

★ PHP FLAWS: PATCH NOW ★ CHAMPI NEARS SAKISHIMA ★ TOKYO, OSAKA LATEST 30°C ON RECORD ★ TAKAICHI: PROMISES KEPT ★ WOMEN'S GYMNASTS WIN BRONZE ★ DRAFT DAY ★

Critical Flaws in PHP, the Language Behind Seven in Ten Websites, Send Banks, Railways and Ministries Rushing to Patch or Pull Sites Offline

Fixes were released at 11 p.m. on Wednesday, Japan time, a day early after details leaked; the prime minister says taking a site down is an effective stopgap, and the FBI warns that confidential data and networks are at risk

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Remote Code Execution Risk in PHP

Critical vulnerabilities allow attackers to execute arbitrary code remotely.

```
01 function handleRequest($input) {
02     $file = $input['file'];
03     $cmd = 'convert ' . $file . ' output.png';
04     shell_exec($cmd);
05     // ...
06 }
07
08 if (isset($_GET['action'])) {
09     $action = $_GET['action'];
10     if ($action == 'preview') {
11         handleRequest($_GET);
12     }
13 }
```

CVE-2026-109618
Improper input sanitization in shell command construction.
Impact: Remote Code Execution

CVE-2026-109619
Insufficient validation of user-supplied action parameter.
Impact: Remote Code Execution

SAFE VERSIONS

✓ 8.5.12

✓ 8.4.27

✓ 8.3.36

✓ 8.2.35

An illustration of the remote code execution risk in PHP and the four fixed versions, 8.5.12, 8.4.27, 8.3.36 and 8.2.35, released at 11 p.m. on Wednesday, Japan time. The code and the descriptions of the two flaws on the illustration are illustrative: according to the PHP security advisory, CVE-2026-109618 involves out-of-memory handling and CVE-2026-109619 state left over between requests. (File image: WPM Productions)

Banks, railways, a government ministry and some of the country's best-known internet services suspended websites and online services on Wednesday night after two critical flaws were found in PHP, the programming language that runs a large share of the world's websites, and governments in Japan, the United States and Europe urged organisations to install fixes without delay.

The PHP project released the corrected versions, PHP 8.5.12, 8.4.27, 8.3.36 and 8.2.35, at 11 p.m. on Wednesday, Japan time. The Information-technology Promotion Agency, the industry ministry's security body known as IPA, announced the problem on Wednesday and urged companies to apply the fixes promptly, warning that the flaws could be exploited in attacks. Experts say a successful attack could lead to the theft of information and, in some cases, to the destruction of systems.

PHP is used by 69.3 per cent of websites whose server-side language is known, according to the web survey firm W3Techs. It is the language behind popular publishing systems such as WordPress, Drupal and Joomla, and behind countless company sites, online shops and booking pages.

What the flaws do

The two vulnerabilities, registered as CVE-2026-109618 and CVE-2026-109619, both allow an attacker who is not logged in to run commands on a server from across the internet, a class of flaw known as remote code execution. The PHP security team rates each at 9.2 out of 10 on the CVSS 4.0 scale. Identifiers that circulated before the release carried a score of 10.0, which the PHP Foundation says was incorrect.

According to the project's advisory, the first flaw arises when PHP runs out of memory while the internal data for a web request is only partly set up; clean-up code can then treat that half-built data as valid. The second arises because internal state belonging to one request can survive after the memory behind it has been freed, so that a later request handled by the same worker process may use it. PHP lists memory disclosure as a further confirmed effect of the second flaw.

Every installation of PHP that serves web requests is affected, the project says, including PHP-FPM, Apache with mod_php, php-cgi, FrankenPHP and LiteSpeed. It rates mod_php, a common way of running PHP inside the Apache web server, as the highest risk, because a demonstrated exploit can be triggered before any of a site's own code has run. The researchers who found the flaws trace the earliest

affected code back to PHP 5.4.0.

Older branches are a particular worry. PHP no longer supports version 8.1 or earlier, and the security team has published only minimal source fixes for versions 7.4 to 8.1. Versions 5.4 to 7.3 have reached the end of their lives and will receive no fix from the project, though some Linux distributions and long-term support vendors provide their own.

A leak, then a race

The release was brought forward by a day. The vulnerability identifiers began circulating on the discussion site Hacker News and on social media on Tuesday, and the PHP security team then announced that a security release would follow at 14:00 GMT on Wednesday. The PHP Foundation has said the release was originally planned for Thursday. Linux distributions and long-term support vendors received the fixes in advance.

The American web security company Cloudflare said it was already seeing early attacks and had deployed firewall rules for its customers, including those on free plans, while warning that the rules were only a stopgap. The security firm watchTowr said it had reproduced both flaws and was seeing attempts to exploit them. The PHP security team said that when it published its advisory it had not identified a working exploit among the proof-of-concept code that appeared online after the leak.

'One effective step'

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi posted on X on Wednesday night that companies should apply the fixes promptly, and that where that is difficult, temporarily suspending a website is one effective way of reducing the risk. The National Cybersecurity Office at the Cabinet Secretariat posted the same advice, warned that websites could be compromised unless the developers' fixes were properly applied, and called for an early response. A government official said the situation was being watched closely.

Banks and railways act

The Japanese Bankers Association said on Wednesday night that it had found no effect on the interbank settlement system it oversees. Several institutions nevertheless acted as a precaution. Shizuoka Bank temporarily halted its internet banking service on Wednesday, and The 77 Bank, based in Sendai, and Mizuho Bank suspended some services. MUFG Bank suspended some services on Thursday morning. Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities stopped its identity checks for new

Continued on Page 2

TYPHOONS

Champi Bears Down on the Sakishima Islands With Gusts of 80 Metres a Second; Storm Winds Could Reach Miyakojima, Ishigaki and Yonaguni by Friday Morning

The weather agency warns of winds strong enough to bring down some houses and urges strict caution against storms, high waves and landslides; the typhoon is forecast to weaken as it moves north and could affect western Japan early next week

By the Weather Desk

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, a large and violent storm, was moving north-west toward the Sakishima Islands of Okinawa Prefecture on Thursday morning, and the Japan Meteorological Agency warned that it could bring winds strong enough to bring down some houses.

At 6 a.m. the centre was south of Okinawa at 20.2 degrees north, 126.5 degrees east, moving north-west at 20 km/h. The central pressure was 905 hectopascals and the maximum sustained wind near the centre 55 metres a second, with gusts of up to 80 metres a second. Winds of storm force, 25 metres a second or more, extended 280 km to the north-east and 220 km to the south-west.

The agency expects Champi to move into the East China Sea between Friday and Saturday as a very strong or strong typhoon and to approach the Sakishima Islands. It has called for strict caution against storms, high waves and landslides, and for preparations to be finished early.

Gales already arriving

Miyakojima and Ishigaki, about 520 km north-north-west of the centre, were already inside the area of gale-force winds of 15 metres a second or more at 6 a.m., according to the agency's bulletin. Gale-force winds reached 650 km to the north-east of the centre.

Weakening from here

The typhoon has passed its peak. The agency forecasts that it will weaken to a very strong typhoon by Thursday evening, with a pressure of 925 hectopascals and winds of 50 metres a second at 6 p.m., and that it will be about 290 km south-south-east of Yonaguni at 6 a.m. on Friday at 940 hectopascals.

At 3 a.m. on Saturday it is forecast to be a strong typhoon about 70 km west-south-west of Yonaguni, with a pressure of 965 hectopascals and winds of 40 metres a second. It is expected to become a severe tropical storm over the East China Sea by 3 a.m. on Sunday, a tropical storm by 3 a.m. on Monday and an extratropical low over the Sea of Japan by early Tuesday.

Who is in the path

Ishigaki, Miyakojima and Yonaguni are all inside the area that could have storm-force winds by 6 a.m. on Friday, and Taipei by 3 a.m. on Saturday. By 3 a.m. on Sunday, the last time for which the forecast gives storm winds, the area that could have them comes to within about 120 km of Naha.

On the forecast centre line, Champi passes about 50 km north-north-west of Fukuoka on Monday morning as a weakening tropical storm, and the agency says it is expected to turn north-east and could affect western Japan. The circle in which the centre has a 70 per cent chance of lying at 3 a.m. on Tuesday has a radius of 460 km and takes in both Osaka and Tokyo, by which time Champi is forecast to be an extratropical low.

A slower, wider storm

The forecast has shifted since Wednesday, when the centre line took Champi about 30 km west of

TODAY'S INDEX	
Typhoons	3-4
Politics	4-8
International	8-11
Economy	11-12
Business	11-13
Technology	14-16
Society	16-21
Sports	21-24
Culture	24-25
Editorial & Opinion	26-29
Crossword	25
Weather	17

WEATHER — TOKYO

25°C

Low 21°C · Sunny, some cloud

10°

Sapporo

25°

Osaka

23°

Fukuoka

28°

Naha

Cooler air after Wednesday's record heat: 25°C in Tokyo and Osaka, 10°C with rain in Sapporo. Naha has rain at times as Typhoon No. 30, Champi, nears Yonaguni. Full weather, Page 17.

TODAY IN BRIEF

- Cyber: critical PHP flaws send banks, railways and a ministry offline; fixes released at 11 p.m.
- Typhoon: Champi, at 905 hPa with gusts of 80 m/s, nears the Sakishima Islands; storm winds possible by Friday.
- Weather: Tokyo and Osaka have their latest 30-degree days on record; cooler air arrives today.
- Politics: Takaichi says keeping promises is her mission; Komeito says tax debate needs numbers.
- Markets: the Nikkei rebounds 545 yen; foreign visitors fall but spend a record 7 trillion yen.
- Sports: Japan's women win world team bronze, their first in 60 years; the draft is today.

PHP FIXES

- 8.5.12, 8.4.27, 8.3.36, 8.2.35.
- Released 11 p.m. Wednesday.
- Severity: 9.2 of 10.
- Can't patch? Go offline.

TODAY

- Baseball draft, 4:50 p.m.
- Jidai Matsuri in Kyoto.
- Tokyo 25, sunny, some cloud.
- Champi at 905 hPa.

MARKETS

Nikkei 225 (Wed)	64,621.24 ▲ 545.82
Topix (Wed)	4,043.73 ▲ 34.52
Dow (Wed)	52,856.09 ▲ 360.21
Nasdaq (Wed)	26,702.86 ▲ 278.04
WTI crude (Wed)	\$97.15 ▼ 0.67
Yen (Wed, 5 p.m.)	158.12-14 per \$
Bank of Japan	meets Oct. 29-30

INSIDE

- PHP flaws: what to do, Page 1.
- Champi nears Sakishima, Page 3.
- Takaichi: promises kept, Page 5.
- Tax bill: show the numbers, Page 6.
- France's yields top 5%, Page 9.
- Nikkei rebounds 545 yen, Page 12.
- Record late heat, Page 19.
- Sato thanks Koshien, Page 22.
- Women's gymnastics bronze, Page 22.
- Editorial: whose rules?, Page 26.

THE WEEK

- Fri. 23: Champi near Sakishima.
- Sat. 24: Japan Series opens.
- Sun. 25: Kikuka Sho.
- Oct. 29-30: Bank of Japan.

THE TROPICS

- Champi: 905 hPa, violent.
- Near Yonaguni early Saturday.

SUBSCRIBE

Home delivery and digital access. ¥3,900/month digital; ¥6,800/month print and digital. www.japanmorningpost.com/subscribe

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

Published daily by WPM Productions. Owner: Paul Carter. Managing Editor: Dixon Yan. Est. 1887. 1-2-3 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0004.

Continued on Page 2

www.japanmorningpost.com | newsdesk@japanmorningpost.com | 1-2-3 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0004

© 2026 WPM Productions | Page 1 of 29

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

FROM PAGE 1

Critical Flaws in PHP, the Language Behind Seven in Ten Websites, Send Banks, Railways and Ministries Rushing to Patch or Pull Sites Offline

Continued from Page 1

customers, and Daiwa Securities paused services including the opening of accounts.

Keihan Holdings took its website offline on Wednesday night, and Hanshin Electric Railway said it would do the same. Keio Corp. said it was preparing to apply the fix to systems that use PHP, and Tokyu Corp. said each of its divisions was checking whether it was affected. The health ministry suspended a website on nursing care, the City of Sapporo suspended its official website, and the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies said it was checking its servers.

Sakura Internet, a data centre and hosting operator, stopped some functions of its services, and BASE, which lets people set up their own online shops, began emergency maintenance, saying no unauthorised access had been confirmed. The illustration and social media service pixiv also paused its service as a precaution. The companies expect to bring their services back once the fixes have been applied.

Warnings abroad

In Washington, the FBI warned on Wednesday that confidential data and networks could be compromised. It advised that programs that could not be updated at once should be disconnected from the internet, and that computers should be watched for suspicious activity, such as files being downloaded unexpectedly. The National Security Agency asked all organisations in the United States to respond immediately.

Britain's National Cyber Security Centre asked organisations to act as soon as the fixes were released and advised taking offline any system that could not be fixed at once. France's national cyber security agency issued an emergency alert. The European Commission's cyber security team, CERT-EU, said organisations that could not apply the fixes should consider cutting their systems off from the internet.

Some governments did exactly that. Finland's government information technology agency blocked

its public-facing website as a precaution, according to Reuters. The Dutch National Cyber Security Centre took its own website offline, and the Port of Rotterdam, Europe's largest port, closed its website on Wednesday, apparently because of the flaws.

Found with the help of AI

The flaws were found with the help of artificial intelligence. OpenAI said a cyber security company had discovered the vulnerabilities with the support of generative AI. The PHP Foundation credited the security firms Calif and Wiz and OpenAI, among others, and both Calif and Wiz have said they used AI models in their research. Wiz said the flaws had existed for decades but that exploiting them required a very complicated chain of steps, a barrier that the most advanced AI models had substantially lowered.

Calif says it confirmed that the flaws could be used to take over specific versions of WordPress, Drupal, Joomla and Magento without logging in. The exploit chain has been nicknamed php2shell.

What to do

PHP says updating is the only complete fix. Until that is done, it suggests settings that reduce the risk but do not remove it, including lifting the memory limit so that applications cannot override it and switching off a session feature that reports the progress of uploads, followed by a restart of every PHP worker. Companies that run sites through hosting services should check whether their provider has applied the fixes, and anyone who runs an older, unsupported version of PHP should plan an upgrade.

Security researchers estimate that more than a million servers on the internet could be vulnerable. Experts warn that the hardest cases will be forgotten systems: old company sites, small online shops and devices with PHP inside that nobody remembers to update.

FROM PAGE 1

Champi Bears Down on the Sakishima Islands With Gusts of 80 Metres a Second; Storm Winds Could Reach Miyakojima, Ishigaki and Yonaguni by Friday Morning

Continued from Page 1

Yonaguni before dawn on Saturday. It now passes farther west, but the typhoon's large wind field means the Sakishima Islands will spend a long time inside its gales.

Rain and seas

The Okinawa Meteorological Observatory said on Wednesday 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 depending on the track. Residents should secure loose objects, stock water and food, charge phones and follow municipal evacuation information before the winds arrive.

Record winds

Gusts of 80 metres a second are rare even in the Sakishima Islands, which lie in one of Japan's busiest typhoon corridors. Yonaguni recorded a gust of 81.1 metres a second during Typhoon Dujuan in September 2015, and Miyakojima's record, 85.3 metres a second, was set by the second Miyakojima typhoon in September 1966.

TECHNOLOGY

The PHP Flaws at a Glance

By the Technology Desk

THE FLAWS: CVE-2026-109618, in which running out of memory mid-request can leave half-built data that clean-up code treats as valid; and CVE-2026-109619, in which state left over from one request can be used by a later one after its memory is freed.

SETTLEMENT: The Japanese Bankers Association said it had found no effect on the interbank settlement system.

SECURITIES: Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities stopped identity checks for new customers; Daiwa Securities paused account opening and some other services.

RAILWAYS: Keihan Holdings took its website offline; Hanshin Electric Railway said it would do the same; Keio said it was preparing to apply the fix; Tokyu said its divisions were checking whether they were affected.

GOVERNMENT: The health ministry suspended a website on nursing care.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: The City of Sapporo suspended its official website.

UNIVERSITIES: The Tokyo University of Foreign Studies said it was checking its servers.

HOSTING: Sakura Internet stopped some functions of its services.

ONLINE SHOPS: BASE began emergency maintenance and said no unauthorised access had been confirmed.

CREATORS: The illustration-sharing service pixiv paused its service as a precaution.

WHAT NEXT: The companies say services will return once the fixes are applied; check each company's website or app for notices.

TECHNOLOGY

What PHP Is, and Why a Flaw in It Reaches So Far

The language began as one programmer's tools for his home page and now quietly assembles a large share of the pages people read every day

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

PHP is a programming language that runs on web servers. When someone opens a page on a site built with it, the server runs a PHP program that fetches what it needs, from a database or elsewhere, and assembles the page before sending it to the reader's browser. The reader never sees the PHP itself, only the result.

It began in 1994 as a set of tools written by the Danish-Canadian programmer Rasmus Lerdorf to manage his personal home page, and its name originally stood for Personal Home Page. It now stands, recursively, for PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor.

From hobby to backbone

Mr Lerdorf released his tools to the public in 1995. Two Israeli developers, Andi Gutmans and Zeev Suraski, rewrote the core of the language for PHP 3 in 1998, and their engine has been developed ever since by a community of volunteers and companies.

The language spread because it was easy to learn, free and widely supported by cheap hosting services. Facebook was first built in PHP, and the software behind Wikipedia, MediaWiki, is written in it.

WordPress and the rest

Much of PHP's reach comes from content management systems, the software people use to run sites without writing code themselves. WordPress, first released in 2003, is the best known; Drupal, Joomla and the online shop system Magento are also written in PHP. Countless company websites, local government pages, blogs and online stores sit on top of them.

Seven in ten

That is why the survey firm W3Techs counts PHP on 69.3 per cent of the websites whose server-side language it can identify. Many of those sites are small and run by people who are not programmers, which is part of what worries security specialists: a site owner may not know which version of PHP their site uses, or that it uses PHP at all.

Versions and support

A new version of PHP is released each year, usually towards the end of the year. Each receives bug fixes and then security fixes for a limited period, after which it receives nothing. On Wednesday the project fixed the four supported branches, 8.2 to 8.5.

