan's crude, has pushed oil above 100 dollars a barrel, and Japan's trade deficit for the April-September half year nearly doubled, to 2.8 trillion yen, as fuel import bills rose. The Nikkei Stock Average fell 841 yen on Tuesday on doubts about the artificial intelligence boom. The average price of a new condominium in greater Tokyo has passed 114 million yen, beyond the reach of most young families.

There is good news too. Personnel commissions in all 47 prefectures have recommended pay rises for their staff for the fifth year in a row, with increases above 3 per cent in 36 of them, following the private sector's lead. Wages are finally moving. The task is to make sure that they keep moving faster than prices.

A tax cut is a painkiller. The underlying conditions are Japan's dependence on imported energy and its weak productivity, and the prime minister's promise of a strong economy will be judged by what she does about them. Energy security is national security. Japan needs more diversified supplies, faster restarts of nuclear reactors that have passed safety checks, and support for technologies that can be made at home. Panasonic's plan to mass-produce glass perovskite solar panels in Shiga from 2029 is the kind of domestic capability that deserves backing.

The two flags

The flags at either end of the desk are the cartoon's quietest detail and its most important. The alliance with the United States is the foundation of Japan's security, and the coming months will test it in several ways.

The Liberal Democrats and Ishin will begin talks in November on revising the three documents that set Japan's security strategy, which the government intends to finish by the end of the year. Two questions stand out: whether to review the three non-nuclear principles, and whether to acquire nuclear-powered submarines. Both deserve frank public debate rather than evasion. Japan should continue to rule out building nuclear weapons of its own. But the principle of not allowing nuclear weapons to be brought into the country was adopted in a very different strategic environment, and it is reasonable to ask whether it still serves Japan's security as China, North Korea and Russia expand their arsenals. Australia has chosen to acquire nuclear-powered submarines with its allies, and Japan should at least study what endurance and range would add to the defence of an island nation.

All of this must be paid for. Keidanren's chairman, Yoshinobu Tsutsui, said on Tuesday that he was "basically" against a further rise in corporate tax to fund defence, warning that it would cool investment. His concern about investment is legitimate, but the business community depends on the security that the Self-Defense Forces provide as much as anyone does. The government owes the public an honest plan that combines spending reviews with a fair sharing of the burden, and it owes it before the year-end budget talks, not after them. A government that cuts 10 trillion yen in tax with one hand and expands defence with the other must explain how both add up.

The alliance also depends on the trust of the communities that host American forces. U.S. troops taking part in the Keen Sword exercise are under a ban on drinking and restrictions on going out wherever they train, after a Marine stationed in Okinawa was arrested this month on suspicion of robbery and murder. Those measures are right. Okinawa bears a heavy share of the burden of the alliance, and every serious crime erodes the consent on which the bases depend.

Beyond the alliance, the Quad of Japan, the United States, Australia and India is expected to hold its first leaders' summit since 2024 in Manila in mid-November, according to Secretary of State Marco Rubio. That is welcome. So is Washington's support for Japan's demand that Russia free the Hokkaido Shimbun reporter detained on suspicion of espionage, whom Moscow has refused to let Japanese diplomats see. Russia's conduct, from that arrest to President Vladimir Putin's visit to the disputed island of Etorofu in August, shows why Japan must keep standing with its partners.

American politics will not stand still. President Donald Trump's approval rating fell to 31 per cent in a Reuters poll this week, and Americans vote in midterm elections on November 3. The alliance must be built to outlast any administration in Washington and any government in Tokyo. That means investing in the relationships between the two countries' forces, officials and companies, not only between their leaders.

What year two must deliver

Ishin will want something for its loyalty. It is pressing for a cut of 45 proportional representation seats in the lower house, and its leader, Osaka Governor Hirofumi Yoshimura, is preparing for a referendum next spring on reorganising Osaka. A cut

in the number of lawmakers would please voters who think there are too many politicians, but it would fall hardest on smaller parties, and changes to the electoral system should come out of talks among all the parties, not out of a bargain between two of them.

Then there is the business of keeping the country safe from nature. As this page went to press, Typhoon Champi had deepened to 900 hectopascals and was heading for the seas south of Okinawa, with storm winds possible in the Sakishima Islands from Friday. A month after Typhoon No. 25 killed 15 people in Chiba and Kanagawa, a stretch of the JR Uchibo Line is still closed and families in Yotsukaido cannot go home. Resilience against disasters is part of national strength, and it deserves the same attention as tax and defence.

So the agenda for year two is clear. Name the money for the tax cut. Finish the security documents with the courage to address the hard questions. Vet appointments as if the government's survival depended on them, because one day it might. Treat the upper house as a place to build consensus rather than a hurdle to be cleared. And make the case for the government's policies to the half of the country that is not yet persuaded.

The calendar on the shelf

The calendar on the cartoonist's shelf still shows 2025, the year Ms Takaichi took office. It will need to be changed soon. Next September the party will decide whether she deserves a full term of her own, and the public will judge her long before that, in the shops where the tax cut is supposed to show up and in the news of how the government handles the crises it cannot predict.

Stability is not an achievement in itself. It is the platform from which achievements are made. Ms Takaichi has spent her first year building that platform, and she has built it well. The rivals are in their boxes, the base is solid and the tax cut is moving. In her second year, the country will want to see what the platform was for. The question, when the party votes next year, will not be how many rivals she kept locked away. It will be what she built while they were there.

ANALYSIS

Keeping Her Rivals Close Has Bought Takaichi a Quiet Year. The Party Vote in 2027 Will Ask a Harder Question

The reshuffle tied Koizumi and Kobayashi to the government's record and left Hayashi free. A strategy built on containment needs results to back it
By William | Senior Political Analyst

One year into the job, Sanae Takaichi's position inside the Liberal Democratic Party looks stronger than that of any prime minister since Shinzo Abe at his peak. It is worth being precise about why, because the reasons also show where the risks lie.

The first reason is the February election. A leader who wins 316 seats in her own name does not depend on the old factions, most of which dissolved after the slush-fund scandal anyway. The second is the reshuffle last month, which the Yomiuri Shimbun described as containing rivals. Shinjiro Koizumi, 45, stays at defence. Takayuki Kobayashi stays in charge of policy. Both now own a piece of the government's record, and both will find it awkward to campaign against a programme they helped to write.

The man outside

The exception is Yoshimasa Hayashi. Having left the Cabinet, the former chief cabinet secretary has more freedom than at any time in recent years. He is a patient politician with long experience in government and wide contacts in the party, and he does not need to say anything provocative for now. He only needs to be available if the government stumbles.

The calendar

Ms Takaichi was elected last October to complete Shigeru Ishiba's term, which runs until September next year. To win a full term she must face a leadership election in which the party's Diet members and its rank-and-file members carry equal weight. A candidate needs 20 lawmakers to get on the ballot. Containing rivals inside the government makes it harder for them to gather those 20 names without looking disloyal. It does not stop them.

The numbers to watch

The polls tell two stories. The Sankei-FNN survey at the weekend put Cabinet support at 62.6 per cent, and

62.3 per cent rated her first year positively. Kyodo News found support below 50 per cent for the first time, at 49.1 per cent. Lawmakers who face voters will watch the lower figure more closely than the higher one, and the trend more closely than either.

Where she is exposed

The agriculture minister she chose had to be replaced within a month, and the education minister is under fire over a fundraiser held in a Diet office building. Both had been disciplined by the party over the slush-fund affair. Appointment errors are exactly the kind of opening rivals look for, because they speak to a leader's judgment rather than her policies.

The food tax cut is the other exposure. Mr Kobayashi's policy council will have to help find about 10 trillion yen. If the money is found and the cut reaches shop shelves, the prime minister gets the credit. If the funding becomes a mess, the party's tax experts will remember who insisted on it.

What would secure her

The safest course for Ms Takaichi is not to tighten the locks but to make a challenge pointless: a tax bill passed with opposition support in the upper house, security documents finished on time, and no more ministers who have to be replaced. A prime minister with results does not need to contain anyone.

There is also a duty that goes beyond her own survival. A governing party needs more than one plausible leader. Giving the next generation real responsibility, as she has with Mr Koizumi at defence and Hideki Murai, 46, in charge of Diet affairs, is how a party stays fit to govern. She should keep doing it, even when it carries a risk to herself.

ANALYSIS

Ten Trillion Yen Needs a Name. The Upper House Is Where the Government Should Find It

The bill rules out deficit bonds but names no other source; the opposition's alternatives point to a better law if the coalition is willing to listen
By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

The prime minister calls the food tax cut her long-held wish, and on Tuesday she began the work of making it law. The bill is simple in outline: food and non-alcoholic drinks taxed at 1 per cent instead of 8 per cent for two years from April 2027, then back to 8 per cent. The difficult part is the part the bill leaves out.

The missing line

The cut is estimated to cost about 10 trillion yen. The bill says the government will not issue special deficit-covering bonds to pay for it, which is the right commitment for a country with Japan's level of public debt. But it does not say what spending will be cut or what revenue will be raised instead. Ms Takaichi did not say on Tuesday, either.

Voters are ahead of the government on this. In the Sankei-FNN poll at the weekend, 80.9 per cent said the government should clearly show how the cut will be funded. That is a larger share than supported the cut itself, at 62.6 per cent.

What people would do with it

A survey by Intage found that the most popular use for the money people would save was to put it in the bank, chosen by 25.7 per cent of respondents. Travel and leisure came second and investment third. A tax cut designed to fight rising prices will do less for spending than its supporters hope if a large share of it is saved.

The opposition's ideas

The coalition is four seats short in the House of Councillors, so it will need opposition votes. That gives the opposition leverage, and two of its proposals deserve a serious hearing.

The Democratic Party for the People has tabled a bill built on deductions from income and resident taxes plus payments to people on low incomes, which it says would cut household burdens by about 50,000 yen. Its leader, Yuichiro Tamaki, warns that when the two years end, the return to 8 per cent "would turn into a big tax increase for the middle class." The Democratic Reform Association wants 40,000 yen paid to every resident now and a benefit tied to income later.

A better bill

The government's own bill already promises a benefit linked to income from early in fiscal 2027, with annual incomes of 1 million to 3.5 million yen

ANALYSIS

mentioned as one point of reference. That is where the opposition's concerns and the government's plan overlap. A compromise that designs the benefit carefully, so that it cushions households when the rate goes back up in 2029, would answer Mr Tamaki's warning and make the cut's end less of a cliff.

The funding should be settled in the same negotiation. A detailed list of spending reviews and other revenue, published before the upper house votes, would do more for the bill's credibility than any number of assurances. The prime minister has said she will not postpone the return of the rate. A funded, time-limited cut with a well-designed benefit attached would be a policy worth defending. An unfunded one would not.

ANALYSIS

Russia Has Made a Japanese Reporter a Hostage to Its Grievances. Tokyo Must Be Patient, Persistent and Firm

Moscow has ignored a treaty obligation to allow consular access; Japan's best leverage is solidarity with its partners and a refusal to bargain away principles
By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

A week after Russia's Federal Security Service detained a Hokkaido Shimbun reporter in the Sakhalin region and moved him to the Lefortovo detention centre in Moscow, Japanese diplomats had still not been allowed to see him. That alone tells us how Moscow means to handle the case.

The obligation

Under the consular convention signed by Japan and the Soviet Union, which Russia inherited, a detained national has the right to a consular visit within four days. Japan's ambassador, Akira Muto, went to the Russian Foreign Ministry on Monday to ask for an early meeting, and was told internal procedures were not ready. Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara called the refusal "extremely regrettable." It is worse than that. It is a breach of a treaty obligation.

The accusation

Russian authorities allege that the reporter, on the instructions of Japanese intelligence, gathered information on the number of soldiers mobilised from the Northern Territories and the Kuril Islands for the war in Ukraine. Japan denies that he was engaged in espionage. Asking how many local men have gone to fight is what journalists do. Espionage carries a sentence of up to 20 years in Russia.