The foundation

Since 2021, development has been supported by the PHP Foundation, a non-profit body funded by companies and individuals that pays developers to work on the language. Its role in this week's release, including thanks to the researchers who found the flaws, shows how much of the web's maintenance

now depends on such arrangements.

Why memory bugs matter

The two flaws fixed this week lie deep in how PHP handles memory between and during requests, not in any single website's code. That is why so many organisations were affected at once, and why patching PHP itself, rather than a site, is the remedy.

Where to look

Owners of WordPress sites can see their PHP version on the dashboard's site health page. Others can ask their hosting company, which in most cases is responsible for updating PHP on shared servers, or run the command `php -v` on their own server.

TECHNOLOGY

Remote Code Execution: Why the Most Serious Kind of Flaw Earns a Score Above 9

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Security flaws are graded by what an attacker can do with them. A flaw that lets someone read a little extra information is serious; a flaw that lets them run their own commands on someone else's computer is among the worst there is.

That second kind is called remote code execution, and both of the PHP flaws disclosed this week fall into it. Remote means the attacker can be anywhere on the internet. Code execution means the server can be made to run instructions of the attacker's choosing.

Without a password

What made this week's flaws especially dangerous is that no login is needed. An attacker does not have to steal a password or trick an employee. A specially crafted web request, sent like any other visit to a site, can be enough.

What follows

Once an attacker can run code on a web server, they can read files and databases the server can reach, plant programs that let them return later, change pages to spread malware to visitors, or use the server as a foothold to move deeper into a company's network. Ransomware gangs have used earlier PHP flaws in exactly that way.

How the scores work

The Common Vulnerability Scoring System, or CVSS, rates flaws from 0 to 10 by how easy they are to exploit and how much damage they can do. Scores of 9.0 and above are rated critical. The PHP security team gave each of this week's flaws 9.2 under the latest version of the system.

Workers and memory

Busy websites do not start a new program for every visitor. They keep a pool of worker processes running and hand each new request to one of them. That makes sites fast, but it also means that anything one request leaves behind in a worker's memory could affect the next. One of this week's flaws exploits exactly that.

Why mod_php is worse

In the `mod_php` arrangement, PHP runs inside the Apache web server itself. The PHP project says the flaw can be triggered there before any of a site's own code runs, so even a carefully written site offers no protection until PHP is updated.

Patching is not the end

Installing a fix closes the door but does not tell an organisation whether someone came in before it was closed. Specialists advise checking logs and watching for unusual activity, as the FBI urged on Wednesday, especially on servers that were exposed for hours after the details became public.

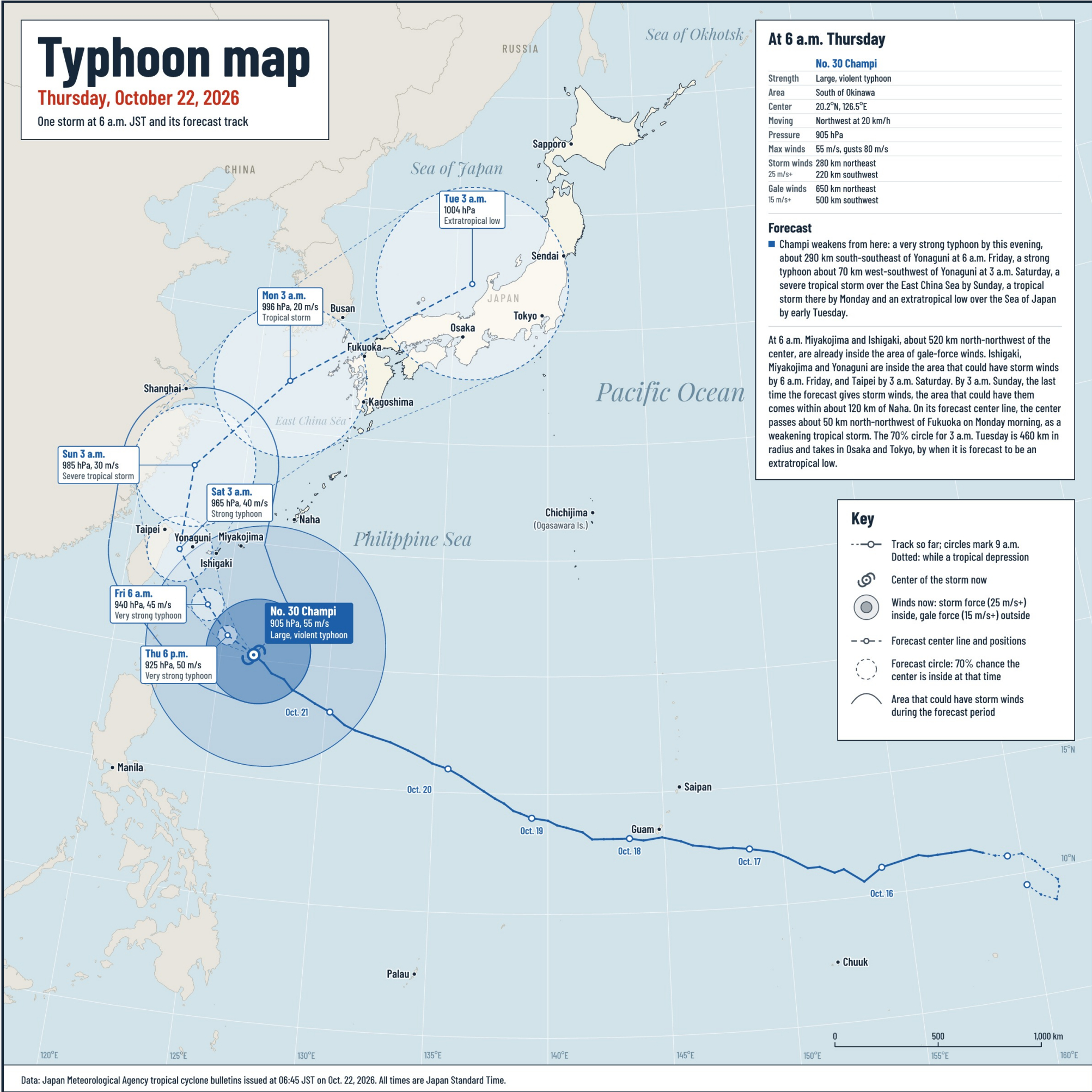
The leak problem

Normally, flaws are fixed quietly and announced together with the fix, so that defenders and attackers learn of them at the same time. When details leak first, as happened this week, attackers get a head start, which is why the PHP project brought its release forward by a day.

Who to call

Small businesses that are unsure whether their sites are affected can ask the company that built or hosts them. The Information- technology Promotion Agency runs a consultation desk and publishes guidance on its website, and police cybercrime units accept reports of suspected attacks.

TYPHOONS



TYPHOONS

Miyakojima

Miyakojima, about 300 km south-west of Naha, is a flat coral island with no mountains or rivers, which leaves it exposed to wind and storm surges. Its city, which includes several neighbouring islands, has a population of about 55,000.

Ishigaki

Ishigaki, more than 100 km farther south-west, is the hub of the Yaeyama Islands and the gateway to smaller islands such as Iriomote and Taketomi. The city has a population of about 50,000.

Yonaguni

Yonaguni, the westernmost point of Japan, is about 110 km from Taiwan, and on a clear day the Taiwanese mountains can be seen from it. Fewer than 2,000 people live there. The island has a Ground Self-Defense Force coastal observation unit.

Typhoon alley

Typhoons that form over the Philippine Sea often pass through these waters on their way to Taiwan, China or the East China Sea. Because the islands are small and isolated, ferries and flights stop well before a storm arrives and supplies can run short if it lingers.

Building for wind

Many homes are built of reinforced concrete with flat roofs to withstand typhoons. Even so, prolonged storms can cut electricity and water, and slow-moving typhoons have kept islands inside storm-force winds for more than a day.

Long exposure

Champi's large wind field means the islands could be inside its gales from Thursday into the weekend. The Okinawa Meteorological Observatory has said storms or warning-level heavy rain are possible in the Miyako region around Friday and in the Yaeyama region on Friday and Saturday.

The tourist season

Autumn is a busy season for visitors to the islands, many of whom come for diving and beaches. Travellers should check with airlines and ferry operators before setting out and expect cancellations as the typhoon approaches.

Getting help

Municipal offices in Miyakojima, Ishigaki and Yonaguni issue evacuation information through local broadcasts, websites and emergency mail. In an emergency, call 119 for fire and ambulance, 110 for police and 118 for the coast guard.

TYPHOONS

Before the Wind Arrives: A Checklist for the Islands and for Kyushu Next Week

By Aiko Tanaka | Society Correspondent

The time to prepare for a typhoon is before the first gales, when it is still safe to be outdoors. The weather agency is urging people in the Sakishima Islands to finish their preparations early, and the advice applies to Kyushu and western Japan if Champi follows its forecast track early next week.

Outside the home

Bring in or tie down anything that could be blown away: potted plants, bicycles, laundry poles and garden furniture. Close storm shutters, or tape and cover windows where there are none, and clear drains and gutters so rain can run off.

Inside

Store drinking water, at least three litres per person per day, and enough food for several days. Fill a bath with water for flushing toilets in case the supply stops.

Power

Charge mobile phones and spare batteries, and keep a torch and a battery radio within reach. Power cuts are common in strong typhoons and can last for days on small islands.

Medicine and documents

Keep regular medicines, glasses, important documents and some cash together in a bag you can carry if you have to leave.

Know where to go

Check your municipality's hazard map for flooding, storm surges and landslides, and know the way to the nearest evacuation centre. Evacuation is not only a matter of going to a centre; staying with relatives in a safer place, or moving to an upper floor, may be the

better choice.

Level 4 means go

Japan's evacuation alerts run from Level 1 to Level 5. At Level 4, an evacuation order, everyone in the area at risk should leave. At Level 5, emergency safety measures, a disaster may already be under way and people should do whatever they can to save their lives.

During the storm

Stay indoors, away from windows. Do not go out to check on fields, boats or rivers. The calm of a typhoon's eye can be followed within minutes by winds from the opposite direction.

Travel

Flights and ferries to and from the islands are likely to be cancelled. Check operators' announcements before going to an airport or port.

After it passes

Beware of fallen power lines, damaged buildings and swollen rivers, and of landslides, which can happen after the rain has stopped.

TECHNOLOGY

How Governments Responded

By the International Desk

JAPAN: Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi urged prompt fixes and said suspending a site is one effective way to cut the risk.

JAPAN'S CYBER OFFICE: The National Cybersecurity Office warned that sites could be compromised without the fixes.

IPA: The industry ministry's security agency urged companies to apply the fixes released at 11 p.m. on Wednesday.

UNITED STATES, FBI: Warned that confidential data and networks could be compromised; disconnect what cannot be updated.

UNITED STATES, NSA: Asked all organisations in the country to respond immediately.

BRITAIN: The National Cyber Security Centre urged prompt action and advised taking unfixable systems offline.

FRANCE: The national cyber security agency issued an emergency alert.

EUROPEAN UNION: CERT-EU advised organisations that cannot patch to consider cutting their systems off from the internet.

FINLAND: The government's information technology agency blocked its public website, according to Reuters.

NETHERLANDS: The National Cyber Security Centre took its own website offline, and the Port of Rotterdam closed its site.

THE MESSAGE: Patch first; if you cannot, disconnect until you can.

POLITICS

The Week Ahead

By the Political Desk

THU. 22: Professional baseball draft, 4:50 p.m.; Jidai Matsuri in Kyoto; UN membership photo exhibition opens in Shibuya.

THU. 22: Nobuta Group Masters GC Ladies golf opens in Hyogo; Champi becomes a very strong typhoon.

FRI. 23: Champi about 290 km south-south-east of Yonaguni at dawn; storm winds possible in Miyako and Yaeyama.

FRI. 23: World Series opens in Milwaukee, Rays against Brewers (Saturday morning, Japan time).

SAT. 24: Japan Series opens at Yokohama Stadium, DeNA against SoftBank; Champi near Yonaguni; large demonstration planned in Paris.

SUN. 25: Kikuka Sho at Kyoto; Fukushima governor and Naha mayoral elections; Europe's clocks go back.

MON. 26: Champi, as a tropical storm, forecast to pass close to Fukuoka.

OCT. 29-30: Bank of Japan policy meeting, with a judgment due on the 2 per cent price target; EU-Canada summit in Montreal.

NOV. 5: Verdict in the Mito trial over the deaths of two children.

NOV. 8-11: Vietnam's To Lam visits Japan.

MID-NOVEMBER: Japan-India two-plus-two talks in Tokyo; Quad summit in Manila.

NOV. 14-15: The Emperor and Empress visit Osaka.

POLITICS

Komeito's Okamoto Calls the Food Tax Cut 'a Bad Move' and Says His Party Cannot Back a Bill That Ties It to the Benefit

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Mitsunari Okamoto, the leader of Komeito, said in an interview with Kyodo News on Wednesday that the government's plan to cut the consumption tax on food was "a bad move" as a measure against rising prices, and that his party currently opposed the bill.

He pointed to cases abroad in which tax cuts were not fully passed on to consumers.

The benefit question

The bill also provides for a new benefit linked to income. Mr Okamoto said its eligibility and amounts were still unclear, so Komeito could not yet take a position on it.

Bundled together

Even if his party came to accept the benefit, he said, it could not vote for the bill as it stood, because the benefit and the tax cut were packaged in a single bill. "Even if we are persuaded by the benefit system, we cannot support it as it is, because it is bundled together with the tax cut," he said.

Case by case

Komeito left the Liberal Democrats' coalition a year ago. Mr Okamoto said the party would judge the Takaichi government's policies case by case: it would oppose those that differ from what it believes the public wants, and support those that match. Opposing everything, he said, was not its way.

The middle way

He described the party's approach as centrist politics, an effort to deliver what the silent majority wants.

Questions in committee

Mr Okamoto also questioned the finance minister at a lower house committee on Wednesday about whether the cut would reach shop prices.

Why it matters

With the ruling coalition short of a majority in the upper house, Komeito's votes, along with those of the Democratic Party for the People, are among those the government may need. Splitting the benefit from the tax cut, or changing its design, could become part of any negotiation.

The bigger picture

Komeito has argued for payments targeted at households that need them, a position it shares with the Democratic Reform Association and the Centrist Reform Alliance.

POLITICS

Rengo Asks the Constitutional Democrats to Press for Cash Payments Rather Than a Cut in the Food Tax

By the Political Desk

Rengo, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, asked the Constitutional Democratic Party on Wednesday to oppose the government's planned two-year cut in the consumption tax on food and drinks and to press instead for cash payments.

Masafumi Jinbo, Rengo's general secretary, visited Masayo Tanabe, the party's secretary-general, at the Diet and handed her a written request on the fiscal 2027 budget and tax reform.

A first step

Alongside the tax cut, the government's bill includes a support payment to ease the burden on middle- and lower-income workers. Rengo's request says that payment could be a first step toward a refundable tax credit, a system that combines payments with income tax deductions.

'Carefully'

Ms Tanabe noted that the ruling bloc was short of a majority in the House of Councillors and said she wanted the deliberations on the tax cut bills to proceed carefully.

Labour's position

Rengo has long argued that a cut in the consumption tax would cost a great deal while helping high-income households as much as those in need, and that targeted support would do more for workers

on low pay.

Political weight

The confederation, with about 7 million members, is the main support base of both the Constitutional Democrats and the Democratic Party for the People, and its views carry weight in their policy decisions.

Other requests

The written request covered Rengo's wider demands for the next budget and tax system revision, which are usually compiled in December.

The timing

The request came as the lower house began detailed questioning of the bill and as three centrist parties agreed that payments would work better than a tax cut.

Not answered

It was not reported whether Ms Tanabe accepted Rengo's request.

POLITICS

Agriculture Minister Takebe Returns a Donation From a Government Contractor and Apologises; Opposition Demands an Explanation

His party branch received 300,000 yen from a Hokkaido shipping company on the day the 2024 general election campaign began, while the company held a state contract

By the Political Desk

Agriculture Minister Arata Takebe said on Wednesday that he had returned a donation his party branch received from a company holding a government contract and had corrected the branch's political funds report, after a weekly magazine reported a possible breach of the Public Offices Election Act.

"I will promptly confirm the facts. I apologise for the trouble I have caused," Mr Takebe told reporters at the Diet earlier in the day.

The donation

The Liberal Democratic Party branch for the 12th district of Hokkaido, which Mr Takebe heads, received 300,000 yen from a shipping company in Mombetsu, Hokkaido. According to the branch's report, the money arrived on October 15, 2024, the day the campaign for that month's general election officially began.

The contract

The Hokkaido Regional Development Bureau says the company won a contract in April 2024 from the Abashiri port office to operate a work boat for port construction. The contract was still in force when the donation was made.

The law

The Public Offices Election Act bars parties to government contracts from making donations in connection with national elections. The company said it had referred all inquiries to the branch office.

'I did not know'

Mr Takebe said that at the time he had not known that the company held such a contract. He said that if the reports were accurate, he would refund the money and correct the report, which he later said he had done.

The opposition

Opposition parties demanded that the minister fulfil his responsibility to explain what happened, and said they would pursue the matter in the Diet.

The minister

Mr Takebe, who represents a district in northern Hokkaido and has won six terms in the House of Representatives, was appointed agriculture minister a week ago, the day after Kazuo Yana resigned from the post. His portfolio includes rice policy, a sensitive issue after two years of high prices.

The pattern

Similar problems have tripped up politicians before. Donations from companies with state contracts are banned around national elections to prevent the appearance of influence over public works, and the question usually turns on whether the recipient knew.

What comes next

The government has not suggested that he should step down. How the matter is handled in the Diet, where the opposition is already pressing the government over the tax bill, will be watched closely.

POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at a podium, in a file photo. On the first anniversary of her government on Wednesday she said that delivering on her pledges one by one was her mission. (File photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

'Keeping My Promises One by One Is My Mission,' Takaichi Says as Her Second Year Begins With Prices Still the Top Priority

The prime minister cites the end of the provisional gasoline tax and help with power bills as proof of results, promises more measures against global inflation, and names better government communication as a task ahead

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said on Wednesday, the first anniversary of her government, that she had spent the year driven by the conviction that her mission was to deliver on her public promises one by one, and that her most pressing task now was to strengthen measures against rising prices around the world.