A pattern

Russia has detained foreigners before and later released them in exchanges. On Tuesday, the American broadcaster ABC reported that Washington and Moscow were close to a deal to free several Americans held in Russia, including Stephen Hubbard, a former teacher who lived in Japan for 25 years. The lesson is uncomfortable: detainees can become bargaining chips.

What Japan should do

Atsuko Higashino of the University of Tsukuba argued in a commentary for Kyodo News that the reporter's early release should be Japan's overriding priority, and that the government should keep to principled diplomacy. Both halves of that advice matter.

The government should press for consular access at every level, as it is doing, and make the case publicly and repeatedly so that the reporter's name is not forgotten. It should work closely with Washington, whose State Department has condemned the detention and backed Japan's position that he is not a spy. And it should not offer to soften its sanctions or its support for Ukraine in exchange for his release. That would only encourage more arrests.

The wider relationship

Relations are at their lowest point in decades. Russia suspended peace treaty talks after Japan joined Western sanctions, and President Vladimir Putin visited the disputed island of Etorofu in August. Japanese journalists and businesspeople who travel to Russia, particularly to the Far East, should be under no illusion about the risks.

None of that changes the immediate task. A Japanese citizen is in a Moscow jail on a charge his government says is false. Bringing him home will take patience, persistence and firmness, and the government will have the public behind it.

ANALYSIS

Defence Must Be Paid For. Keidanren Is Right About Investment, but Wrong if It Expects Someone Else to Foot the Bill

The security documents due by the end of the year will raise the cost of Japan's defence; business, households and the government all have a share to carry
By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Yoshinobu Tsutsui, the chairman of Keidanren, did not mince his words on Tuesday. Asked about reports that a further rise in corporate tax is emerging as an option to pay for stronger defences, he said: "Basically, I am against it."

His argument deserves to be taken seriously. Keidanren has been urging companies to raise capital investment and research spending, and an extra tax, he said, would "pour cold water on that momentum." He also said that Japan effectively has the highest effective tax rate among the Group of Seven countries. Investment is what Japan's economy has lacked for three decades, and anything that discourages it has a cost.

The bill is coming

But the bill is coming regardless. The government intends to revise the three documents that set its security policy by the end of the year, and the five-year total for defence spending is set in one of them. Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said on Tuesday that he wanted defence-related infrastructure spending to cover more than the airports and ports it mainly targets now, possibly including railways. The Liberal Democrats and Ishin will discuss nuclear-powered submarines. None of this is cheap.

The government already decided in 2022 to raise corporate, tobacco and income taxes to fund the defence buildup agreed that year. Any further increase in spending will need further money.

Two promises that pull apart

The difficulty is that the government is also asking the Diet to cut the consumption tax on food at a cost of about 10 trillion yen, without saying how it will be paid for, while promising not to issue deficit-covering bonds. A government that cuts taxes with one hand and expands defence with the other has to explain how the arithmetic works. So far, it has not.

A fair share

There is no painless option. Spending reviews across the budget should come first, because a government asking for more money must show it is using what it has well. After that, the burden should be shared broadly, among companies, households and future taxpayers, in proportion to the benefits each receives from a secure country. Business, which depends on safe sea lanes, stable supply chains and a deterrent that keeps conflict at bay, has as much at stake as anyone.

Mr Tsutsui says that the business community is aiming for an "investment-led economy" and that the government's pursuit of a strong economy is in step with that goal. The government could meet him halfway, for instance by tying any corporate contribution to incentives for domestic investment, including in the defence industry itself.

What it should not do is postpone the question. The year-end budget talks are weeks away, and the security documents will set the scale of the spending. The public is entitled to see the bill and the plan to pay it at the same time.

ANALYSIS

The Weakest Link Is the Contractor. Japan's Breach Wave Shows Who Really Holds Our Personal Data

From a hometown tax portal to a police safety-check system and a national subsidy office, Tuesday's leaks ran through companies most people have never heard of
By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Look closely at Tuesday's list of data breaches and a pattern emerges. The damage did not come from the organisations people think they are dealing with. It came from the companies those organisations hired.

The contractors

The personal information of about 4.45 million users of Furusato Choice, the hometown tax donation portal, leaked through unauthorised access to systems run by TrustBank, the company that operates it. The data included users' estimated tax deductions.

Police forces in Tochigi, Gunma and Fukuoka said the details of thousands of officers and staff may have leaked from systems run by Arcadia, an Osaka Prefecture company that sends safety-check emails during disasters. Seven forces are affected, according to the Asahi Shimbun.

The land ministry said data on 23,918 people at 16,950 businesses registered with a national subsidy programme for energy-saving home renovations may have been exposed after unauthorised access at Hakuhodo, which runs the programme's secretariat.

And at Iwai Cosmo Securities, an attack on the systems of TradeWorks, the company that runs the brokerage's online trading system, placed unwanted buy and sell orders in seven customers' accounts. It may be the first case of actual damage in the finance and securities sector from the recent wave of attacks, although the firm has restored the accounts.

Why contractors

Outsourcing makes sense. A prefectural police force should not have to build its own mass-email system, and a city running hometown tax donations should not have to write its own software. But every contract also hands data to another organisation with its own defences, its own staff and its own weaknesses. Attackers know that a single service provider can open the door to dozens of clients at once.

What should change

The Liberal Democratic Party's cyber security headquarters called the wave of leaks a "grave crisis" on Tuesday and urged the government to set up a response headquarters at the Prime Minister's Office. That is a start. Three further steps would help.

First, public bodies should set binding security standards for contractors that handle personal data, and audit them, rather than relying on promises written into tenders. Second, organisations should collect and keep only the data they need. A disaster safety-check system does not need to hold more than contact details. Third, breach notices should tell people plainly what was taken and what they should do, as quickly as possible.