Speaking to reporters at the Prime Minister's Office in the afternoon, Ms Takaichi said: "I have kept running with the belief that steadily delivering on my pledges, one at a time, is my mission." Her government's second year, she said, began that day.

"The important policy at hand is to strengthen our measures further in response to rising prices around the world," she added.

Results she cited

The prime minister pointed to the abolition of the provisional tax rate on gasoline and the subsidies for electricity and gas bills as examples of what she called continuous measures against inflation. She cited her policy of "responsible and proactive public finances," the label she gives to an expansionary fiscal stance, and said its aim was for the Japanese economy to be visibly moving. The public mood, she claimed, was beginning to change.

Security and intelligence

Ms Takaichi said she wanted to strengthen the government's ability to gather intelligence and repeated her intention to revise the three documents that set out Japan's national security strategy, a task the Liberal Democrats and their coalition partner, the Japan Innovation Party, plan to take up in talks from November.

Lessons of the Middle East

Referring to the war in the Middle East, which has driven up the price of crude oil and widened Japan's trade deficit, she said that with no end in sight, policy had to anticipate what lay ahead, and that she recognised this more strongly now than before.

POLITICS

What the Prime Minister Said

Sanae Takaichi's remarks to reporters on the first anniversary of her government, as reported

By the Political Desk

ON HER YEAR: She has kept running with the belief that delivering on her pledges, one at a time, is her mission.

ON WHAT COMES NEXT: Her second year begins today.

TOP PRIORITY: Strengthening measures further in response to rising prices around the world.

WHAT SHE CITED: The end of the provisional gasoline tax rate and subsidies for electricity and gas bills.

ECONOMIC POLICY: "Responsible and proactive public finances," with the aim of getting the economy visibly moving.

THE MOOD: She said the public mood was starting to change.

INTELLIGENCE: She wants to strengthen the

Getting the message across

Asked about her challenges, she named improving the government's public relations, suggesting that the government had not always explained its policies well enough to the public.

The government's view

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara told a news conference that the government would keep working with all its strength on problems at home and abroad "so that the people can feel prosperity and a sense of security."

The year in brief

Ms Takaichi became Japan's first woman prime minister on October 21 last year, forming a coalition with Ishin after Komeito ended its long partnership with the Liberal Democrats. She won a landslide in a general election in February, and the coalition now holds a large majority in the House of Representatives, though it remains short of a majority in the House of Councillors.

Year two

Her second year opens with her flagship bill, which would cut the consumption tax on food from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years, before the lower house, a decision due on how to pay for it, and pressure from the opposition to say who would receive the income-linked benefit that is meant to follow.

Diplomacy ahead

The diplomatic calendar is also crowded. Vietnam's leader, To Lam, is due in Tokyo in early November, foreign and defence ministers from Japan and India are expected to meet in mid-November, and leaders of the Quad of Japan, the United States, Australia and India are due to meet in Manila. Relations with China remain strained after her remarks last November about a Taiwan contingency.

government's intelligence-gathering.

SECURITY: She wants to revise the three national security documents.

THE MIDDLE EAST: With no end in sight, policy must anticipate events, something she said she now feels more strongly.

A TASK AHEAD: Better public relations by the government.

THE CABINET: Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara pledged to work "with all our strength" so people can feel prosperity and security.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Sato thanks Koshien, Page 22.

Women's gymnastics bronze, Page 22.

Editorial: whose rules?, Page 26.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 17.

Crossword, Page 25.

PHP flaws: what to do, Page 1.

Champi nears Sakishima, Page 3.

Tax bill: show the numbers, Page 6.

POLITICS

Liberal Democrats and Ishin Aim to Decide by Year-End Whether More People Over 70 Should Pay 30 Per Cent of Their Medical Bills

Ishin wants a 30 per cent share to be the norm; the Liberal Democrats are wary because many older people have low incomes

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Innovation Party confirmed on Wednesday that they would aim to reach a broad conclusion by the end of the year on raising the share of medical bills paid at the clinic by people aged 70 and over.

The two coalition partners resumed working-level talks on social security reform at the Diet on Wednesday afternoon. Their stated aim is to reduce the burden of social insurance premiums on the working generation.

The key questions

The talks will turn on the income and age thresholds that decide who pays more. No specific method of raising the share was discussed at Wednesday's meeting. In future sessions the parties will analyse how older patients use medical care and what their household finances look like, before working out the details.

The two sides

Ishin has called for a 30 per cent share to become the rule for older patients as well. The Liberal Democrats are cautious, partly because many elderly people have low incomes.

The current rules

Today, people from elementary school age to 69 pay 30 per cent of their medical costs. Those aged 70 to 74 pay 20 per cent, and those aged 75 and over pay 10 per cent, or 20 per cent if their income is above a certain level.

People aged 70 and over with incomes comparable to those of working people already pay 30 per cent. For a single-person household, that applies from an annual income of 3.83 million yen.

The options

Options under consideration include extending the 30 per cent share to more people aged 70 and over, extending the 20 per cent share to more people aged 75 and over, and revising the income standards.

Why now

Health spending is rising as the population ages, and premiums paid by employees and employers have risen with it. Both parties promised to ease the burden on younger workers, and Ishin made social security reform a condition of its partnership with the Liberal Democrats.

The politics

Any increase is likely to be unpopular with older voters, who turn out in large numbers. The timing also overlaps with the debate on the consumption tax cut, which the government presents as relief for households.

What follows

A conclusion by the end of the year would allow changes to be reflected in the budget for fiscal 2027 and in bills for next year's ordinary Diet session.

POLITICS

Komeito and Two Allies Agree Payments Would Work Faster Than a Tax Cut, and Plan a Joint Lower House Group Called 'Chudo'

By the Political Desk

Komeito, the Democratic Reform Association and the Centrist Reform Alliance agreed on Wednesday that cash payments would be a better answer to rising prices than the government's planned cut in the consumption tax on food, which they called inefficient.

The three parties held a joint meeting of their policy research councils at the Diet to discuss the government's bill, which would cut the tax on food and drinks from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years.

Speed over breadth

The parties said payments would take effect faster, while a tax cut would spread the benefit across all households regardless of need, including the well-off.

Komeito's plan

Komeito has drawn up a counterproposal of payments worth about 80,000 yen per person over two years.

The reform association's plan

The Democratic Reform Association wants a uniform payment of 40,000 yen to every resident as soon as possible, to be followed by a benefit system linked to income once the money has been found. Its leaders have said that with such a system, the tax cut would not be needed.

A common group

The three parties will form a joint group in the House of Representatives under the name Chudo, meaning the middle way, to coordinate their response to the bill. They also plan to work with other opposition parties.

The background

The Centrist Reform Alliance was set up by Komeito and lawmakers from the Constitutional Democratic Party to fight February's general election. About 20 lawmakers later left it to form the Democratic Reform Association.

Other voices

The Democratic Party for the People has submitted its own bill centred on cuts in income and resident taxes and payments to people on low incomes. Rengo, the largest federation of labour unions, asked the Constitutional Democratic Party on Wednesday to press for cash payments rather than a tax cut.

What it means

The opposition's alternatives have little chance of passing on their own, but its votes matter in the upper house, where the ruling coalition lacks a majority. A common position among the centrist parties would strengthen their hand in any talks on amending the bill.

POLITICS

Working Adults Could Earn a Teaching Licence in One Year of Graduate School Under an Education Ministry Plan

By the Political Desk

The education ministry plans to let working adults who did not take teacher-training courses at university obtain a teaching licence after as little as one year at graduate school, as it tries to ease a shortage of people willing to become teachers.

The ministry intends to amend the Education Personnel Certification Act at next year's ordinary Diet session.

Who could apply

The course would be open to working adults with a bachelor's degree who have not completed teacher-training coursework. Universities and boards of education would select participants together.

Credit for experience

Work experience would count for 20 credits in specialised subjects. An elementary school licence requires 37 credits in total, and a junior or senior high school licence 36. How many years of work experience would be needed has not been decided.

The licence

Graduates would receive a first-class licence, equivalent to one gained with a bachelor's degree. After three years of teaching, they could earn 15 more graduate credits to obtain an advanced licence, the level normally linked to a master's degree.

Learning on the job

The plan is designed so that paid work at a school counts toward the graduate study.

The shortage

Schools have struggled to fill posts as the number of applicants has fallen, and the ministry also hopes to bring a wider range of experience into classrooms.

The timetable

The legislation is targeted for next year's ordinary session, and no start date for the courses has been set.

A related plan

The ministry has also been working to cut teachers' long working hours, which are widely seen as one reason young people avoid the profession.

POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi answers questions in the Diet, in a file photo. Opposition lawmakers are pressing the government for figures on its food tax cut and the income-linked benefit meant to follow it. (File photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

Katayama Promises to Check That Food Prices Really Fall After the Tax Cut, but Opposition Warns Debate Will Stall Without Figures

The finance minister tells a lower house committee that fierce competition should pass the cut on to shoppers; Komeito says it keeps asking and gets nothing concrete

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama said on Wednesday that the government would track food prices before and after its planned cut in the consumption tax to confirm that they actually fall, as opposition lawmakers questioned whether shoppers would see the benefit.

The bill would lower the tax on food and non-alcoholic drinks from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years. Its effect depends on whether shops pass the cut on in their prices, and critics point to cases abroad in which the savings from consumption tax cuts were swallowed by higher labour and logistics costs, so that prices did not fall as much as expected.

'Competition is fierce'

Answering a question from Mitsunari Okamoto, the leader of Komeito, at the House of Representatives Committee on Financial Affairs, Ms Katayama said food prices changed often and competition among shops was intense, so the cut should in principle be reflected in prices. Her answer amounted to a warning to retailers not to hold back from lowering their prices.

The benefit

Ms Katayama again avoided giving specifics about the income-linked benefit system that the government plans for fiscal 2027, including who would be eligible and how much they would receive. The prime minister told the lower house on Tuesday that annual incomes of 1 million to 3.5 million yen were one point of reference, with the details still to be decided.

'Hard to continue'

After the session, Shinichi Isa of Komeito, the leading opposition member on the committee's board of directors, criticised the government's answers. "However many times we ask, nothing concrete comes out," he said. "Unless they show us numbers, it will be difficult to continue the deliberations."

POLITICS

The Food Tax Cut: Where the Parties Stand

By the Political Desk

THE BILL: Food and drink taxed at 1 per cent instead of 8 per cent for two years from April 2027, then a benefit tied to income.

THE COST: About 10 trillion yen; the government has not yet said how it will be paid for.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS AND ISHIN: Support the bill and want it enacted by December 12.

KOMEITO: Opposes the bill as a "bad move"; proposes payments of about 80,000 yen per person over two years.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM ASSOCIATION: Wants 40,000 yen for every resident now, then an income-linked benefit.

CENTRIST REFORM ALLIANCE: Agreed with the two parties above that payments work faster than a tax cut.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY FOR THE PEOPLE: Has tabled its own bill built on cuts in income and

A question of tactics

The government's reluctance to commit to figures has a tactical side. People in the ruling parties see the design of the benefit as a bargaining chip that could win over the Democratic Party for the People and Komeito, whose votes may be needed in the upper house.

The arithmetic

The ruling coalition has a large majority in the lower house but is short of a majority in the House of Councillors, so the bill needs support from opposition parties or independents there. The government wants it enacted before the extraordinary session ends on December 12.

The cost

The cut is expected to cost about 10 trillion yen over two years. The bill says the government will not rely on special deficit-covering bonds, but it has not yet said which spending cuts or other revenue would pay for it.

A shelved bill

The government has decided not to submit a bill this session to widen the use of maiden names after marriage, a policy the prime minister favours, to avoid disrupting the debate on the tax cut, according to people familiar with the matter.

Next steps

The committee will continue its questioning in the coming days. Opposition parties plan to keep pressing for the eligibility rules and payment amounts of the benefit before any vote.

resident taxes and payments.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRATS: Want careful deliberation; their backer Rengo wants cash payments instead.

THE UPPER HOUSE: The ruling coalition lacks a majority and needs opposition or independent votes.

THE OPEN QUESTION: Who would receive the benefit, and how much; Komeito says debate will be hard without figures.

POLITICS

Government Shelves a Bill to Widen the Use of Maiden Names, Putting the Tax Cut First and Avoiding a Clash Over Surnames

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The government has decided not to submit a bill during the current Diet session that would make it easier for people to keep using their maiden names after marriage, a policy Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi regards as important, people familiar with the matter said on Wednesday.

The government wants to avoid disrupting the

deliberations on its top priority, the bills to cut the consumption tax on food, and expected strong objections from opposition parties. It now aims to submit the bill to the ordinary Diet session next year or later.

What it would do

The bill would widen the informal use of maiden names, while keeping the principle that a married couple share the same surname in the family register. Its aim is to reduce the everyday inconvenience faced by people who change their names when they marry, most of them women.

The bigger fight

The bill is also seen as a way of heading off a separate proposal to let married couples keep different surnames, an option that conservatives in the Liberal Democratic Party oppose. Some Liberal Democrats who support separate surnames were also cautious about the government's bill, which contributed to the decision.

The prime minister's words

Earlier this month, in the House of Councillors, Ms Takaichi said the bill could reduce the number of people who feel disadvantaged in their social lives and that the government would continue the necessary consideration.

On allowing separate surnames, she said the government had to take into account the views of people across the country and the direction of debate in the Diet.

Why it matters

Japanese law requires married couples to share a surname, and in practice the great majority of wives take their husband's name. Business groups, lawyers and many women's organisations have called for a choice, while opponents argue that separate surnames would weaken the family.

The calendar

The extraordinary Diet session ends on December 12, and the government's priority is enacting the tax cut before then.

Opposition reaction

Opposition parties that favour allowing separate surnames had signalled that they would fight the government's bill as an attempt to shut down that debate.

What happens now

For now, the informal use of maiden names will continue under existing rules, which already allow them on some official documents, such as passports and My Number cards alongside the legal name.

POLITICS

Who Pays What at the Clinic

The share of medical costs patients pay themselves, under the current rules

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

BEFORE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: 20 per cent, though many local governments cover children's costs.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO AGE 69: 30 per cent.

AGES 70 TO 74: 20 per cent.

AGES 75 AND OVER: 10 per cent.

AGES 75 AND OVER, HIGHER INCOMES: 20 per cent above a certain income.

AGES 70 AND OVER, INCOMES LIKE WORKING PEOPLE'S: 30 per cent.

THAT THRESHOLD: An annual income of 3.83 million yen for a single-person household.

WHAT ISHIN WANTS: 30 per cent as the rule for older patients too.

THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS: Cautious, because many older people have low incomes.

THE DEADLINE: A broad conclusion by the end of this year.

THE GOAL: Lower social insurance premiums for working people.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

France's yields top 5%, Page 9.

Nikkei rebounds 545 yen, Page 12.

Record late heat, Page 19.

Sato thanks Koshien, Page 22.

Women's gymnastics bronze, Page 22.

Editorial: whose rules?, Page 26.

POLITICS

Liberal Democrats Float Cutting 31 Lower House Seats Instead of 45 as Talks on Shrinking the Chamber Stall

By the Political Desk

The Liberal Democratic Party is preparing to propose cutting the number of seats in the House of Representatives by 31, fewer than the 45 it has sought with its coalition partner, as a compromise to break a deadlock with opposition parties, according to reports in the Yomiuri Shimbun, the Mainichi Shimbun and the Nikkei.

The Mainichi reported that the figure could be presented to the other parties as early as Thursday. The Yomiuri described the plan as a cut of 31 seats in proportional representation.

Ishin's line

The Japan Innovation Party, which made a reduction of about 10 per cent of the 465 seats a condition of joining the coalition, has insisted that its goal of cutting 45 seats is unchanged, according to the Asahi Shimbun.

The deadlock

At cross-party talks on the electoral system on October 15, the ruling bloc again called for cutting 45 seats in the proportional representation section, and the opposition again opposed it. The parties agreed to aim for a conclusion by the end of October.

The opposition

The Democratic Party for the People has said the number of seats should be kept for now, as any change would only be a stopgap before more fundamental reform. Komeito has called a 45-seat cut completely unacceptable, saying the outcome should be whatever the parties can agree on.

Another idea

The Liberal Democrats have also proposed making it harder for candidates who lose in single-seat districts to win a seat through the proportional lists, an idea some in the opposition have welcomed.

Why proportional seats

Cutting proportional seats tends to hurt smaller parties, which win most of their seats that way. That is why the opposition, and Komeito in particular, has resisted.

The background

A bill to cut 45 seats was submitted earlier this year but was not enacted, and talks among the parties resumed in the autumn.

What comes next

A compromise figure would test whether Ishin can accept less than its target and whether any opposition party will join. Without a deal, the issue could strain the coalition as the Diet focuses on the tax cut.

POLITICS

Government Launches Ministry Talks to Speed AI Adoption in Medicine, Care and Transport, With an Action Plan Due by Year-End

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The government held the first meeting of a new liaison council of ministries on Wednesday to speed up the use of artificial intelligence, and will draw up an action plan by the end of the year.

The council will promote AI in sectors with serious labour shortages, such as medicine, nursing care and transport, and will also discuss strengthening the development of what is called physical AI, AI that operates machines on its own.

'AX'

Ryosei Akazawa, the economy, trade and industry minister, who is also responsible for putting AI to use across society, greeted the meeting. He called AI transformation, or AX, "a central issue for the growth strategy."

Using the data

The government wants to use large amounts of data from manufacturing and services to change society and industry with AI.

Rules for key sectors

Officials are also preparing clearer rules for sectors such as medicine and construction, including who is

POLITICS

responsible when AI causes harm and how damage would be remedied, and guidelines for safe use across ministries are expected by the end of the year.

The government's own AI

The Digital Agency has been expanding Gennai, the generative AI environment it provides for government staff, and has added AI agent functions, according to the agency.

The security worry

The push comes as companies in Japan face a wave of cyberattacks, some of them reportedly carried out with the help of AI tools.

Why it matters

Japan's shrinking workforce is the main argument for automation. Care homes, hospitals and bus and truck operators all report shortages that are expected to worsen as the population ages.