Our own part

Individuals have a part to play too: using different passwords for different services, turning on two-step verification and treating unexpected messages with suspicion.

But the main responsibility lies with those who hold the data. When citizens give their information to the state, or to a company acting for it, they have a right to expect that it will be protected all the way down the chain.

ANALYSIS

Seven Years for Six Lives Was the Most the Court Could Give. It Is the Law That Needs Looking At

The driver who watched a video at the wheel received the maximum for negligent driving; deliberate, prolonged phone use deserves a harder look from lawmakers
By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The Tsu District Court did all it could on Tuesday. It sentenced the former truck driver whose crash on the Shin-Meishin Expressway killed six people in March, five of them from one family, to seven years in prison, the maximum for negligent driving resulting in death, and exactly what prosecutors had demanded.

For many people, seven years for six lives will still feel too little. That is not the judge's fault. It is the law's.

Thirteen seconds

Prosecutors said the defendant had been watching a cooking video on TikTok while driving a large truck, and had also tried to fill in a driving log, taking their eyes off the road for about 13 seconds. At 80 kilometres an hour, a vehicle travels nearly 290 metres in that time. Presiding Judge Hiroaki Deguchi called it "an extremely careless way to drive," and said the victims "were in no way at fault."

Two categories

Japan's law on deaths and injuries caused by driving separates negligent driving, punishable by up to seven years, from dangerous driving, which carries up to 20 years when it causes death. Dangerous driving covers conduct such as driving while severely drunk, at a speed beyond control or while deliberately running red lights. Watching a video at the wheel, however long, is treated as negligence.

That distinction made sense when the main risk was a moment's inattention. It fits less well with a phone that can hold a driver's eyes for many seconds at a time, by choice, at motorway speed in a vehicle weighing many tonnes.

The case for review

Calls to revise the dangerous driving provisions have grown in recent years, and the government has been studying clearer standards for speeding and drink-driving. Prolonged, deliberate use of a screen while driving should be part of that review. Lawmakers could consider whether looking at a phone for a sustained period, at speed, should count as dangerous driving, or whether the ceiling for the most serious negligence should be raised.

Penalties for using a phone at the wheel were toughened in 2019, and they should be enforced more visibly, particularly on expressways.

The employers

Haulage companies have a part to play as well. In-cab cameras and driver monitoring systems that detect when a driver is looking away are now widely available. Operators of large trucks should be expected to use them, and to make clear to drivers that the phone stays out of reach while the vehicle is moving.

Nothing will bring back the six people who died on March 20. The least the law can do is reflect how seriously society now regards the choice to look at a screen instead of the road.

ANALYSIS

Kyoto's Citizen Fare Is Fair in Principle. It Must Be Simple to Use and Kind to the Commuters Who Keep the City Running

Charging non-residents 360 yen and residents 200 yen recognises who pays for the buses; the details will decide whether it works
By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Kyoto's plan to charge residents less than visitors on its city buses will strike some people as unwelcoming. It should not. The principle is sound.

Who pays

Residents pay the taxes that sustain the bus network and live with its crowding every day. Visitors use the same buses for a few days and leave. Under the plan Mayor Koji Matsui described on Tuesday, residents would pay 200 yen within the flat-fare zone and everyone else 360 yen, against the 230 yen everyone pays now. A visitor who rides four buses in a day would pay 520 yen more than today, a sum small beside the cost of a hotel room in the city, where the accommodation tax was raised in March.

Not about nationality

The distinction is between people who live in the city and people who do not, not between Japanese and foreigners. Tourists from Tokyo will pay the same as tourists from abroad. That matters, both legally and in principle. Himeji, which began charging non-residents 2,500 yen to enter its castle in March while residents pay 1,000 yen, drew the same line.

The commuters

The hardest question is one the city has not yet answered in public: what happens to the many people who work or study in Kyoto but live in neighbouring cities? They are not tourists, they ride the buses daily, and they contribute to the city's economy. If they end up paying 360 yen a ride, the plan will feel less like a measure against overtourism and more like a tax on commuters. Season tickets or other arrangements for regular users from outside the city deserve consideration.

Keep it simple

The other test is practical. Kyoto's buses are slow partly because boarding is slow. A system that requires drivers to check documents would make matters worse. Residents' fares should be applied automatically, through registered IC cards or a similar method, so that nobody has to explain themselves at the fare box.

Measure it

The city should also say how it will judge success: shorter boarding times, fewer residents left at the stop, revenue reinvested in more buses on the busiest routes. Kyoto has already tried express sightseeing buses at 500 yen and stopped selling its one-day bus pass. Each step should be measured and reported, so that other cities considering dual pricing can learn from Kyoto's experience rather than copy it blindly.

ANALYSIS

Done well, the citizen fare could become a model for how a city welcomes visitors without asking residents to carry the cost of their own popularity. Done badly, it will only add to the frustration. The assembly debate in November is the time to get the details right.

ANALYSIS

Japan's Gymnasts Have Booked Los Angeles With Two Years to Spare. The Federation Should Spend the Time Building Depth

A second straight world team title, despite a fall in the final rotation, shows the strength of the system; Russia's swift return to the podium is a warning

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Japan's men did not have a perfect night in Rotterdam. They struggled on the parallel bars, and Shohei Kawakami fell on the high bar in the final rotation. They still won the world team title with 251.928, retaining the crown they took in 2023 and becoming, with Russia and China, the first men's teams to qualify for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles.

That is the mark of a strong system: winning on a bad night.

The core

The team was built around two Olympic all-around champions, Daiki Hashimoto, who won in Tokyo, and Shinnosuke Oka, who won in Paris, supported by Fusuke Maeda, Kawakami and Ryosuke Doi. Japan also won the team gold in Paris, coming from behind to beat China.

The margins

The margins were thin. Russia, competing under the designation WG2, finished 1.599 points behind, and China 2.735 behind. Russia's gymnasts had been absent from the world stage under their own flag since the invasion of Ukraine, and they returned straight to the podium, their first world team medal since they won the title in 2019. Great Britain led after three rotations before errors cost them. On another night, the order could have been different.