Next

The action plan is to be compiled by the end of the year.

POLITICS

Japan and India Plan Two-Plus-Two Talks in Tokyo in Mid-November, With China's Pressure in Mind

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Japan and India are arranging a meeting of their foreign and defence ministers in Tokyo in mid-November, government sources said on Wednesday, aiming to strengthen security ties with China's growing assertiveness in mind.

Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi would meet India's External Affairs Minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

The agenda

The ministers are expected to confirm their opposition to any attempt to change the status quo by force or coercion, and to agree to strengthen cooperation on maritime security and in economic fields. A joint statement is under consideration.

The fourth meeting

If held, it would be the fourth two-plus-two meeting between the two countries. The previous one took place in India in August 2024. At a summit in July this year, the two leaders instructed their ministers to hold the meeting within the year.

Missiles in India

Separately, the Ground Self-Defense Force is sending personnel to India for launch training with surface-to-ship missiles, NHK reported.

The Quad

The meeting would come around the time of the summit of the Quad, which brings together Japan, the United States, Australia and India, scheduled to be held in Manila in November.

Why India

India is the largest democracy in the region and shares Japan's concern about China, though it avoids formal alliances and keeps close ties with Russia. Japan has invested heavily in Indian infrastructure, including a high-speed rail line between Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

The defence side

Defence cooperation between the two countries has grown to include joint exercises by their armies, navies and air forces.

Not final

The government says the arrangements are still being finalised.

POLITICS

Vietnam's To Lam Is Expected to Address the Diet During His Visit to Japan in November

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The government is arranging for To Lam, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the country's president, to address the Diet during his visit to Japan next month, government sources said on Wednesday.

Mr Lam is to visit as an official working guest from November 8 to 11. The afternoon of November 9 is seen as the most likely time for the speech, which Vietnam requested.

The message

He is expected to speak about promoting cooperation between the two countries.

Talks with Takaichi

Mr Lam is also due to meet Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in Tokyo. Cooperation on stable energy supplies is among the topics under consideration, and a joint statement is being considered.

The context

Japan and Vietnam are working to strengthen their ties as China steps up its maritime activity and economic pressure. Both governments want to show at home and abroad how closely they cooperate.

Japan's role

Japan is the largest provider of official development assistance to Vietnam, and Vietnamese people make up one of the largest groups of foreign residents and workers in Japan.

A rare honour

Addresses to the Diet by foreign leaders are relatively rare and are regarded as a mark of special friendship.

Not settled

The plan is still being coordinated and has not been finalised.

POLITICS

Peru's President Keiko Fujimori to Visit Japan on November 19 and 20 for Talks With Takaichi

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

President Keiko Fujimori of Peru will visit Japan on November 19 and 20 and hold talks with Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

Kyodo News reported in August that Ms Fujimori was arranging a visit to Japan in November to strengthen relations between the two countries.

Family ties

Ms Fujimori is the daughter of Alberto Fujimori, the son of Japanese immigrants, who was president of Peru from 1990 to 2000 and died in 2024.

Close links

Peru is home to one of the largest communities of people of Japanese descent in Latin America, and Japan is an important trading partner and source of aid.

The agenda

Trade, investment and cooperation on minerals are likely topics. Peru is one of the world's biggest producers of copper.

The Pope's trip

The visit comes in a busy month for Peru: Pope Leo XIV, who served for many years as a missionary and bishop there, is scheduled to visit three South American countries including Peru in November.

Leaders in Tokyo

The visit is one of several by foreign leaders planned for November, including Vietnam's To Lam.

Details awaited

The government has not formally announced the visit.

POLITICS

Japan to Give Malaysia a Counter-Drone System Worth About 1.65 Billion Yen Under Its Security Aid Programme

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Japan will provide Malaysia with a system to counter drones worth about 1.65 billion yen under its Official Security Assistance programme, the Yomiuri Shimbun and The Japan Times reported.

The programme

Official Security Assistance, known as OSA, was set up in 2023 to provide equipment and help build facilities for the armed forces of like-minded countries. It is separate from Japan's official development assistance, which cannot be used for military purposes.

Earlier recipients

Malaysia was among the first recipients, along with the Philippines, Bangladesh and Fiji.

Why drones

Small drones have become one of the main threats in modern conflicts, from the war in Ukraine to attacks in the Middle East, and defending against them has become a priority for militaries around the world.

The South China Sea

Malaysia has overlapping claims with China in the South China Sea, and Japan's support is aimed at strengthening the ability of countries in the region to watch over their waters and airspace.

Rules on transfers

Equipment supplied under the programme is meant for purposes such as surveillance and the protection of territory, not for use in international conflicts.

The wider picture

The programme is part of Japan's effort to build security partnerships across Southeast Asia, alongside regular port calls and joint exercises.

Details

Details of the system and the delivery schedule were not reported.

POLITICS

Tottori's Hirai, Former Head of the Governors' Association, Will Not Seek a Sixth Term, Choosing to 'Draw a Line'

By the Political Desk

Shinji Hirai, the governor of Tottori Prefecture, said on Wednesday that he would not run in the election expected at next spring's unified local elections, ending his tenure after five terms.

"I think the right choice is to draw a line and entrust the job to the next person," he told a news conference, becoming tearful as he spoke of his gratitude for his time in office.

The sports festival

He said that because the prefecture will host the national sports festival in 2033, which requires long preparation, the change of governor should happen now.

A national figure

Mr Hirai served as chair of the National Governors' Association and became one of the best-known voices of local government, often speaking for prefectures in dealings with the national government.

Japan's smallest prefecture

Tottori has the smallest population of Japan's 47 prefectures. During his tenure the prefecture dealt with earthquakes, heavy snow and the coronavirus pandemic.

A memorable phrase

He became known for his puns, most famously the line that Tottori had no Starbucks but did have the "Sunaba," a play on the Japanese word for a sandpit that pointed to the Tottori Sand Dunes, made before the chain opened its first shop in the prefecture in 2015.

The race

His decision opens the way for a new governor in next spring's elections.

Unified elections

Governors, mayors and assemblies across the country are elected in the unified local elections held every four years in April.

POLITICS

Izumi and Hiroyuki Invite Would-Be Mayors and Governors to Run on Free Child Insurance and Free Sanitary Products

By the Political Desk

Fusaho Izumi, an independent member of the House of Councillors and former mayor of Akashi, said on Wednesday that a political group he leads with Hiroyuki Nishimura, the founder of the internet bulletin board 2channel, would recruit candidates for next spring's unified local elections.

The group will consider backing candidates for governor, for mayor of designated cities and other municipalities, and for the heads of Tokyo's special wards. Applications close at the end of November.

The conditions

Candidates must include in their platforms pledges such as making children's social insurance premiums

free and providing sanitary products for women free of charge.

Already endorsed

The group has already announced its support for Hideo Higashikokubaru, a former governor of Miyazaki, in the Miyazaki gubernatorial election in December, and for a former ward assembly member in the Bunkyo Ward mayoral election in Tokyo expected next April.

Hiroyuki's ambitions

Mr Nishimura suggested he might himself run for mayor in a future election.

'Keeping promises'

"I want to bring about politics that keeps its promises, starting from the regions," Mr Izumi said at a news conference at the Diet.

The Akashi model

As mayor of Akashi in Hyogo Prefecture from 2011 to 2023, Mr Izumi became known nationally for expanding free services for children, which helped increase the city's population.

An unusual pair

Mr Nishimura, widely known simply as Hiroyuki, is a popular commentator on social media with a large following among young people.

POLITICS

Hannan Will Join Izumisano and Sennan in Studying a Merger That Could Create a City of More Than 200,000

By the Political Desk

Hannan, a city of about 48,000 people in the south of Osaka Prefecture, plans to join a study group on a possible merger being set up by its neighbours Izumisano and Sennan, officials said on Wednesday.

The study group could be launched as early as January.

The invitation

At a meeting on regional cooperation in the south Senshu area on October 5, the mayors of Izumisano and Sennan announced the group and invited neighbouring municipalities to join, with a merger as one option.

A shrinking city

Hannan's population fell from about 58,000 in 2000 to about 48,000 at the end of September. The city expects the decline to accelerate and wants to keep providing services to residents in the future.

The neighbours

The town of Tajiri will not take part, and the town of Kumatori has not yet decided.

Core city status

The three cities together have more than 200,000 people, which could allow a merged city to qualify as a core city, a status that gives a municipality more powers, such as running its own public health centre.

The airport

Kansai International Airport lies off the coast of Izumisano, Tajiri and Sennan, and the area's economy depends heavily on it.

The bigger trend

Many municipalities are considering cooperation or mergers as their populations shrink, though the wave of mergers of the 2000s left many residents wary of losing local identity.

POLITICS

Kinki Governors Will Ask Tokyo to Do Its Best to Ease Kyoto's Worries About the Hokuriku Shinkansen Extension

By the Political Desk

Governors from the Kinki region and surrounding prefectures agreed on Wednesday to ask the national government to make its best efforts to address concerns about the planned extension of the Hokuriku Shinkansen from Tsuruga to Shin-Osaka, particularly those in Kyoto Prefecture about the effects of construction on groundwater.

The governors of Fukui, Kyoto and Osaka agreed on the proposal at the Kinki Block Governors' Meeting, which brings together 10 prefectures, in Kyoto City.

POLITICS

The request

The proposal will be submitted to the national government as a formal request from the meeting around the end of November.

Money and timing

The request will also ask the government to review how the cost is shared between the national and local governments, to keep the burden on municipalities along the route as low as possible, and to present a concrete schedule for opening the whole line as soon as possible.

Fukui's view

The governor of Fukui said he wanted to tell the national government that proceeding carefully while winning the full understanding of the municipalities along the route was the shortest way to opening the whole line.

The route

The planned route runs from Tsuruga through Obama and Kyoto to Shin-Osaka, much of it in tunnels. Concerns in Kyoto include the possible effect on groundwater used by sake brewers and others, and the handling of the large amount of soil from tunnelling.

Where things stand

The line reached Tsuruga in March 2024. Construction of the remaining section has not begun, and the opening date is uncertain.

Why it matters

Fukui wants the extension to connect the Hokuriku region directly to Osaka, while Kyoto residents and businesses have voiced doubts about the benefits and the risks.

POLITICS

Air Self-Defense Force Shows Photos of Global Hawk Fuselage Being Raised From the Seabed off Tottori

By the Political Desk

The Air Self-Defense Force released photographs on Wednesday showing the recovery of a section of the fuselage of an unmanned Global Hawk reconnaissance aircraft that crashed into the sea off Tottori Prefecture last month.

The section was raised on October 17 by a civilian salvage vessel using a crane. It was found at a depth of about 200 to 300 metres some 50 km off the Aoya district of Tottori City.

The size

The recovered section is about 6 metres long, 1.6 metres wide and 1.5 metres high.

The crash

The aircraft, based at Misawa Air Base in Aomori Prefecture, disappeared from radar on September 15 about 50 km north of the Tottori coast.

Still searching

Some debris remains on the seabed, and the Air Self-Defense Force is continuing its search and recovery work.

The investigation

Recovering the wreckage is essential to finding the cause of the crash. The Air Self-Defense Force operates a small number of Global Hawks, which fly at high altitudes for long periods to watch the seas around Japan.

Earlier find

The force confirmed earlier this month that an object recovered in the search was part of the aircraft.

Flights

The force has not said when it will resume Global Hawk flights.

INTERNATIONAL

Witkoff Thanks Putin for Freeing an American and Calls Him a 'Humanitarian,' Drawing Fury From Both Parties in Washington

The release of Stephen Hubbard, a former teacher who lived in Japan for 25 years, comes as Russia says it is ready to resume three-way talks on Ukraine in mid-November

By the International Desk

Steve Witkoff, President Donald Trump's special envoy for peace negotiations, met President Vladimir Putin in St Petersburg on Wednesday and thanked him for releasing a former American teacher held in

Russia, prompting a storm of criticism after he called the Russian leader a humanitarian.

According to reports, Mr Putin praised Mr Trump as a humanitarian, and Mr Witkoff replied that Mr Putin was one too.

'Shameful'

Members of Congress from both parties condemned the remark, pointing to the many people killed in Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Senator Thom Tillis, a Republican, wrote on X that Mr Witkoff should look up the meaning of the word humanitarian. Senator Chris Coons, a Democrat, called Mr Putin a murderer and a villain who kills children and tears families apart in Ukraine.

Trump hedges

At the White House, Mr Trump told reporters that Mr Putin could be called a humanitarian "for certain purposes," but declined to say whether he considered him one.

The release

Mr Putin said on Wednesday that Russia had released Stephen Hubbard, a former American teacher whose detention the State Department had designated as wrongful. Mr Hubbard lived in Japan for 25 years, working as an English teacher, and has children with his Japanese former wife.

'Nothing in return'

Mr Trump claimed credit for the release, saying it followed his telephone call with Mr Putin and that Russia had asked for nothing in return. A State Department spokesperson told Kyodo News that the United States had made no concessions.

Sanctions

Mr Trump defended his recent decisions to ease sanctions on Russian diesel and not to impose new sanctions, saying sanctions would have stalled the negotiations. He said critics of the easing had apologised once they learned that talks were under way, and wrote that Mr Hubbard "should have been released long ago," criticising former President Joe Biden and the Democrats.

Talks on Ukraine

Mr Putin told Mr Witkoff that Russia was ready to resume three-way talks with Ukraine and the United States in mid-November, according to his aide Yuri Ushakov. President Volodymyr Zelensky said Ukraine supported the American proposal to resume the talks.

The politics

Mr Trump's conciliatory approach to Russia has been unpopular with voters ahead of the midterm elections on November 3, and he used the release to showcase his diplomacy. At one point he lost his temper with a reporter and called him a fool.

INTERNATIONAL

Kremlin Aide Says China Is Preparing a Putin-Trump-Xi Summit at APEC in Shenzhen; Ukraine Talks Could Resume in Abu Dhabi

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Yuri Ushakov, an aide to President Vladimir Putin, said on Wednesday that China was preparing for a three-way summit between Mr Putin, President Donald Trump and President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders' meeting in Shenzhen in November.

"The Chinese side is making preparations," Mr Ushakov said in Moscow, adding that no government had rejected the idea and that China would add it to the Shenzhen programme if conditions were right.

Discussed with Witkoff

Mr Putin and the American envoy Steve Witkoff discussed the possibility of a three-way summit at their meeting in St Petersburg on Wednesday. Russia gave Mr Witkoff specific ideas about what such a meeting might discuss, according to reports.

Ukraine talks

Mr Ushakov said Mr Putin had told Mr Witkoff that Russia was ready to resume three-way talks with Ukraine and the United States in mid-November, and asked that they focus on security arrangements for both Russia and Ukraine after the fighting ends. He expected the talks to be held in Abu Dhabi, according to TASS, with Russian participants possibly including the presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky

and military officers.

The last round

The last round of three-way talks was held in Geneva in February. Russia and Ukraine remain far apart on territory, and the negotiations are expected to be difficult even if they resume.

Zelensky's view

President Volodymyr Zelensky, briefed by the American side, said Ukraine supported the proposal to resume the talks.

No confirmation

There was no comment from Beijing or Washington on a three-way summit, and no date has been confirmed.

Japan's interest

A summit of the three leaders would be closely watched in Tokyo, which has sanctioned Russia over the invasion of Ukraine and whose relations with Beijing remain strained.

Oil

Hopes of a resumption of talks helped push down the price of crude oil in New York on Wednesday.

INTERNATIONAL

World in Brief

Iran's leader meets the speaker, Brussels investigates Booking.com, and other news from abroad

By the International Desk

IRAN: The office of Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said on Wednesday that he had met the speaker of parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, to discuss developments involving the United States and Israel and the role of lawmakers in keeping the country united.

IRAN'S LEADER: Mr Khamenei became supreme leader in March after his father, Ali Khamenei, was killed in the American and Israeli attacks on Iran that began in late February. He was reported to have been seriously injured and has not appeared in public since taking office.

EUROPE: The European Commission opened an investigation into Booking.com under the Digital Services Act, over whether its measures against fraud, including listings for accommodation that does not exist, were adequate.

BOOKING.COM: The investigation will also examine whether the company's security prevents booking information from being used in phishing scams. A spokesperson said the company was cooperating fully.

UNITED STATES: The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed transgender inmates in federal prisons to keep receiving medical care such as hormone therapy for now, rejecting the Trump administration's emergency application without giving reasons.

THE PRISON POLICY: President Trump signed an order in January 2025 barring federal funds for such care, and the Bureau of Prisons announced restrictions in February. About 1,000 federal inmates are reported to have a diagnosis of gender dysphoria.

RUSSIA: A Russian fighter jet crashed, and the crew were unhurt, the Sankei Shimbun reported.

BRAZIL: The Asahi Shimbun examined the weight of evangelical Christian voters in Brazil's presidential election.

BRITAIN AND MYANMAR: The Asahi Shimbun reported on an envelope sent through diplomatic channels by King Charles in connection with Aung San Suu Kyi.

THE MEDIA: The Yomiuri Shimbun's editorial expressed concern about the unrest in France and its curfews, and the paper examined the growth of the Trump family's wealth as an issue in the midterm campaign.

JAPAN AND THE WORLD: A photographic exhibition marking 70 years of Japan's membership of the United Nations opens at the UN University in Tokyo on Thursday.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 17.

Crossword, Page 25.

PHP flaws: what to do, Page 1.

Champi nears Sakishima, Page 3.

Takaichi: promises kept, Page 5.

Tax bill: show the numbers, Page 6.

INTERNATIONAL

Russia Calls a Japanese Company's Delivery of Interceptor Drones to Ukraine a Hostile Act and Promises a Firm Response

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Russia's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday denounced the delivery of small interceptor drones to Ukraine by an affiliate of the Tokyo drone developer Terra Drone, calling it an openly hostile act against Russia and saying Moscow would respond firmly.

Terra Drone announced this month that the drones, made by its affiliate in Ukraine, had been delivered to the Ukrainian government.

The accusation

Maria Zakharova, the ministry's spokeswoman, told a news conference that the Japanese authorities were encouraging companies to do military business with the Ukrainian government, and dismissed the idea that the cooperation was purely private as unconvincing.