The gift of time

Qualifying this early is valuable. The federation can now plan the next two years around Los Angeles rather than around qualifying for it. That time should be used to widen the base: giving younger gymnasts international experience, so that the team is not dependent on two stars, and investing in the events where Japan has been weakest.

The women

The women's team, fifth in qualifying, faces its final on Wednesday. Japan's women have not matched the men's success in recent years, and the gap between the top teams and the rest is large. The same patience and investment that built the men's programme should be applied to theirs.

Gymnastics has given Japan some of its proudest sporting moments, from the great teams of the 1960s and 1970s to the golds of Tokyo and Paris. A tradition like that is kept alive by building, not just by winning.

ANALYSIS

A 2.8 Trillion Yen Trade Deficit Is the Price of Energy Dependence. A Tax Cut Will Not Fix That

The half-year shortfall nearly doubled as the war in the Middle East lifted the cost of crude; the weak yen makes every barrel dearer

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

The Finance Ministry's figures released on Wednesday morning put a number on something households already feel. Japan's trade deficit for the April-September half of fiscal 2026 was 2.8184 trillion yen, up 98.8 per cent from a year earlier. Imports rose 20.4 per cent to 66.2754 trillion yen, driven above all by the soaring price of crude oil. It was the 11th half-year deficit in a row.

The causes

The proximate cause is the war in the Middle East. Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the route for much of Japan's crude, has pushed New York crude above 100 dollars a barrel this month. The weak yen, around 158 to the dollar, makes every barrel more expensive in yen terms.

The government has released oil from national stockpiles and subsidised fuel prices. Those measures soften the blow. They do not change the underlying

position: Japan imports nearly all of its oil and most of the rest of its energy.

The cushion

Japan still earns large sums from its investments overseas, which keep the broader current account in surplus. That is a genuine strength. But a country that relies on investment income to pay for its fuel is exposed to every shock in the energy market and every swing in the currency.

Markets are nervous

The Nikkei Stock Average fell 841 yen on Tuesday as doubts about the artificial intelligence boom hit chip stocks and oil's climb added to the gloom. On Wall Street, the Dow rebounded as oil paused on hopes of talks between Washington and Tehran. Investors are trading on headlines from the Gulf.

What would help

The food tax cut, whatever its merits, does nothing to reduce Japan's dependence on imported energy. Three things would. The first is restarting nuclear reactors that have passed the Nuclear Regulation Authority's safety checks, which would directly reduce fuel imports. The second is diversifying the sources and routes of oil and gas. The third is backing energy technology that can be built at home, such as the perovskite solar panels Panasonic plans to mass-produce in Shiga from 2029.

A stronger yen would help too, and the Bank of Japan meets on October 29 and 30. But monetary policy cannot do the work of energy policy. The trade figures are a reminder that the strong economy the government promises depends as much on energy security as on tax.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Today's Numbers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

1 YEAR: Sanae Takaichi's time as prime minister, as of Wednesday.

352: Seats held by the ruling coalition in the 465-seat House of Representatives.

62.6 PER CENT: Cabinet support in the Sankei-FNN poll; Kyodo News found 49.1 per cent.

10 TRILLION YEN: The estimated cost of cutting the consumption tax on food to 1 per cent for two years.

900 HPA: Typhoon Champi's central pressure at 6 a.m. on Wednesday.

2.8184 TRILLION YEN: Japan's trade deficit for April to September, up 98.8 per cent.

4.45 MILLION: Furusato Choice users whose personal information leaked.

114.94 MILLION YEN: The average price of a new condominium in greater Tokyo, April to September.

251.928: Japan's winning score in the men's team final in Rotterdam.

7 YEARS: The sentence for the Shin-Meishin crash, the legal maximum.

360 YEN: Kyoto's proposed bus fare for non-residents; residents would pay 200 yen.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Words in the News

By the Copy Desk

KEIGEN ZEIRITSU: The reduced consumption tax rate, now 8 per cent on food and non-alcoholic drinks, which the government wants to cut to 1 per cent.

TOKUREI KOSAI: Special deficit-covering bonds, which the government says it will not issue to pay for the food tax cut.

NEJIRE KOKKAI: A "twisted Diet," in which the ruling side controls one house but not the other.

RYOJI MENKAI: A consular visit, the right of a detained national to see diplomats from his or her own country.

KOKINKEI: The single form of prison sentence introduced in June 2025, replacing imprisonment with and without labour.

NIJU KAKAKU: Dual pricing, such as different fares for residents and non-residents.

SHINGI: The sacred wooden sticks thrown to the crowd at the Saidaiji Eyo festival in Okayama.

ASYMMETRIC AUTOCATALYSIS: A reaction in which a molecule of one "handedness" catalyses the formation of more of itself.

QUALIFYING OFFER: A one-year contract a major league club can offer a player about to become a free agent.

KOKUSUPO: The National Sports Festival, renamed from Kokutai in 2024.

STORM-FORCE LOW: A low-pressure system at sea forecast to produce winds of 48 to 63 knots.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

October 21 in History

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1520: Ferdinand Magellan reaches the strait at the southern tip of South America that now bears his name.

1600: The Battle of Sekigahara, by the Western calendar; Tokugawa Ieyasu's victory opens the way to the Tokugawa shogunate.

1805: The British fleet under Horatio Nelson defeats the French and Spanish at Trafalgar; Nelson is killed.

1943: Students called up for military service march in the rain at the Meiji Jingu Gaien stadium in Tokyo in a send-off rally.

1945: Women in France vote in a national election for the first time.

1967: Tens of thousands of people march on the Pentagon in protest against the Vietnam War.

1969: Willy Brandt becomes chancellor of West Germany.

1984: Niki Lauda wins his third Formula One world title by half a point.

1994: The United States and North Korea sign the Agreed Framework on the North's nuclear programme in Geneva.

2025: Sanae Takaichi becomes Japan's first woman prime minister.

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.

THURSDAY: The professional baseball draft.

AICHI, THROUGH SATURDAY: The Asian Para Games, with a fan event for medallists in central Nagoya until Friday.

OSAKA, THIS WEEK: The Kinoshita Group Japan Open women's tennis tournament at Utsubo.

ROTTERDAM: The World Gymnastics Championships continue, with the women's team final on Wednesday.

MILWAUKEE, FRIDAY NIGHT: The World Series opens, at 9 a.m. on Saturday in Japan.

YOKOHAMA, SATURDAY: The Japan Series opens at Yokohama Stadium, DeNA against SoftBank.

OKINAWA: The Okinawa Industry Festival has been cancelled because of Typhoon Champi.

SUNDAY: Fukushima governor and Naha mayoral elections.

MONDAY: Tomoka Nishiyama's news conference on whether to turn professional in shogi.

MORE INSIDE TODAY

Takaichi Marks a Year in Power With Her Rivals Kept Close and Her Party Firmly Behind Her, as the Food Tax Cut Opens Year Two — Page 1

Typhoon Champi Deepens to 900 Hectopascals and Heads for the Seas South of Okinawa; the Sakishima Islands Brace for Storm Winds — Page 1

The Takaichi Year in Dates — Page 2

From 8 Per Cent to 1 Per Cent for Two Years, Then a Benefit Tied to Income: What the Government's Tax Bill Would Do — Page 2

The Week Ahead — Page 2

The Cabinet After the September Reshuffle — Page 2

How the Liberal Democrats Choose Their Leader, and Why Next September Matters So Much to the Prime Minister — Page 2

Champi Is Forecast to Stay Violent Into Thursday, Pass Just West of Yonaguni Before Dawn Saturday and Turn North Toward Kyushu — Page 3

Champi at a Glance — Page 3

How Low Is 900 Hectopascals? The Readings Behind Japan's Most Destructive Storms, and the Record Set by Typhoon Tip — Page 3

What Ishigaki, Miyakojima and Yonaguni Can Expect, and How to Prepare Before the Winds Arrive on Friday — Page 3

Okinawa: Seas, Winds and Warnings — Page 4

How to Read a Typhoon Map: Forecast Circles, the Storm-Wind Area and Why the Circles Grow Larger Each Day — Page 4

The Weekend Poll at a Glance — Page 4

Democratic Party for the People Tables Its Own Bill, Warning the Food Tax Cut Ends in 'a Big Tax Rise for the Middle Class' — Page 4

Democratic Reform Association Wants 40,000 Yen for Everyone Now and a Benefit Tied to Income, Saying No Tax Cut Would Then Be Needed — Page 4

Three Answers to Rising Prices — Page 4

Kishida Tells Oxford Audience That a Russian Victory in Ukraine Would Tempt Others in East Asia to Change the Status Quo by Force — Page 4

Tax Cut Debate Opens in the Lower House: Takaichi Calls It Her 'Long-Held Wish' but Will Not Yet Say Who Pays or Who Benefits — Page 5

The Tax Bill: Day One at a Glance — Page 5

Komeito and the Democratic Reform Association Agree to Press Education Minister Seki Over His Party in a Diet Office Building — Page 5

The Security Documents at a Glance — Page 5

LDP Promises to Back Okinawa's New Governor With Money, as the Promotion Budget's 300 Billion Yen Line Becomes the Focus — Page 5

Yoshimura Will Seek a Third Term as Head of Osaka Ishin, Vowing to Throw All His Political Power Behind Next Spring's Referendum — Page 5

LDP and Ishin to Begin Talks in November on Rewriting Japan's Security Documents, With Nuclear Submarines and the Non-Nuclear Principles in Play — Page 6

Not Possessing, Not Producing, Not Permitting: The Three Non-Nuclear Principles, and Why Their Review Is on the Table — Page 6

Why Some in Tokyo Want Nuclear-Powered Submarines, and the Legal and Practical Questions Japan Would Have to Answer — Page 6

Eleven Parties Receive 7.88 Billion Yen in Subsidies; the Liberal Democrats Take Nearly Half, and a Party With One Lawmaker Gets 585 Million — Page 6

Koizumi Wants Defence-Related Spending to Cover More Than Airports and Ports, and Railways May Feature in the New Strategy — Page 6

Keidanren's Tsutsui 'Fundamentally Opposed' to a Further Corporate Tax Rise for Defence, Warning It Would Dampen Investment — Page 6

A Record 560 Applications for Defence Research Grants, With 47 Projects Chosen; the Defence Minister Sees a Change in Academia — Page 7

Ishin's First Minister Says His First Month 'Flew By' and Promises to Clear the Way for Self-Driving Cars and Other New Ventures — Page 7

Reconstruction Agency Official Calls Tokushima Request 'a Great Honour' and Is Said to Lean Toward Challenging Governor Gotoda — Page 7

Yokohama's New Mayor, a Former Airline Mechanic Turned Lawyer, Promises an 'Open Mayor's Office' After Her Predecessor's Harassment Scandal — Page 7

Japan Submits Its Nuclear Abolition Resolution to the United Nations for the 33rd Straight Year, Urging Nuclear Powers to Keep Their NPT Promise — Page 7

Quad Leaders to Meet in Manila Next Month, Rubio Says, in the First Summit of Japan, the U.S., Australia and India Since 2024 — Page 7

Pile-Driving at Henoko Halted for Four Months as Typhoon Season Keeps the Work Boats Away, Fuelling Doubts About the Schedule — Page 8

U.S. Troops in Keen Sword Are Under a Drinking Ban and Curfew Wherever They Train, the Defence Ministry Says — Page 8

Recovered Object Is Part of the Crashed Global Hawk, the Air Self-Defense Force Says, as Searches Continue Off Tottori — Page 8

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 say MMX has entered orbit; the probe was placed on its path to Mars by Tuesday's launch and is due to enter orbit around Mars in August 2027. They again give Teruaki Sato's batting average as .360; it was .306. They call Typhoon No. 30 Champi; its international name is Champi, and its grade is violent, the agency's highest, rather than extremely powerful. They spell the former agriculture minister's name Yanagi; it is Kazuo Yana. They describe a proposal to cap support payments at incomes of 3.5 million yen; the prime minister described annual incomes of 1 million to 3.5 million yen as one point of reference for the new benefit, with eligibility still to be decided. They repeat the figure of 250 billion yen for the additional investment in Rapidus; the industry ministry is seeking 400 billion yen. The dates given for mandatory driver monitoring and the new textbook guidelines are those corrected on Tuesday: September 2031 for new models, and fiscal 2030.