'Legitimate targets'

She repeated Russia's position that weapons threatening its security, and the Ukrainian facilities that produce them, are legitimate targets.

What they do

Interceptor drones are designed to destroy incoming attack drones in the air, a cheaper alternative to missiles. Ukraine has come to rely on them to defend its cities against waves of Russian drones.

Japan's rules

Japan's rules on the transfer of defence equipment restrict exports of lethal weapons, and its support for Ukraine has centred on non-lethal equipment and money. The drones in question were made by the company's Ukrainian affiliate.

Strained relations

The exchange came as relations between Tokyo and Moscow are already strained by Russia's detention of a Hokkaido Shimbun reporter.

The company

Terra Drone is listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange and is known for drones used in surveying and inspection. Its response to Moscow's remarks was not reported.

INTERNATIONAL

Pope Leo Needs No Further Treatment After Lung Cancer Surgery, the Vatican Says

By the International Desk

Pope Leo XIV needs no further treatment after surgery for lung cancer, the Vatican said on Wednesday, after final tissue tests showed the cancer had not spread.

Doctors found a nodule in his lung early during a routine check-up.

The operation

The Pope was admitted to hospital on October 13, and the lower lobe of his right lung was removed. It was found to contain an adenocarcinoma.

Recovery

He recovered well and left hospital on October 17, earlier than first expected, and returned to public duties the next day, leading the Sunday prayer in St Peter's Square. On Wednesday he greeted crowds at his weekly general audience.

South America

He is scheduled to visit three South American countries, including Peru, in November. Before his election in 2025, the American-born Pope spent many years in Peru as a missionary and bishop.

Good news for the Church

The announcement eases concern about the health of the 71-year-old head of the Roman Catholic Church, who was elected in May last year after the death of Pope Francis.

Early detection

Lung cancer found at an early stage, before it spreads, can often be treated successfully with surgery alone.

A common cancer

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide, and screening has made it more common for tumours to be found while they are still small.

INTERNATIONAL



President Emmanuel Macron of France, in a file photo. Speaking in Qatar on Wednesday, he said any new acts of violence would be stopped, as France's 10-year borrowing costs rose above 5 per cent for the first time since 2002. (File photo: WPM Productions)

INTERNATIONAL

France's Borrowing Costs Top 5 Per Cent for the First Time Since 2002 as Riots Deepen Doubts About Its Finances

Six in ten French people say they must protect themselves, a poll finds; Macron, speaking in Qatar, promises that new violence will be stopped as a large protest is planned in Paris for Saturday

By the International Desk

The yield on France's 10-year government bonds, the benchmark for the country's long-term borrowing costs, rose above 5 per cent during trading on Wednesday, the highest level in 24 years, as weeks of riots and a widening budget deficit shook investors' confidence in the government's management of its finances.

It was the first time since 2002 that the yield had reached that level. Investors cited the cost of the war in the Middle East, the large-scale demonstrations and riots across the country, and worries about how the government would control its spending.

The deficit

In September the French government projected that this year's budget deficit would exceed its target of 5 per cent of gross domestic product, blaming measures to cushion the rise in fuel prices and aid for farmers hit by drought.

Germany as a haven

Investors bought German government bonds as a safe asset, and the gap between French and German 10-year yields widened to about 1.6 percentage points, a measure of how much more investors demand for lending to France.

Six in ten

A poll reported by the French news channel BFMTV on Wednesday found that 61 per cent of French people felt they needed to protect themselves, a sign of growing distrust of the police and security services after the riots.

Macron in Qatar

President Emmanuel Macron, speaking at a news conference during a visit to Qatar, said any new acts

of violence would be stopped. "There are people trying to cause chaos," he said, but they would not be allowed to succeed. "Nothing justifies violence in a democratic society."

Order and curfews

The government has called for public order to be restored, and Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu said earlier this week that curfews would be imposed wherever they were needed. France passed Monday night without major incidents under the curfews already in place.

Saturday's march

A large demonstration is planned in Paris on Saturday, with protesters demanding action on rising prices and better conditions in schools.

Why it matters

Higher yields make it more expensive for France to borrow and to refinance its debt, which is among the largest in the euro zone, and can spill over to other countries' bond markets. Japanese investors hold French government bonds, and a sell-off in Europe can move global interest rates.

A warning from the past

France's political instability has repeatedly unsettled markets in recent years, with governments struggling to pass budgets through a divided parliament.

Stephen Hubbard; Washington says it made no concessions.

THE ROW: Mr Witkoff's description of Mr Putin as a humanitarian drew criticism from both parties in Congress.

INTERNATIONAL

Tension Rises Along the Korean Border as the Two Sides Trade Accusations and Kim Yo Jong Talks of Building Up Forces

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Tension is rising along the military demarcation line between North and South Korea, where a mine explosion injured South Korean soldiers about a month ago and the two sides have since exchanged accusations.

South Korea's military says North Korea buried the mine on the southern side of the line. North Korea denies any involvement.

Kim Yo Jong's tour

Kim Yo Jong, the sister of the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un, and a senior official of the ruling Workers' Party, recently toured areas near the line, according to the Korean Central News Agency. She spoke of building up military strength and stepped up threats against the South.

Loudspeakers

Ms Kim also said loudspeakers for psychological warfare would be in operation this month, NHK reported. The Yomiuri Shimbun reported that North Korea was fortifying its side of the line with mines and barbed wire.

A line that has faded

The demarcation line was set by the armistice that ended the fighting in the Korean War in 1953. According to South Korea's defence ministry, 1,292 markers were placed along it at the time, but many have been lost to wind and rain and only about 200 remain.

Different maps

South Korea draws the line from the surviving markers and American maps, while North Korea appears to apply its own line where markers are missing. South Korea and the United Nations Command also disagree on some sections.

Work on the roads

South Korea's military released a photograph showing North Korean soldiers reinforcing a military road inside the Demilitarised Zone.

The risk

Analysts worry that disputes over where the line runs could lead to clashes as North Korean troops work closer to it.

Japan's concern

Japan watches the peninsula closely because of North Korea's missile launches, many of which have landed in waters near Japan.

INTERNATIONAL

Canada and the EU Plan a Framework for Canadian 'Associate Membership,' Possibly by 2027, Bloomberg Reports

By the International Desk

Canada and the European Union are preparing a concrete framework for Canada to become an associate member of the EU, with a target of a summit in 2027, Bloomberg News reported on Wednesday.

The framework is expected to be included in a joint statement at a summit between the two sides in Montreal on October 29 and 30.

No precedent

The EU has no form of associate membership, and the legal and procedural obstacles to creating one are considered large.

A deeper relationship

The draft statement describes a "deeper, more integrated strategic relationship," according to the report. Cooperation is expected in energy, artificial intelligence, critical minerals and economic security.

Why now

Both Canada and the EU face trade friction with the Trump administration and want to reduce their dependence on the United States.

Existing ties

Canada and the EU already have a comprehensive trade agreement, which has been provisionally in force since 2017.

Subject to change

The details are based on a draft and could change before the summit.

Japan's parallel

Japan has also been deepening its ties with Europe, including an economic partnership agreement with the EU that took effect in 2019.

INTERNATIONAL

EU Will Keep Working With Japan to Get U.S. Sanctions on the International Criminal Court Lifted, Commissioner Says

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The European Union will continue to work with Japan and other like-minded countries to persuade the United States to withdraw its sanctions on the International Criminal Court, Michael McGrath, the European commissioner responsible for the rule of law, said in an online interview with Japanese media.

"We will continue to cooperate with Japan and like-minded countries," Mr McGrath said in Brussels

on Tuesday.

Regret

He said he regretted the American decision and welcomed Japan's support for international law.

A grace period

Withdrawing the sanctions was the best outcome, he said, and he would keep talking to Washington during a grace period of 180 days.

A blocking regulation

The EU is considering using a blocking regulation, which would make the American sanctions ineffective within the EU. Mr McGrath said the EU was prepared to take all necessary measures, together with the court, to protect European companies if it did so.

A dilemma for business

A blocking regulation would put companies in a difficult position, because complying with the American sanctions could make it hard for them to operate outside the EU, including in the United States, while ignoring them could expose them to penalties.

The court

The court, based in The Hague, prosecutes individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Its president is Tomoko Akane, a former Japanese prosecutor, and Japan is its largest financial contributor.

The context

Russia has also targeted the court, issuing arrest warrants for its officials after it charged President Vladimir Putin over the deportation of Ukrainian children.

INTERNATIONAL

Warming Beyond 1.5 Degrees Is Now Unavoidable, the UN Environment Programme Says, With Current Policies Heading for 2.8

By the Science Desk

Global warming will exceed the 1.5 degree target set under the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Environment Programme said in a report on Wednesday, warning that current policies would lead to warming of 2.8 degrees by the end of the century.

The 1.5 degree target is measured against temperatures before the industrial revolution.

Emissions

Global greenhouse gas emissions in 2025 were 58.4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, about the same as the year before, the report said.

Scenarios

If every country met its national pledges, warming would be held to 2.6 degrees. If net-zero emissions were reached, it would be about 2.1 degrees.

What it would take

To limit warming to 1.7 or 1.8 degrees, emissions would have to fall 18 per cent by 2030 and 45 per cent by 2035 from their 2025 level.

Coming back down

Bringing temperatures back to 1.5 degrees after overshooting would require removing 3.2 trillion tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, about eight times the world's emissions in 2024. It is unclear whether that is achievable.

A warning

"The larger and longer the overshoot beyond 1.5 degrees, the greater the effects of global warming, such as catastrophic floods and heatwaves," said Inger Andersen, UNEP's executive director. "Every possible measure should be taken to keep it to a minimum."

Japan's record heat

The report came on the day Tokyo and Osaka recorded their latest days of 30 degrees or more since records began.

Next month

The report is published each year ahead of the UN climate conference, which is held in November.

INTERNATIONAL



A news conference in the press room of the Prime Minister's Office, in a file photo. The government is demanding the release of the Hokkaido Shimbun reporter detained in Russia and access for Japanese diplomats. (File photo: WPM Productions)

INTERNATIONAL

Russia Says It Will 'Try to Provide Information' on the Detained Hokkaido Shimbun Reporter as Tokyo Demands His Release

A Japanese Foreign Ministry official met Russian officials and called for the reporter's immediate release; the Wall Street Journal calls him 'a pawn' in Moscow's hostage diplomacy

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday that it would confirm the details and try to provide information about the Hokkaido Shimbun reporter it has detained on espionage charges, as Japan pressed for his release and for diplomats to be allowed to see him.

Asked at a news conference about the prospects for a consular visit, the ministry's spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, said Russia would "try to provide information after confirming" the facts. She did not say whether or when a visit would be allowed.

Tokyo's demand

A Japanese Foreign Ministry official met Russian officials and demanded the reporter's immediate release and an early meeting with him, according to the Yomiuri Shimbun, the Sankei Shimbun and NHK. The government said on Tuesday that Russia's refusal to grant consular access was "extremely regrettable."

'A pawn'

In an editorial on Wednesday, the Wall Street Journal said the reporter was likely to be used "as a pawn" in President Vladimir Putin's intimidation and hostage diplomacy. It argued that President Donald Trump's efforts to improve relations with Moscow might have led Russia to see a chance to pressure Japan into easing the sanctions it imposed after the invasion of Ukraine.

INTERNATIONAL

The Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration at 70

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

SIGNED: October 19, 1956, in Moscow, by Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama and Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin.

WHAT IT DID: Ended the state of war between Japan and the Soviet Union and restored diplomatic relations.

THE ISLANDS: The Soviet Union agreed to hand over Habomai and Shikotan after a peace treaty was concluded.

THE OTHER TWO: Etorofu and Kunashiri were not mentioned; Japan claims all four islands.

THE UNITED NATIONS: The Soviet Union dropped its opposition to Japan's membership, and Japan joined on December 18, 1956.

PRISONERS: Japanese detained in the Soviet Union since the war were to be repatriated.

STATUS: Ratified by both parliaments; it is the only treaty-level document on the islands ratified by both sides.

NO PEACE TREATY: Japan and Russia have still not signed one.

2001 AND 2018: Japanese and Russian leaders reaffirmed the declaration as a starting point for talks.

TODAY: Russia's Foreign Ministry calls it the basic document of relations, while talks on a peace treaty remain frozen.

Others still held

It was not immediately clear whether other Americans would be freed under the arrangement that ABC reported.

A contrast

The release came as Japan presses Russia to free a Hokkaido Shimbun reporter detained on espionage charges, and to allow Japanese diplomats to see him.

Past exchanges

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

INTERNATIONAL

U.S. Orders Some Embassy Staff and Families to Leave Saudi Arabia as Houthi Attacks on Airports and Oil Sites Intensify

By the International Desk

The United States ordered some staff at its embassy in Saudi Arabia and their families to leave the country on Wednesday, as the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen kept up attacks on Saudi airports and other important facilities.

A State Department spokesman, Tommy Pigott, announced the order on X.

The attacks

The Houthis have struck airports across Saudi Arabia, including in the capital, Riyadh, and facilities linked to the oil industry, causing civilian casualties and disrupting travel.

An Aramco target

The Saudi state news agency said that on Wednesday air defences intercepted a drone aimed at facilities connected with the state oil company Saudi Aramco in the east of the country. Two people were killed.

The war

Saudi Arabia, working with Yemen's government, has been carrying out air strikes on the Houthis, and the fighting between them has intensified.

The wider conflict

The attacks are part of the turmoil in the Middle East that followed the American and Israeli strikes on Iran that began in late February. Britain has sent Typhoon fighter jets to help defend Saudi Arabia.

Oil prices

Attacks on Saudi oil facilities are watched closely by markets because the kingdom is one of the world's largest exporters. Japan imports most of its crude oil from the Middle East, and Saudi Arabia is its largest supplier.

Travel advice

Japanese nationals in Saudi Arabia are advised to follow the Foreign Ministry's travel information and their embassy's announcements.

INTERNATIONAL

German Army Raises the Threat of Russian Sabotage to 'Serious' After Explosives and a Drone Are Found Near an Air Base

By the International Desk

The German armed forces have raised their assessment of the threat of Russian sabotage to "serious," the second-highest level, for the first time, German newspapers including the Sueddeutsche Zeitung reported on Wednesday.

The decision followed the discovery in September of a can filled with explosives and a drone near the Wunstorf air base in northern Germany. The military concluded that its own forces were being targeted.

Capability and intent

According to the reports, the military's situation assessment says Russia has the capability to act, and that the likelihood that its intent has hardened is extremely high.

A red line crossed

The report says the use of drones as weapons has gone beyond what was previously assumed to be a red line.

Leipzig

In August, an attempted attack took place at an airport near Leipzig, in which a drone loaded with

explosives targeted a civilian cargo aircraft.

Europe on alert

European countries have reported a series of drone sightings over military bases, airports and power plants, as well as suspected sabotage of rail lines and undersea cables, which many governments blame on Russia. Moscow denies involvement.

The response

Germany has been strengthening its armed forces and its air defences, and is debating how to shoot down drones over its territory.

Ukraine

The assessment comes as Russia continues its invasion of Ukraine, and as the United States tries to restart peace talks.

INTERNATIONAL

Former UAE Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh Enters the Stalled Race for UN Secretary-General

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Lana Nusseibeh, the former ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, announced on Wednesday that she would stand to become the next secretary-general, joining a race that has stalled in the Security Council.

She said her candidacy aimed to rebuild trust in the United Nations and bring about meaningful change.

Her career

Ms Nusseibeh served as the UAE's ambassador to the United Nations from 2013 to 2024, the first woman to hold the post.

A deadlock

In an informal straw poll in the Security Council on October 16, every candidate received at least two negative votes from permanent members with a veto, leaving the selection stuck.

The deadline

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's term ends at the end of this year.

How it works

The Security Council recommends a candidate, who must avoid a veto from any of the five permanent members, and the General Assembly then appoints the secretary-general.

A woman's turn

No woman has held the post in the organisation's history, and many member states have called for one to be chosen this time.

Japan's role

Japan, a non-permanent member of the Security Council in the past and a major funder of the United Nations, marks 70 years of membership in December.

INTERNATIONAL

El Nino Could Push 50 Million People Deeper Into Hunger, the UN Warns, Calling It 'a Giant Monster'

By the International Desk

Up to 50 million people around the world could face severe food shortages because of El Nino, the head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Tom Fletcher, warned on Wednesday.

Speaking in Geneva, Mr Fletcher called the weather pattern "a giant monster" and urged governments to prepare.

The forecast

The World Meteorological Organization, which declared the El Nino in July, said on Wednesday that it was expected to peak around the end of the year and could reach the strongest level on record.

The regions at risk

Mr Fletcher said Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia could suffer severe damage. Many of those regions are already struggling with conflict, soaring prices and cuts in aid.

What El Nino is

El Nino is a warming of the sea surface in the eastern and central Pacific, from off the coast of Peru westward. It shifts rainfall patterns around the world, bringing drought to some regions and floods to others.

INTERNATIONAL

How often

El Nino events occur every two to seven years and usually last nine to 12 months.

Japan's weather

In Japan, El Nino tends to bring cooler summers and milder winters, though the effects vary. The weather agency forecast this week that temperatures would be above normal nationwide through January.

Food prices

A strong El Nino could damage harvests of rice, wheat and other crops and push up world food prices, adding to the inflation that many countries, including Japan, are already fighting.

INTERNATIONAL

Taiwan's Army Shows Japanese Reporters Its Stinger Drills on Penghu, a Tour Arranged by the American Side

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Taiwan's defence ministry opened training on the Penghu Islands to Japanese journalists based in Okinawa on Wednesday, in a tour arranged by the American Institute in Taiwan and the U.S. Consulate General in Naha.

The islands lie about 40 km off Taiwan's central west coast in the Taiwan Strait.

The drill

Soldiers of the army's Penghu Defence Command went through the procedure for firing the American-made Stinger surface-to-air missile. Officers said its range was about 4 km and that its launcher was highly mobile. "The training is carried out every day," one said.

A key position

Penghu is regarded as a strategic point in Taiwan's defence against China, controlling the approaches to the western coast.

History on show

The journalists were also shown an ammunition depot built by the Imperial Japanese Army during Japan's colonial rule of Taiwan.

Why Okinawa

The tour for reporters from Okinawa, the Japanese prefecture closest to Taiwan, underlines how closely the security of the southern islands is tied to that of the strait.

China's pressure

China regards Taiwan as part of its territory and has held large military exercises around the island.

Japan's position

Relations between Tokyo and Beijing soured after Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the Diet last November that a Taiwan contingency involving the use of force could amount to a situation threatening Japan's survival.

INTERNATIONAL

The Plaza Hotel, Where the 1985 Plaza Accord Was Signed, Will Close for at Least Four Years for Restoration

By the International Desk

The Plaza Hotel in Manhattan, where the finance ministers and central bankers of five leading economies agreed in 1985 to drive down the dollar, will close for at least four years from January for restoration of its exterior.

The company that runs the hotel said the planned work on the ageing building would make it impossible to keep operating normally.

The accord

The Plaza Accord of September 1985 brought together the United States, Japan, West Germany, France and Britain to correct the strength of the dollar. The yen rose sharply in the following years, a shift that reshaped Japan's economy and is often linked to the asset bubble of the late 1980s.

A landmark

The hotel opened in 1907 and has 18 floors. It appears in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel The Great Gatsby and in the film Home Alone 2, the Beatles stayed there on their first visit to America, and Donald Trump owned it for a time.

Why close

An expert quoted by an American newspaper said the hotel had probably decided it could not charge high room rates with noise and construction outside the windows.

Unanswered

The cost of the restoration and the date of reopening were not announced.

Today's yen

The dollar traded at about 158 yen on Wednesday. In 1985, before the accord, it bought about 240 yen.

ECONOMY

Wall Street Extends Gains as SpaceX's First Profit Since Listing Revives Appetite for AI Shares; Oil Falls Below \$98

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

Wall Street rose for a second day on Wednesday as strong results from SpaceX revived buying of technology and AI-related shares.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed 360.21 points higher at 52,856.09, and the Nasdaq Composite, which is heavy with technology companies, rebounded 278.04 points to 26,702.86.

SpaceX

SpaceX reported on Tuesday that its AI business was growing and that it had made its first quarterly profit since going public, which encouraged investors to return to high-technology shares. The company and Tesla have set up special committees to discuss a possible combination.

Winners and losers

IBM and Nvidia were among the notable gainers, while Nike fell.

Oil

West Texas Intermediate crude for December delivery fell 67 cents to \$97.15 a barrel, a second day of declines, after President Vladimir Putin said Russia was ready to resume peace talks with Ukraine in mid-November with the United States as mediator, easing worries about a global shortage of energy.

Tesla

After the close, Tesla reported that its net profit for July to September fell 43 per cent from a year earlier to \$787 million, as spending on AI for self-driving weighed on earnings. The results were broadly better than analysts had expected.

Meta

Meta Platforms said its net profit for the quarter rose about 3.6 times to \$9.86 billion, helped by strong advertising and by a large tax charge a year earlier.

The dollar

The dollar was quoted at 158.11-21 yen at 5 p.m. in New York, almost unchanged.

What's ahead

Investors are watching corporate earnings and the Federal Reserve's meeting next week, as well as developments in the Middle East.

ECONOMY

Foreign Visitors Fall for the First Time Since the Pandemic Year of 2021, but Their Spending Hits a Record 7 Trillion Yen

Chinese visitors are down by more than half after Beijing told its citizens to avoid Japan; September brought about 3.1 million visitors, 5 per cent fewer than a year earlier

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The number of foreign visitors to Japan from January to September fell 2.9 per cent from a year earlier to about 30.73 million, the Japan National Tourism Organization said on Wednesday, the first decline for the period since 2021, when travel was restricted by the coronavirus pandemic.

The comparison is with last year's record. The main reason was a 55.5 per cent drop in visitors from China, after the Chinese government urged its citizens to avoid travelling to Japan following Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's remarks in November last year about a Taiwan contingency.

Spending at a record

Visitors nevertheless spent more. Their spending on accommodation, shopping and other items reached a record of about 7.0574 trillion yen for January to September, up 1.9 per cent, according to preliminary figures from the Japan Tourism Agency.

September

In September alone, about 3.1 million people visited, around 5 per cent fewer than a year earlier, according to reports. Typhoons, higher fuel costs and the Chinese government's travel advice were among the factors cited.

Why spending held up

Visitors from other markets, including South Korea, Taiwan, the United States and Europe, have continued to come in large numbers, and the weak yen has encouraged spending on shopping, hotels and dining.

The government's goal

The government aims to attract 60 million visitors a year by 2030 and to raise their spending to 15 trillion yen.

Crowding

At the same time, popular destinations such as Kyoto are trying to manage crowding; Kyoto plans to charge residents less than visitors on its city buses.

The outlook

How quickly Chinese travel recovers will depend largely on relations between Tokyo and Beijing, which remain strained.

BUSINESS

Business in Brief

NTT opens transfers across the group, JR Kyushu marks ten years as a listed company, and a forest fund takes shape

By the Business Desk

NTT: The NTT group is introducing a system that allows about 100,000 employees to move between group companies, aiming to break down the barriers between its divisions, the Nikkei reported.

JR KYUSHU: Kyushu Railway marks 10 years since its shares were listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange on October 25, 2016, completing its privatisation. It is seeking to earn more from property while keeping its rail lines running and returning profits to shareholders, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

FOREST FUND: Financial groups, trading houses and general contractors are discussing what would be Japan's first forest fund, worth about 100 billion yen, according to business media.

IWAI COSMO: Iwai Cosmo Securities removed the reference to artificial intelligence from its statement on a cyberattack that placed unwanted orders in customers' accounts, after its system contractor, Trade Works, said the use of AI could not be confirmed.

RICOH: Ricoh plans to encourage the rental of AI servers with graphics processors that companies can keep on their own premises, according to reports.

HITACHI: Hitachi has developed a way of cooling GPUs that it says can cut the power used by AI data centres by about 30 per cent, according to technology media.

SUBARU: Subaru aims to offer driver assistance on ordinary roads at what it calls Level 2++, adding acceleration and steering support to its EyeSight system at a competitive price, according to Nikkei xTECH.

MAZDA: Mazda aims to capture carbon dioxide while cars are driven by using biofuel made from algae, with practical use targeted for the 2030s, the Asahi Shimbun reported.

BANKS: Japan's major banks are accelerating a shift to authentication using IC chips, The Japan Times reported.

THE YEN: The dollar was trading at about 158 yen in New York late on Wednesday.

EV SUBSIDIES: From January 1, the top subsidy for a standard electric car falls from 1.25 million yen to 750,000 yen, for a kei electric car from 550,000 yen to 440,000 yen, and for a plug-in hybrid from 800,000 yen to 480,000 yen.

GASOLINE: The subsidy for regular gasoline from Thursday to October 28 is 42.80 yen a litre, keeping the average near 170 yen.

COPPER: Mitsubishi Corp.'s share of the Copper World mine in Arizona will be 30,000 tonnes a year from the second half of 2029.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Champi nears Sakishima, Page 3.

Takaichi: promises kept, Page 5.

Tax bill: show the numbers, Page 6.

France's yields top 5%, Page 9.

ECONOMY

Bank of Japan Set to Judge Whether Its 2 Per Cent Price Target Has Finally Been Reached, Nearly 14 Years After Adopting It

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The Bank of Japan will decide at its policy meeting on October 29 and 30 whether its goal of 2 per cent inflation has been reached, people familiar with the matter said, a judgment that would mark a turning point after a long struggle against deflation.

The bank is expected to keep its short-term policy rate at about 1.25 per cent, after raising it at its September meeting.

A long road

The bank set the 2 per cent target in January 2013. If it now declares the target achieved, it will have taken almost 14 years.

The outlook report

The bank will set out its view in its quarterly Outlook for Economic Activity and Prices, published after the meeting. Its previous forecast was that the target would be reached in the period from the second half of fiscal 2026 into fiscal 2027. The final decision will be made just before the meeting.

Four years above 2 per cent

Core consumer prices, which exclude fresh food, have risen by more than 2 per cent a year for four straight years since 2022, according to the Internal Affairs Ministry. Financial markets already regard the target as met.

The bank's caution

The bank has said it wants to confirm the strength of underlying inflation, excluding temporary factors such as energy, and whether wages are rising steadily, before drawing a conclusion.

Why it matters

Declaring the target reached would signal a shift away from the policies of the long deflation era, and could shape expectations of further increases in interest rates.

Wages

A health ministry survey published on Wednesday showed that companies raised monthly pay by an average of 13,926 yen this year, the largest increase since comparable records began.

The yen

The yen's weakness, at about 158 to the dollar, adds to import prices, one of the factors the bank weighs.

BUSINESS

OpenAI Expands ChatGPT Advertising to 89 Countries Including Japan, With More Than 100,000 Advertisers Signed Up

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

OpenAI said on Wednesday that it had expanded advertising in ChatGPT to a total of 89 countries and regions, including Japan, adding 26 countries such as Argentina, Ukraine and Bangladesh.

The company began showing ads in February.

Which users

Ads appear in the free version and in the low-cost Go plan, which costs \$8 a month, about 1,260 yen. More expensive plans aimed at complex work remain free of advertising.

Advertisers

The total number of advertisers has passed 100,000.

Privacy

OpenAI said the content of users' conversations with the AI was not shared with advertisers and that user data was not sold.

Why ads

The company said advertising helped keep the service free or cheap, and that ads could be matched to what users need.

The business

OpenAI spends heavily on the computing power needed to run its models and has been looking for new sources of revenue.

Japan

Japan is one of ChatGPT's largest markets outside the United States.

ECONOMY



The Tokyo Stock Exchange at Kabutocho. The Nikkei average rose 545.82 yen on Wednesday to 64,621.24 as hopes of an end to the fighting between the United States and Iran cooled oil prices. (Photo: TG2 (CC))

ECONOMY

Nikkei Rebounds 545 Yen to 64,621 as Hopes of an End to U.S.-Iran Fighting Cool Oil Prices

The index gained as much as 748 yen in the morning before profit-taking; the yen held near 158 to the dollar as traders waited for the Bank of Japan

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Tokyo stocks rebounded on Wednesday as hopes that talks to end the fighting between the United States and Iran were making progress eased the rise in crude oil prices and encouraged buying.

The Nikkei Stock Average closed at 64,621.24, up 545.82 yen, or 0.85 per cent, recovering part of Tuesday's fall of 841 yen. The broader Topix index rose 34.52 points to 4,043.73. About 2.18 billion shares changed hands on the prime market.

Strong morning

Buying was strongest in the morning. The Nikkei climbed more than 1,000 yen in early trading and briefly recovered the 65,000 mark, and at the midday break it stood 748.13 yen higher at 64,823.55. Gains narrowed in the afternoon as some investors took profits.

Oil in focus

The price of crude oil has been the market's main worry this month. On Tuesday the index slid as chip stocks fell on doubts about the AI boom and oil climbed. On Wednesday, signs of progress toward ending the fighting in the Middle East reversed part of that move.

The yen

In the currency market, the dollar was at 158.12-14 yen at 5 p.m. in Tokyo, little changed. Dealers said trading was thin ahead of the Bank of Japan's policy meeting next week, and that wariness about possible intervention by the government and the central bank

kept the yen from weakening further.

Overnight

In New York on Wednesday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 360.21 points to 52,856.09 and the Nasdaq Composite gained 278.04 to 26,702.86. SpaceX's results, which showed growth in its AI business and its first quarterly profit since it went public, revived buying of technology shares.

Thursday morning

Tokyo opened lower on Thursday but briefly turned higher, and the Nikkei was 9 yen up at 9:20 a.m.

After the close

The suspension of some online services by banks and brokerages because of the critical flaws in the PHP programming language came on Wednesday night, after the market had closed. The bankers' association said settlement systems were not affected.

Next week

The Bank of Japan meets on October 29 and 30 and is expected to judge whether its 2 per cent inflation target has been reached, while leaving its policy rate at about 1.25 per cent. The Federal Reserve meets on October 27 and 28.

1999, the health ministry said on Wednesday.

The figure was 325 yen more than last year and the fifth consecutive increase.

The rate

The average rise was 4.4 per cent, unchanged from last year.

The survey

The ministry surveyed private companies with 100 or more employees in July and August, and 1,862 responded.

Most raised pay

The share of companies that had raised or planned to raise wages was 92 per cent, up 0.5 points.

'Labour shortages'

"Momentum for wage increases is growing in response to labour shortages," a ministry official said.

By industry

The share of companies raising pay was highest in electricity, gas, heat supply and water, at 100 per cent, followed by information and communications at 96.6 per cent and wholesale and retail at 96.1 per cent. It was lowest in transport and postal services, at 81.1 per cent.

Business conditions

In August, 40.3 per cent of companies described business conditions as good, 48.6 per cent as not very good and 8.4 per cent as bad.

The gap

Many people say they do not feel better off, because prices have also risen. Real wages, adjusted for inflation, have struggled to keep up with the cost of living.

ECONOMY

EV Subsidies Will Shrink From January, With the Top Payment for a Standard Electric Car Falling From 1.25 Million Yen to 750,000

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The industry ministry said on Wednesday that it would reduce subsidies for buyers of electric vehicles, fuel cell vehicles and similar cars registered on or after January 1, because demand has been stronger than expected and the budget risked running out.

Overall, the subsidies will fall to roughly 60 to 80 per cent of their current levels.

The amounts

The maximum subsidy for a standard electric car will fall from 1.25 million yen to 750,000 yen. For a kei, or light, electric car, it will fall from 550,000 yen to 440,000 yen, and for a plug-in hybrid from 800,000 yen to 480,000 yen.

Fuel cell cars

Fuel cell vehicles are also covered by the reduction, though the ministry's figures for them were not reported.

Carmakers' share

Additional amounts that depend on each carmaker's own efforts will also be reduced.

Keeping it going

The ministry said the change was meant to keep the programme running within its budget.

Buy now?

The change could encourage some buyers to register their cars before the end of the year to receive the larger payments.

The market

Electric cars still account for a small share of new car sales in Japan compared with China and Europe, though new models from Japanese and foreign makers have widened the choice.

The goal

The government aims for all new passenger cars sold to be electrified, including hybrids, by 2035.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

PHP flaws: what to do, Page 1.

Champi nears Sakishima, Page 3.

Takaichi: promises kept, Page 5.

Tax bill: show the numbers, Page 6.

France's yields top 5%, Page 9.

Record late heat, Page 19.

ECONOMY

Gasoline Rises 10 Sen to 170.20 Yen, Its First Increase in Three Weeks, as the Government Weighs Help With Winter Power Bills

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The national average retail price of regular gasoline rose 10 sen from a week earlier to 170.20 yen a litre as of Monday, the first increase in three weeks, the industry ministry said on Wednesday.

A government subsidy keeps the price at around 170 yen. For the week from Thursday to October 28, the subsidy will be 42.80 yen a litre of regular gasoline.

Kerosene and diesel

Kerosene rose 10 yen to 2,573 yen for an 18-litre can, the size many households buy for heating. Diesel rose 10 sen to 159.70 yen a litre.

Winter bills

The government is considering subsidies for household electricity and gas bills for January to March, when heating pushes up use, and may start the support from December's bills. It expects to use reserve funds set aside for the response to the Middle East situation and is also considering a supplementary budget.

Record bills

The subsidies for July to September have ended. October electricity bills at the 10 major power companies reached record highs, and city gas prices also rose sharply.

The prime minister

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the House of Councillors on October 8 that the government would watch how energy prices affected household budgets ahead of winter and respond appropriately.

The party

Koichi Hagiuda, the Liberal Democrats' acting secretary-general, said on an NHK programme on Sunday that the cost of electricity and gas needed to be considered before the end of the year.

The cost of crude

Oil prices have been driven up by the war in the Middle East, and Japan, which imports almost all its crude, has seen its trade deficit widen.

What it means

At this week's subsidy of 42.80 yen, the average price would be about 213 yen a litre without government support.

BUSINESS

Mitsubishi Corp. to Invest 152.6 Billion Yen in an Arizona Copper Mine as AI Data Centres Drive Up Demand

By the Business Desk

Mitsubishi Corp. said on Wednesday that it would take part in developing the Copper World copper mine in Arizona with the Canadian company Hudbay Minerals, investing about 152.6 billion yen.

The mine is expected to produce an average of 100,000 tonnes of copper a year from the second half of 2029, and Mitsubishi will have rights to 30,000 tonnes a year.

Why copper

Demand for copper is growing as artificial intelligence spreads, because the data centres that run AI need large amounts of power cables and wiring. Copper is also used in electric vehicles and renewable energy equipment.

Prices

Copper prices have risen because of supply disruptions at large mines and export restrictions imposed by some producing countries.

Securing supply

Japan has almost no copper of its own, and trading houses such as Mitsubishi have invested in mines abroad to secure supplies for Japanese industry.

The partner

Hudbay, based in Toronto, operates mines in the Americas and has been developing Copper World near Tucson.

In the United States

Mining in the United States has gained importance as Washington tries to reduce reliance on imports of

ECONOMY

Markets at a Glance

By the Markets Desk

NIKKEI 225, WEDNESDAY CLOSE: 64,621.24, up 545.82 (0.85 per cent).

TOPIX: 4,043.73, up 34.52.

VOLUME, PRIME MARKET: About 2.18 billion shares.

MORNING HIGH POINT: The Nikkei was up 748.13 at 64,823.55 at the midday break.

THURSDAY MORNING: The Nikkei opened lower, briefly turned higher and was up 9 yen at 9:20 a.m.

DOLLAR, 5 P.M. WEDNESDAY, TOKYO: 158.12-14 yen, 5 sen weaker for the yen.

EURO, 5 P.M. TOKYO: 177.50-54 yen.

DOLLAR, 5 P.M. WEDNESDAY, NEW YORK: 158.11-21 yen.

DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE: 52,856.09, up 360.21.

NASDAQ COMPOSITE: 26,702.86, up 278.04.

WTI CRUDE, DECEMBER: \$97.15 a barrel, down 67 cents.

REGULAR GASOLINE, NATIONAL AVERAGE (OCT. 19): 170.20 yen a litre, up 10 sen.

BANK OF JAPAN: Meets October 29-30; policy rate about 1.25 per cent.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Record late heat, Page 19.

Sato thanks Koshien, Page 22.