Not repeated today because they were reported in earlier editions, or concern earlier days: the rice harvest, the Nozomi fare rise, the kerosene subsidy, Keidanren's 80th anniversary, the regional banks, Subaru, Europe's car rules, support for games and anime, the crude oil bills, the Bank of Japan governor's remarks, the survey of companies hit by data leaks, the decision to post Teruaki Sato, the Climax Series results, the opening of the Asian Para Games, Takefusa Kubo, Shoki Oda, FIFA, the Levain Cup, judo, the Asian Games, the FIFA rankings, the sumo tour of Bangkok, the Tohto League, Typhoon No. 29, the Abashiri fire, gasoline prices, electronic warrants, the earthquake early warning, the SourceNext leak, sensitive personal data, the leap second, Anthropic's warning, the lawsuits against OpenAI, the start of active cyber defence and the Chinese AI tool found in attacks on about 80 companies, which were covered yesterday. China's third-quarter growth figure, released on Monday, is not reported because we could not confirm it. The 'lineage' items in the technology notes, such as VisiCalc, the NES, iTunes for Windows and ARPANET, are not October 21 anniversaries; today's history items are dated from other sources.

THE WEEK AHEAD

WED. 21: First anniversary of the Takaichi government; food tax cut talks among Komeito, the Democratic Reform Association and the Centrist Reform Alliance; Champi stays violent; women's team final at the gymnastics world championships. THU. 22: Baseball draft; telecoms cyber security panel meets; Jidai Matsuri and Kurama Fire Festival. FRI. 23: Champi closest to the Sakishima Islands; World Series opens in Milwaukee (Saturday morning, Japan time). SAT. 24: Japan Series opens in Yokohama; Champi passes near Yonaguni; Asian Para Games close. SUN. 25: Fukushima governor and Naha mayoral elections; Europe's clocks go back. MON. 26: Champi near Tsushima; Tomoka Nishiyama's news conference. OCT. 27: Israeli election. OCT. 27-28: Federal Reserve. OCT. 28: B.League board on Osaka. OCT. 29-30: Bank of Japan. NOV. 1: U.S. clocks go back. NOV. 3: U.S. midterms. NOV. 7: Osaka Ishin leadership vote. NOV. 8: Kyushu sumo tournament opens. MID-NOVEMBER: Quad summit, Manila. NOV. 22: Tengen Game 3, Busan. DEC. 12: Diet session ends.

TYPHOON AND MARINE ADVISORIES

6 a.m. Wednesday. No. 30, Champi: large, violent typhoon east of the Philippines, 17.6N, 130.9E; 900 hPa; winds 60 m/s, gusts 85; west-north-west at 25 km/h. Storm-force winds 280 km to the north-east and 220 km to the south-west; gale-force 650 km to the north-east and 500 km to the south-west. Forecast: 900 hPa and 60 m/s, violent, at 6 p.m. Wednesday; 905 hPa and 55 m/s, violent, at 6 a.m. Thursday; 940 hPa and 45 m/s, very strong, at 3 a.m. Friday; 965 hPa and 40 m/s, strong, at 3 a.m. Saturday, passing about 30 km west of Yonaguni on the centre line; 985 hPa and 30 m/s, severe tropical storm, at 3 a.m. Sunday; 998 hPa and 18 m/s, tropical storm, at 3 a.m. Monday, about 210 km west of Fukuoka. Ishigaki and Miyakojima inside the storm-wind area by 3 a.m. Friday; Yonaguni and Taipei by 3 a.m. Saturday. The Okinawa Meteorological Observatory says storms or warning-level heavy rain are possible in the Miyako region around Friday and in the Yaeyama region on

EDITORIAL & OPINION

THE JAPAN MORNING POST

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Friday and Saturday, with storm surges possibly reaching warning levels depending on the track. Weathernews expects waves of about 5 metres on Wednesday and 6 metres or more on Thursday around Okinawa. The 70 per cent forecast circle for 3 a.m. Monday, 460 km in radius, takes in all of Kyushu. Emergencies at sea: 118.

MARKET REFERENCE

Tuesday close: Nikkei 225 64,075.42, down 841.28; Topix 4,009.21, down 58.27; prime market volume about 2.149 billion shares. Morning close: Nikkei 64,512, down 404. New York, Tuesday: Dow 52,495.88, up 529.85; Nasdaq 26,424.82, down 6.07; WTI crude, November, \$101.79, down \$1.87. Dollar 158.07-09 yen at 5 p.m. in Tokyo; 158.12-22 yen late in New York. Euro 177.49-53 yen. Trade deficit, April-September: 2.8184 trillion yen. Federal Reserve meets October 27-28; Bank of Japan October 29-30.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

Front: Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at a podium, file photo, WPM Productions. Typhoon map, Japan and United States weather maps: supplied for this edition. The prime minister in the Diet and greeting a visitor, the Paris street scene, the briefing room at the Prime Minister's Office, the bear warning sign, the teppay illustration, the MMX illustration and Shugo Maki: file photos and images, WPM Productions. Tokyo Stock Exchange: photo by TG2 (CC). Nozomi train: photo by Akihiko Maeda. Cartoon: Taro Suzuki. U.S. government works are public domain and credited; agency news photographs are not reproduced.