ECONOMY

Visitors in Numbers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

JANUARY-SEPTEMBER VISITORS: About 30.73 million.

CHANGE: Down 2.9 per cent from last year's record.

FIRST FALL SINCE: 2021, when the pandemic restricted travel.

VISITORS FROM CHINA: Down 55.5 per cent.

THE REASON GIVEN: Beijing's call to avoid travel to Japan after the prime minister's Taiwan remarks.

SEPTEMBER: About 3.1 million visitors, around 5 per cent fewer than a year earlier.

SPENDING, JANUARY-SEPTEMBER: About 7.0574 trillion yen, a record.

SPENDING CHANGE: Up 1.9 per cent.

SOURCES: Japan National Tourism Organization; Japan Tourism Agency (preliminary).

THE 2030 TARGET: 60 million visitors spending 15 trillion yen a year.

ECONOMY

Average Monthly Pay Rise Reaches a Record 13,926 Yen as Labour Shortages Push Companies to Raise Wages

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Companies raised their employees' monthly pay by an average of 13,926 yen per person this year, the largest increase since comparable records began in

BUSINESS

critical minerals, many of which are processed in China.

Copper alloys

Demand for copper alloys used in AI servers has also led JX Advanced Metals and Nippon Steel to raise production, according to reports.

BUSINESS

Tesla's Profit Drops 43 Per Cent as AI Spending Bites; Meta's Jumps 3.6 Times but a New Mexico Court Orders It to Pay \$25 Billion

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

Tesla said on Wednesday that its net profit for July to September fell 43 per cent from a year earlier to \$787 million, as spending on artificial intelligence for self-driving weighed on earnings, while operating profit fell 56 per cent to \$718 million.

Revenue edged down to about \$28.05 billion. Deliveries of electric vehicles fell 2 per cent to 486,532.

Better than feared

The results were broadly better than analysts had expected, which may ease concern about Tesla's heavy spending on AI and humanoid robots, which it sees as its future growth areas.

Meta's profit

Meta Platforms, which owns Facebook and Instagram, said its net profit rose about 3.6 times to \$9.86 billion, as higher advertising prices and more ads lifted revenue 26 per cent to \$64.61 billion. The year-earlier quarter had included a large tax charge.

Users

Daily users of Meta's services rose 3 per cent to 3.64 billion.

Legal costs

Meta recorded about \$9.9 billion in costs for lawsuits brought by American authorities over the harm social media is alleged to do to young people. It raised its forecast for total expenses this year to \$175 billion to \$179 billion.

\$25 billion

Separately, a district court in New Mexico ordered Meta on Wednesday to pay the state \$25 billion, about 3.9 trillion yen, after a jury found in September that the company had violated the state's consumer protection law in protecting Facebook users' personal data. It is among the largest penalties ever imposed on a big technology company.

Children and social media

Meta has also said that Japan should limit how long children use social media, proposing two hours a day, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

SpaceX

The results followed SpaceX's report of its first quarterly profit since going public.

BUSINESS

Hino's AI Watches Bus Passengers and Flags Those at Risk of Falling, Such as People Not Holding a Strap

By the Business Desk

Hino Motors said on Wednesday that it had developed a system that uses artificial intelligence to spot route bus passengers at risk of falling, to help drivers check safety inside the bus.

The AI analyses images from cameras inside the bus and picks out passengers who are standing without holding a handrail or strap.

A red frame

A monitor at the driver's seat shows the passengers at risk outlined in red, so the driver can see them at a glance.

Retrofitting

The system can be added to buses already in service.

Trials

It will be installed on buses run by members of the Nihon Bus Association, and its effectiveness will be tested until December. Hino plans to start selling it next year.

The problem

Passengers falling when buses start, stop or turn is one of the most common causes of injuries on route buses, and older passengers are at particular risk.

Drivers' burden

Bus companies face a severe shortage of drivers, and tools that help a single driver watch the whole bus could ease their workload.

Other AI

Osaka Metro is extending for a year an experiment with AI-routed on-demand buses in some areas, according to reports.

BUSINESS

Tea Industry Unites to Protect 'Nihoncha,' Now a Protected Geographical Indication, From Foreign Imitations

By the Business Desk

Tea industry organisations launched a committee in Tokyo on Wednesday to promote the use of "Nihoncha," or Japanese tea, as a geographical indication and to protect the brand from imitations.

The committee announced a declaration calling for wider use of the GI label.

Registered in July

Nihoncha was registered under the geographical indication system in July. Registered products can carry a special mark, and the government cracks down on misleading labels.

Matcha boom

Demand has grown with a worldwide boom in matcha, and the damage from foreign imitations has become serious.

The plan

The industry will work together to promote the GI label, keep production stable and remove fake products from the market.

An ambassador

The actor Kasumi Arimura was appointed as a supporting ambassador for Nihoncha.

Other GI products

Japan's GI system, introduced in 2015, protects products such as Kobe beef and Yubari melons whose quality is tied to where they are made.

Exports

Green tea exports have grown rapidly in recent years, led by matcha for drinks and sweets in the United States and Europe.

BUSINESS

Board of Audit Finds the Cost of a Small Business Aid System Has Swollen to 96.3 Billion Yen, 1.7 Times the Original Contract

By the Business Desk

The Board of Audit said on Wednesday that the cost of rebuilding a computer system at the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises and Regional Innovation had grown to about 96.26 billion yen, 1.7 times the original contract, because of extra work and other problems.

The system manages contracts for two mutual aid schemes for small businesses: the Small Enterprise Mutual Aid Plan, with about 1.72 million members at the end of fiscal 2025, and a scheme to prevent chain bankruptcies, with about 670,000 contracts.

Old system

The system was first developed in 1975 and last overhauled in 1995.

Avoidable costs

The board estimated that about 4.65 billion yen of the increase would not have arisen if the project had been properly planned and carried out. About 67.93 billion yen had been paid by the end of March.

Delays

The new system was originally due to start in August 2025. Its launch has been postponed three times, and it is now planned for February 2028.

Members' money

The cost is covered by investment returns on members' contributions. The organisation estimated that some payments under the small enterprise plan could be reduced by about 400 yen in fiscal 2026, but said both schemes could continue to operate normally.

A familiar story

Large government information technology projects in Japan have repeatedly run over budget and behind

schedule.

BUSINESS

McDonald's Launches a 390-Yen Afternoon Set of a Side and a Drink to Draw Customers Looking for a Break

By the Business Desk

McDonald's Japan began selling a set called the 390 Pair nationwide on Wednesday, combining a side item with a medium drink for 390 yen, available from 2 p.m.

Bought separately, the items can cost up to 250 yen more.

The choices

Customers can choose from five side items, including medium French fries, a five-piece order of Chicken McNuggets and small pancakes, and from 10 drinks, including Coca-Cola and coffee.

Tested in Kyushu

The set was first sold on a limited basis in parts of Fukuoka and Saga prefectures from December 2025, and the good response led to the national launch.

Afternoon trade

The company hopes to attract people looking for an afternoon break, a market it also targets with its McCafe range of sweets and drinks.

Prices

Fast-food chains have raised prices several times as ingredient and labour costs climbed, and many are now using set deals to keep customers coming.

The tax cut

Meals eaten in restaurants are taxed at 10 per cent and would not be affected by the planned cut in the consumption tax on food, though takeaway food would be.

BUSINESS

Chubu Electric Considers Bringing in Outside Experts to Recalculate the Hamaoka Plant's Earthquake Data After Manipulation

By the Business Desk

The president of Chubu Electric Power said on Wednesday that the company was considering involving outside experts in recalculating seismic data for its Hamaoka nuclear power plant in Shizuoka Prefecture, after it admitted that earlier data had been manipulated.

"We will create a team that can be trusted and do the recalculation," he told reporters in the town of Yoshida.

A trusted team

He said that if including third-party specialists would make the result trustworthy, the company would like to adopt that approach. Details have not been decided.

Taking time

The recalculated data will be made public, but he said the work would take time.

The standard

The company said on October 8 that it would recalculate the design basis ground motion, the strength of shaking used as the benchmark for the plant's earthquake-resistant design.

Local concern

He met the mayor of Shimada, Kinuyo Someya, on Wednesday afternoon.

The plant

Hamaoka sits close to the expected source area of a Nankai Trough earthquake. All its reactors have been offline since 2011, when the government asked the company to suspend operations after the Fukushima disaster.

The regulator

The Nuclear Regulation Authority has been examining whether the plant meets the safety standards introduced after Fukushima, and the manipulation has cast doubt on that process.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Crossword, Page 25.

PHP flaws: what to do, Page 1.

Champi nears Sakishima, Page 3.

Takaichi: promises kept, Page 5.

BUSINESS

Panasonic Corrects Its Recall Notice: Two People Were Hurt Fleeing a 2024 Fire Linked to a Drum Washer-Dryer

By the Business Desk

Panasonic said on Wednesday that two people were injured while escaping a fire in 2024 that may be linked to drum-type washer-dryers it is recalling, correcting its earlier statement that no one had been hurt.

The company announced the recall over the risk of fire on October 15.

The fire

The fire, in Saitama Prefecture in 2024, burned down a house. Panasonic learned of the injuries when it contacted customers after the recall was announced. It has not disclosed how seriously the two were hurt.

Seven fires

Seven fires had occurred in Japan and abroad before the correction.

The cause

The cause of the Saitama fire has not been confirmed, but Panasonic said it could not rule out a link with the mechanism of ignition it had identified in announcing the recall.

What to do

Owners of the affected models should stop using them, check the list of models on the company's website and contact Panasonic.

Recalls

Fires caused by household appliances are usually reported to the Consumer Affairs Agency, which publishes information on serious accidents.

Earlier statements

Panasonic had said when it announced the recall that no injuries had been reported, a statement it has now corrected.

BUSINESS

Tanita Returns to Kitchen Appliances After 38 Years With a Toaster That Also Grills Fish

By the Business Desk

Tanita, the maker of scales and body composition monitors, is returning to the market for cooking appliances for the first time in 38 years, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported, with products including a multifunctional toaster that can also grill fish.

The toaster will sell for about 50,000 yen, according to the report.

A return

Tanita, based in Tokyo, made kitchen appliances in the past before concentrating on measuring devices.

Fish at home

Grilling fish at home is a staple of Japanese cooking, but many people avoid it because of the smoke and the cleaning, and appliance makers have competed to make it easier.

Health

The company is known for promoting healthy eating, including through its staff cafeteria recipes and restaurants.

The market

Small kitchen appliances that combine several functions have sold well as households look to save space and time.

The competition

The company enters a market crowded with established appliance makers.

Body fat

Tanita is best known for bathroom scales that estimate body fat, a type of device it introduced for home use in 1992.

One for several

Multifunction toasters that can bake bread, grill fish and roast vegetables have become a popular category as households look to replace several appliances with one.

Details

Release dates and other specifications were not reported.

TECHNOLOGY



An H3 rocket lifts off from the Tanegashima Space Center, in a file photo. The tenth H3 launched the MMX probe on Tuesday, and JAXA said on Wednesday that the probe's power, attitude control and communications were all working normally. (File photo: WPM Productions)

TECHNOLOGY

MMX Is Working Normally on Its Way to Mars, JAXA Says, With Its Solar Power, Steering and Radio Link All in Order

The probe launched on Tuesday will tune its instruments during the cruise, aiming to enter orbit around Mars in August 2027 and bring samples of Phobos home in 2031

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The Martian Moons eXploration probe, MMX, is functioning normally after its launch on Tuesday, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said on Wednesday.

JAXA said the probe's basic functions, including generating power with its solar panels, controlling its attitude and communicating with the ground, were working without problems.

The launch

MMX was launched on the 10th H3 rocket from the Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima Prefecture on Tuesday.

The cruise

During the journey to Mars the team will adjust the instruments on board. The probe is scheduled to reach Mars and enter orbit around the planet in August 2027.

Phobos

The mission's main goal is to land on Phobos, the larger of Mars's two moons, collect samples of its surface and bring them back to Earth in July 2031. It is a Japanese-led international mission.

A world first

If it succeeds, it will be the first mission to bring back material from the Martian system.

Why Phobos

Scientists want to know whether Phobos and the smaller moon, Deimos, are captured asteroids or fragments thrown up when a large body struck Mars. Phobos may also carry material blasted off Mars itself, which could help in the search for traces of past life.

Japan's record

Japan has twice brought back samples from asteroids, with Hayabusa from Itokawa in 2010 and Hayabusa2 from Ryugu in 2020.

The rocket

JAXA plans to hand over H3 launches to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, the rocket's maker, from 2027.

Next milestones

The next major events will be course corrections during the cruise and the arrival at Mars in August next year.

TECHNOLOGY

Personal Data From 22 Prefectural Police Forces May Have Leaked Through a Disaster Messaging Service, About 141,000 Records in All

Names and email addresses of about 125,000 officers and staff, and the email addresses of 16,000 residents who signed up for crime alerts, are affected; no investigative information is thought to be involved

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The personal information of police officers and staff at 22 prefectural police forces may have leaked as a result of unauthorised access to the systems of a company that provides disaster information services, the National Police Agency said on Wednesday.

The company is Arcadia, based in Minoh, Osaka Prefecture, which provides systems for distributing disaster information.

The numbers

Through a service used to confirm the safety of staff during disasters, the names and email addresses of officers and staff at 20 prefectural police forces, about 125,000 records, may have leaked. Through crime prevention email services, the email addresses of about 16,000 residents registered with four prefectural police forces may also have leaked.

No case files

No leak of investigative information has been confirmed, the agency said. "We are confirming the facts," it said.

Tochigi first

Arcadia notified the Tochigi prefectural police by email on October 13 of a possible leak, and Tochigi stopped using the system the same day. Details of the

departments to which all its staff belong may have leaked.

Growing

On Tuesday the number of affected forces was reported as seven, including Tochigi, Gunma and Fukuoka. The total has since grown to 22.

Beware of emails

Arcadia and the police have warned people to be careful of suspicious emails that might use the leaked information, such as messages pretending to come from the police.

The wider wave

The leak is one of a series of data breaches at Japanese companies and organisations disclosed this month, many of them involving contractors that hold data on behalf of their clients.

Why it matters

Lists of police officers' names and email addresses could be valuable to criminals planning phishing or other targeted attacks, and the residents who signed up for crime alerts did so to stay safe.

TECHNOLOGY

Up to 4.2 Million Records Leaked From the Comic Cmoa E-Book Store, Its Operator NTT Solmare Says

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

NTT Solmare, the Osaka-based operator of the e-book store Comic Cmoa, said on Wednesday that up to about 4.2 million records had leaked as a result of unauthorised access to its systems.

The figure was calculated from information remaining in the system's logs.

What leaked

The leaked information includes email addresses, dates of birth and gender. The items differ from user to user.

Duplicates

The 4.2 million records may include more than one entry for the same person, so the number of people affected may be smaller.

The store

Comic Cmoa is one of Japan's largest online stores for manga and e-books.

Payment data

The company's announcement as reported did not say whether any payment card information was involved.

What to do

Users should be wary of emails that appear to come from the store or that mention their personal details, and should change their passwords if they reuse them on other services.

Part of a wave

The disclosure came on the same day as leaks at Recruit and suspicious access at Aeon, adding to a run of breaches this month.

TECHNOLOGY

Recruit Says Up to 3.7 Million Personal Records May Have Leaked From Its Carsensor Used-Car Site and Other Services

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Recruit said on Wednesday that up to about 3.7 million personal records may have leaked from Carsensor, its used-car information site, and other services, after suspicious access to its systems from outside.

The information includes names and addresses, but not credit card payment details.

Dealers too

The names of dealer staff registered with C-MATCH, a business support service for used-car dealers, may also have leaked.

The timeline

Recruit detected the suspicious access on October 17, determined the number of records involved on October 20 and announced it on Wednesday.

No misuse yet

The company said it had not confirmed any misuse of the information.

Carmakers' sites

Nissan and Mitsubishi Motors temporarily suspended their used-car search sites on Wednesday, and Mazda stopped updating its own.

A big service

Carsensor is one of Japan's largest used-car listing sites, used by dealers across the country.

Advice

Users should watch for phishing messages that use their names and addresses to appear genuine.

TECHNOLOGY

Aeon Detects Unauthorised Access to Websites Run by 13 Group Companies, Which Cannot Be Viewed

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Aeon said on Wednesday that it had detected unauthorised access by a third party to some of the websites run by its group companies, and that sites connected with 13 companies, including Aeon Retail, could not be viewed.

The company is carrying out maintenance to check security and is investigating the cause.

Shops unaffected

Aeon said the systems used to run its stores and its online shopping sites were not affected.

Personal data

The company is investigating whether any personal information leaked and will publish the results when they are known.

The group

Aeon is one of Japan's largest retail groups, with supermarkets, shopping malls, financial services and other businesses.

The timing

The announcement came the same day as critical flaws in the PHP programming language led many companies to take websites offline, though Aeon did not link its problem to the flaws.

Not alone

Recruit and NTT Solmare also announced leaks on Wednesday.

Next

Aeon said it was working to restore the sites.

TECHNOLOGY

Wednesday's Breach Disclosures

By the Technology Desk

POLICE: Data from 22 prefectural police forces may have leaked via Arcadia's systems; about 125,000 staff records and 16,000 residents' email addresses.

COMIC CMOA: Up to about 4.2 million records, including email addresses, dates of birth and gender.

RECRUIT: Up to about 3.7 million records, including names and addresses, from Carsensor and other services.

AEON: Unauthorised access to websites of 13 group companies; investigation of personal data under way.

IWAI COSMO SECURITIES: Removed the reference to AI from its statement on an attack that placed unwanted orders in customers' accounts.

USED-CAR SITES: Nissan and Mitsubishi Motors suspended search sites; Mazda stopped updates.

KDDI: Reported to have published information about merchants without their consent.

MONEX: Temporarily stopped accepting applications to open securities accounts.

PHP: Banks, railways and others paused services as a precaution against the newly disclosed flaws.

ADVICE: Treat unexpected emails and messages with suspicion, and change reused passwords.

TECHNOLOGY

PHP: How the Week Unfolded

By the Technology Desk

TUESDAY, OCT. 20: The vulnerability identifiers circulate on Hacker News and social media.

TUESDAY: The PHP security team announces a security release for 14:00 GMT on Wednesday, a day earlier than planned.