SYMBOLS, UNITS AND TIME

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); at sea, in knots (1 knot is about 1.85 km/h). Pressure in hectopascals. Typhoon grades: strong from 33 m/s, very strong from 44 m/s and violent from 54 m/s; large when gales reach 500 km from the centre, very large from 800 km. 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 and Rome 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. Typhoon updates: the Japan Meteorological Agency's website and NHK broadcasts. In the Sakishima Islands and Okinawa, secure loose objects, stock water and food, charge phones and follow municipal evacuation information before the winds arrive. Anyone whose personal data may have leaked should change passwords, watch for phishing messages and check card statements.

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 Wednesday morning papers, including the Yomiuri Shimbun, the Asahi Shimbun, the Sankei Shimbun and the Nikkei; on Kyodo News, Jiji Press and NHK; on the Japan Meteorological Agency, the Okinawa Meteorological Observatory and Weathernews; on the Ministry of Finance, the Environment Ministry, the health ministry, the Real Estate Economic Institute and official statements in Japan and abroad; on nippon.com, KSB Setonaikai Broadcasting, International Gymnast Magazine, Reuters, ABC, ANSA, Al Jazeera and Fox News where cited; and on the U.S. National Weather Service for the American map.

READER SERVICES

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TOMORROW'S EDITION

Thursday: Typhoon Champi's approach to the Sakishima Islands, the second day of questioning on the food tax cut, the opposition parties' talks on an alternative, the women's team final in Rotterdam, the Kobe shooting suspect's rearrest, the preview of the professional baseball draft and the Japan Series. Also: Wednesday night's Champions League matches, including Bayern Munich against Arsenal and Real Madrid against RB Leipzig, the second round of the Japan Open in Osaka, and the fifth day of the Asian Para Games in Aichi.

MORE INSIDE TODAY (CONTINUED)

Education Ministry Asks the University of Tokyo to Examine How It Chose Its Next President, a First for Any University — Page 8

All 47 Prefectures Recommend Pay Rises for Their Staff for the Fifth Year Running, With Increases Above 3 Per Cent in 36 — Page 8

France Has a Quiet Night Under Curfews, and the Prime Minister Promises More of Them Wherever They Are Needed — Page 9

Italy Makes Violence at Demonstrations a Crime Punishable by Five Years in Prison, After Weekend Looting by Young People in Milan — Page 9

Japan Demands Russia Free the Hokkaido Shimbun Reporter at Once, Calling the Refusal of Consular Access 'Extremely Regrettable' — Page 10

What Consular Access Means, and Why Russia's Refusal to Let Japanese Diplomats See a Detained Reporter Matters — Page 10

Trump's Approval Falls to a Record Low of 31 Per Cent in a Reuters Poll, and Democrats Open a 12-Point Lead for the Midterms — Page 11

Trump Rallies His Base in North Carolina, Where Republicans Trail in a Senate Race They Need, Two Weeks Before the Midterms — Page 11

Nikkei Slides 841 Yen as Doubts Over the AI Boom Hit Chipmakers and Oil's Climb Weighs; SoftBank Group Alone Drags the Index Down 200 Yen — Page 12

Japan's Trade Deficit Nearly Doubles to 2.8 Trillion Yen in the First Half, as War in the Middle East Drives Up the Cost of Crude — Page 12

JR East Launches 'teppay,' Turning the Mobile Suica App Into a Code-Payment Wallet With a 300,000-Yen Limit and a 20 Per Cent Rebate Campaign — Page 13

Markets at a Glance — Page 13

Fair Trade Commission Raids Pet Food Importer Suspected of Stopping Shops From Discounting Its 'Select Balance' Dog and Cat Food — Page 14

Board of Audit Finds Flat 35 Mortgages Worth 3 Billion Yen Used for Private Lodging, Shops and Offices in Breach of the Rules — Page 14

'We Kept Our Promise': MMX Begins Its Long Cruise to Mars as JAXA Plans to Hand H3 Launches to Mitsubishi Heavy From 2027 — Page 15

MMX: After the Launch — Page 15

My Number Card on Android Phones Can Now Be Used to Prove Identity and Age in Person, Without Carrying the Card — Page 16

Tokyo Court Rules a 23-Second Owl Video Is a Creative Work and Orders Google to Stop a Copy Being Shown on YouTube — Page 16

1965: Comet Ikeya-Seki, Found by Two Japanese Amateurs, Grazes the Sun and Becomes One of the Brightest Comets in a Thousand Years — Page 17

Rain Spreads Over the North and Hokuriku as Highs Climb Back to 30 Degrees and More From Nagoya and Osaka to Takamatsu and Naha — Page 18

A Storm-Force Low Brings Gusty Winds and Coastal Flooding to the East Coast, While Rain Reaches Los Angeles and Phoenix Faces Storms — Page 19

A Month After Typhoon No. 25 Killed 15, a Chiba Rail Line Is Still Cut and Families in Yotsukaido Cannot Go Home — Page 20

Experts Will Help 11 Local Governments Prepare for Bears, From Noboribetsu in Hokkaido to a Mountain Village in Okayama — Page 21

Kyoto Will Ask Its Assembly to Approve Cheaper Bus Fares for Residents Than for Visitors, a First for Public Transport in Japan — Page 22

Two Former Hawks Relish Their Shot at SoftBank as DeNA Prepare at Yokohama Stadium for Saturday's Japan Series Opener — Page 23

Scoreboard — Page 24

Uchijima Outlasts Shibahara in Three Sets to Reach the Second Round of the Japan Open; Sakatsume Falls to Boulter — Page 25

A Year of Consolidation Has Given Takaichi a Strong Hand. Year Two Must Show It Is Being Played for the Country — Page 26

Keeping Her Rivals Close Has Bought Takaichi a Quiet Year. The Party Vote in 2027 Will Ask a Harder Question — Page 27

Russia Has Made a Japanese Reporter a Hostage to Its Grievances. Tokyo Must Be Patient, Persistent and Firm — Page 28

Japan's Gymnasts Have Booked Los Angeles With Two Years to Spare. The Federation Should Spend the Time Building Depth — Page 29