TUESDAY: CERT-EU publishes an advisory naming both flaws.

EARLY WEDNESDAY, JAPAN TIME: The PHP developers' warning of two serious flaws reaches Japan.

WEDNESDAY EVENING: Japan's National Cybersecurity Office calls for a prompt response; companies begin pausing services.

WEDNESDAY, ABOUT 10 P.M.: The prime minister urges prompt fixes and calls suspending a site an effective stopgap.

WEDNESDAY, 11 P.M.: PHP 8.5.12, 8.4.27, 8.3.36 and 8.2.35 are released.

OVERNIGHT: Britain, France, the United States and the EU issue warnings; Finland and the Netherlands take sites offline.

THURSDAY MORNING: The FBI warns of risks to confidential data; MUFG Bank suspends some services.

NEXT: Companies apply the fixes and restore services, and check whether anyone got in first.

TECHNOLOGY

Liberal Democrats Propose an AI 'Observation Network' to Spot Attacks on Supply Chains Early, as AI-Assisted Hacking Spreads

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The Liberal Democratic Party has drafted a proposal recommending an AI-based network to watch over supply chains and detect signs of cyberattacks early, to protect companies, especially small and medium-sized ones, the Nikkei reported.

The proposal is to be finalised and submitted to the government.

Why supply chains

Attackers often break into large companies through smaller suppliers and contractors whose defences are weaker, and a breach at one company can spread to

TECHNOLOGY

many.

Traces of AI agents

GMO Cybersecurity has found traces of AI agents, including one of Chinese origin called ARTEX, in attacks on about 80 Japanese companies in sectors such as insurance, finance, logistics and retail, according to reports. Several led to confirmed leaks.

Fifteen seconds

A security company demonstrated that a Chinese AI tool could be misused to extract information from a website in 15 seconds, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported on its front page.

Getting around the safeguards

The newspaper also reported on methods of getting around the safeguards that AI developers build in to prevent misuse, and on the linking of several tools to make intrusions more efficient.

A headquarters

The party earlier called the wave of cyberattacks a "grave crisis" and urged the government to set up a response headquarters at the Prime Minister's Office.

The PHP lesson

This week's critical flaws in PHP were themselves found with the help of AI, a reminder that the technology can serve defenders as well as attackers.

TECHNOLOGY

Digital Agency Adds AI Agents to 'Gennai,' the Generative AI Used Across Ministries, and Publishes Rules for Its Use

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The Digital Agency has added AI agent functions to Gennai, the generative AI environment it provides for government staff, which is available to about 180,000 people across ministries, according to the agency and technology media.

AI agents are systems that can carry out a series of tasks with some independence, such as gathering information, drafting documents and checking them, rather than simply answering a question.

The rules

The agency has also published "Gennai standards" covering governance, security and safety, according to the reports. They set out who is responsible for what, how confidential information is to be handled, how AI models are chosen, and a preference for processing data in Japan.

Open source

The agency plans to release the system as open source later, the reports said.

Why it matters

Ministries face heavy workloads and difficulty in recruiting, and the government hopes AI can take over routine work such as drafting and summarising documents.

The risks

The use of AI in government raises questions about accuracy, accountability and the protection of confidential information, which the standards are intended to address.

The wider push

The government held the first meeting of a liaison council of ministries on accelerating the use of AI on Wednesday and plans an action plan by the end of the year.

TECHNOLOGY

U.S. Start-Up Says It Has Given a Patient a Virus Designed by AI for the First Time, to Fight a Drug-Resistant Infection

By the Science Desk

Radical Numerics, an American start-up, says it has given a patient a virus designed by artificial intelligence, a step it describes as a world first.

The virus is a phage, a type of virus that infects and multiplies inside bacteria, and it was designed to attack bacteria taken from the patient.

The patient

The treatment was given to one patient with a severe bacterial infection that antibiotics could not cure. The company has not disclosed the patient's condition or the outcome.

Tested first

The phage's effect was checked in a test tube before it was given.

Outside a trial

The treatment was given under a programme of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that allows seriously ill patients to receive unapproved treatments outside clinical trials.

No paper yet

The company has not published a scientific paper or disclosed details of the treatment, so its claims have not been independently checked.

A new path

The New York Times said that success would point to a new route for AI in medicine.

Why phages

Phage therapy has a long history but has been overshadowed by antibiotics. Interest has revived as bacteria resistant to antibiotics have spread, and finding a phage that matches a patient's infection can take time, a task AI could speed up.

Caution

Experts generally caution that single cases cannot show whether a treatment is safe and effective.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology in Brief

By the Technology Desk

NTT: Group companies have demonstrated AI that identifies leaks in water pipes in about 15 minutes, AI that estimates vegetation and ecosystems from group data, and the coordination of wireless base stations and power use, according to Nikkei xTECH.

OSAKA METRO: An experiment with AI-routed on-demand buses has been extended by a year in some areas, according to Nikkei xTECH.

VOICE ACTORS: Performers' unions are proposing standards for the use of AI-generated voices, including prior consent, the management of voice data and compensation, according to reports.

MICROSOFT: Companies are working through Microsoft's large monthly batch of security fixes for October alongside the PHP updates.

MONEX: Monex Securities temporarily stopped accepting applications to open securities accounts on Wednesday.

KDDI: KDDI was reported to have published information about merchants without their consent.

SAKURA INTERNET: The data centre operator stopped some functions of its services as a precaution against the PHP flaws.

THE EU: The European Commission opened an investigation into Booking.com over its measures against fake listings and phishing.

CHATGPT: OpenAI expanded advertising to 89 countries and regions, including Japan.

THE AI VIRUS: An American start-up said it had treated a patient with a bacteria-killing virus designed by AI.

TECHNOLOGY

1797: Andre-Jacques Garnerin Cuts Himself Loose From a Balloon Over Paris and Makes the First Parachute Descent

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 22, 1797, the French balloonist Andre-Jacques Garnerin rose over the Parc Monceau in Paris beneath a hydrogen balloon, sitting in a small basket attached to a folded canopy of silk.

At a height of roughly a thousand metres he cut the cord that held him to the balloon.

The descent

The canopy opened, but without a vent at the top to let air escape it swung violently from side to side as it fell, and Garnerin was reportedly airsick by the time he landed in a nearby plain. He was unhurt.

No frame

Earlier designs, including sketches attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, imagined parachutes held open by a rigid frame. Garnerin's had none: it was held open only by the air, the principle on which every parachute since has relied.

The vent

Later descents used a small opening at the top of the canopy, a suggestion attributed to the astronomer Jerome Lalande, which made the fall far steadier.

A showman

Garnerin made repeated descents before paying crowds, and his wife, Jeanne-Genevieve, became one of the first women to jump.

From show to safety

For more than a century parachutes were mainly an entertainment. They became life-saving equipment for aviators only in the early 20th century, and were issued widely to pilots after the First World War.

Today

Parachutes now land spacecraft, slow aircraft on short runways and deliver supplies, as well as carrying soldiers and sport jumpers.

The idea that endured

Garnerin's insight that a simple sheet of fabric could slow a fall safely remains the heart of every design.

TECHNOLOGY

1903: George Beadle Is Born; His Work With Bread Mould Showed That Genes Act by Making Enzymes

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

George Wells Beadle, who helped show how genes control the chemistry of living cells, was born on October 22, 1903, in Wahoo, Nebraska.

He grew up on a farm and expected to become a farmer himself until a teacher encouraged him to study science.

The bread mould

In the early 1940s at Stanford University, Beadle and the biochemist Edward Tatum exposed the bread mould Neurospora to X-rays to cause mutations, then looked for strains that could no longer make a particular nutrient they needed to grow.

One gene, one enzyme

Each such mutation, they found, blocked a single step in the mould's chemistry, a step carried out by a single enzyme. They concluded that each gene directs the making of one enzyme, the idea that became known as the one gene, one enzyme hypothesis.

The Nobel Prize

Beadle and Tatum shared the 1958 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with Joshua Lederberg, who had shown that bacteria can exchange genes.

Refined since

The idea has since been refined, because some genes make proteins that are not enzymes and some make RNA rather than protein. But it gave biology a way to link genes to the chemistry of the cell.

A new discipline

The approach helped found biochemical genetics, which in turn led to molecular biology and the understanding of DNA.

A university leader

Beadle later became president of the University of Chicago. He died in 1989.

Maize

He also studied the origins of maize, arguing that it descended from a wild grass called teosinte, a view later supported by genetic studies.

TECHNOLOGY

1938: '10-22-38 ASTORIA': Chester Carlson Makes the First Xerographic Copy in a Rented Room in Queens

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 22, 1938, in a small laboratory he had set up in Astoria, Queens, the patent attorney and physicist Chester Carlson and his assistant, Otto Kornei, made the first copy by the process that would become known as xerography.

Kornei wrote "10.-22.-38 ASTORIA" in ink on a glass microscope slide.

How it worked

Carlson rubbed a zinc plate coated with sulphur with a handkerchief to give it an electric charge, placed the slide on it and shone a bright lamp on them. Where light struck, the charge drained away. Dusting the plate with a fine powder made the letters appear, and

the image was transferred to waxed paper.

Why he did it

Carlson worked in a patent office and spent long hours copying documents and drawings by hand, which was slow and hard on his eyes. He wanted a dry, quick way to copy them.

Rejection

For years companies including IBM and General Electric turned him down. The process seemed crude, and carbon paper was cheap.

Haloid

In the 1940s the Battelle Memorial Institute agreed to develop the process, and the Haloid Company of Rochester, New York, took a licence. The word xerography, from the Greek for dry writing, was coined for it.

The 914

Haloid, renamed Xerox, introduced the Xerox 914, the first automatic plain-paper copier for offices, in 1959. It became one of the most successful products in American business history.

The legacy

The same principle, using light and static electricity to place toner on paper, is at the heart of laser printers.

Japan

Japanese manufacturers, including Fuji Xerox, a joint venture formed in 1962 and now called Fujifilm Business Innovation, became major makers of copiers.

TECHNOLOGY

1962: Kennedy Tells the World of Soviet Missiles in Cuba, Revealed by Photographs From a U-2 Spy Plane

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On the evening of October 22, 1962, President John F. Kennedy told Americans in a televised address that the Soviet Union was building sites for nuclear missiles in Cuba, and announced a naval quarantine of the island.

The evidence came from photographs taken by a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft flying high over western Cuba on October 14.

The photo interpreters

Analysts at the National Photographic Interpretation Center identified the launch sites and equipment for medium-range ballistic missiles in the images, and the president was briefed on October 16.

Thirteen days

The confrontation that followed, often called the Thirteen Days, brought the United States and the Soviet Union closer to nuclear war than at any other time.

The resolution

It ended when the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, agreed on October 28 to remove the missiles, in return for an American pledge not to invade Cuba and a secret understanding that American missiles in Turkey would later be withdrawn.

Eyes in the sky

The crisis showed the value of aerial reconnaissance. The U-2 could fly at about 21,000 metres, above the reach of most fighters, though one was shot down over Cuba during the crisis, killing its pilot.

Satellites

Reconnaissance satellites were by then also coming into use, and imaging from space would gradually take over much of the work done by spy planes.

The hotline

A direct communications link between Washington and Moscow, the so-called hotline, was set up the following year to reduce the risk of misunderstanding.

Today

Commercial satellite images now allow journalists and researchers to watch military movements, as they have throughout the war in Ukraine.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

PHP flaws: what to do, Page 1.

Champi nears Sakishima, Page 3.

Takaichi: promises kept, Page 5.

Tax bill: show the numbers, Page 6.

France's yields top 5%, Page 9.

TECHNOLOGY

TECHNOLOGY

1968: Apollo 7 Splashes Down After 163 Orbits, Proving the Spacecraft That Would Carry Astronauts to the Moon

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Apollo 7, the first crewed flight of the Apollo programme, splashed down in the Atlantic Ocean south of Bermuda on October 22, 1968, after nearly 11 days in Earth orbit.

Its crew, Walter Schirra, Donn Eisele and Walter Cunningham, had circled the Earth 163 times.

After the fire

The flight came 21 months after a fire on the launch pad killed the crew of Apollo 1 during a test in January 1967. The command module had been redesigned, and Apollo 7's job was to prove that it worked.

The tests

The crew fired the main engine of the service module repeatedly, practised meeting the spent upper stage of their rocket in orbit, and tested the systems that would be needed on the way to the Moon.

Television

The astronauts made the first live television broadcasts from an American spacecraft, cheerfully holding up cards for viewers on Earth.

Colds in orbit

All three caught heavy colds, and their sometimes testy exchanges with mission control became part of the flight's legend.

The success

The spacecraft performed so well that NASA decided to send Apollo 8 around the Moon in December 1968, just two months later.

The Moon

Seven months after that, Apollo 11 landed on the Moon.

The legacy

Japan's own human spaceflight ambitions now run through international programmes, including NASA's Artemis plans to return astronauts to the Moon.

TECHNOLOGY

1975: Venera 9 Sends Back the First Picture Ever Taken From the Surface of Another Planet

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 22, 1975, the Soviet lander Venera 9 touched down on Venus and transmitted the first photograph taken from the surface of another planet.

The black-and-white panorama showed a landscape of flat, angular rocks under a surprisingly bright sky.

A hostile world

The surface of Venus is hotter than 450 degrees Celsius, and the pressure of its thick carbon dioxide atmosphere is about 90 times that at sea level on Earth.

Fifty-three minutes

The lander was built like a pressure vessel and cooled before descent, and it survived for about 53 minutes before its signal was lost.

The first orbiter

Its mother craft became the first spacecraft to orbit Venus and relayed the lander's signal back to Earth.

A sister mission

Venera 10 landed three days later and sent back a second image.

Rocks and soil

The pictures showed that the surface was not covered in dust, as some had expected, and suggested that the rocks were relatively young.

Since then

Later Venera landers sent back colour images. Japan's Akatsuki probe, which entered orbit around Venus in 2015, studied the planet's fierce winds from above.

Coming missions

NASA and the European Space Agency have planned new missions to Venus in the coming years.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Women's gymnastics bronze, Page 22.

Editorial: whose rules?, Page 26.

TECHNOLOGY

2008: India Launches Chandrayaan-1, the Moon Mission That Helped Find Water on the Lunar Surface

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

India launched its first mission to the Moon, Chandrayaan-1, on October 22, 2008, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota, on a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle.

The orbiter carried instruments from India and from other countries, including the United States and Europe.

The impact probe

In November 2008 it released the Moon Impact Probe, which struck the surface near the south pole, making India the fourth country to place its flag on the Moon.

Water

Its most important result came from NASA's Moon Mineralogy Mapper, which detected signs of water molecules and hydroxyl across the lunar surface, findings announced in 2009.

Cut short

The mission ended in August 2009, earlier than planned, after contact was lost, but it had achieved most of its goals.

What followed

India followed with Chandrayaan-2 in 2019 and Chandrayaan-3, which made the country the first to land near the Moon's south pole, in August 2023.

Japan and India

Japan and India are working together on a lunar polar exploration mission, known in Japan as LUPEX, to study water ice near the south pole.

Why water matters

Water on the Moon could one day supply drinking water, oxygen and rocket fuel for astronauts, which is why the south polar region is the target of several countries' missions.

TECHNOLOGY

2008: The First Android Phone, the T-Mobile G1, Goes on Sale in the United States With Google's Android Market

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The first smartphone running Google's Android software, the T-Mobile G1, made by Taiwan's HTC, went on sale in the United States on October 22, 2008.

It arrived with the Android Market, the online shop for apps that later became Google Play.

The design

The G1 had a touchscreen that slid aside to reveal a physical keyboard, and a small trackball for scrolling.

Open software

Google made Android available free to phone makers, a strategy that allowed many manufacturers to build their own phones on it.

Against the iPhone

Apple had launched the iPhone the year before. Android became its main competitor and eventually the most widely used mobile operating system in the world.

In Japan

The first Android phone in Japan, the HT-03A, also made by HTC, was released by NTT Docomo in 2009.

Apps

The Android Market and Apple's App Store turned apps into an industry, and Google Play now offers millions of them.

Security

The openness that helped Android spread has also made it a target for malicious apps, and Google has steadily tightened its checks.

Today

Android phones can now carry the functions of Japan's My Number card, which became usable for identification in person this week.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Crossword, Page 25.

TECHNOLOGY

2009: Windows 7 Goes on Sale and Wins Back Users Disappointed by Vista

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Microsoft released Windows 7 on October 22, 2009, less than three years after Windows Vista, which had been widely criticised as slow and demanding.

Windows 7 ran well on ordinary computers and quickly became one of the most popular versions of the operating system.

What was new

It introduced a redesigned taskbar to which programs could be pinned, a quicker way of arranging windows side by side, and better support for touchscreens.

Fewer interruptions

It also toned down the security prompts that had irritated Vista's users.

Long life

Many companies kept using Windows 7 for years, and Microsoft ended support for it in January 2020, after which it stopped receiving security fixes.

A lesson

Computers that keep running unsupported software are exposed to attacks that exploit flaws which will never be fixed, a problem that applies equally to old versions of PHP.

Japan

In Japan, the end of support prompted companies and government offices to replace large numbers of computers.

Successors

Windows 8 followed in 2012, Windows 10 in 2015 and Windows 11 in 2021.

Today

Microsoft ended support for Windows 10 in October 2025, offering paid security updates for a limited period, and the same upgrade cycle began again on a larger scale.

TECHNOLOGY

October 22 in Science and Technology

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1797: Andre-Jacques Garnerin makes the first parachute descent, over the Parc Monceau in Paris.

1903: George Beadle, who linked genes to enzymes, is born in Nebraska.

1938: Chester Carlson and Otto Kornei make the first xerographic copy in Astoria, Queens.

1962: President Kennedy reveals Soviet missiles in Cuba, found by U-2 photographs.

1968: Apollo 7 splashes down after 163 orbits.

1975: Venera 9 sends the first image from the surface of another planet, Venus.

2008: India launches Chandrayaan-1 to the Moon.

2008: The first Android phone, the T-Mobile G1, goes on sale in the United States.

2009: Microsoft releases Windows 7.

2026: Japan sees its latest 30-degree day on record in Tokyo and Osaka.

SOCIETY

Koyoshi River Overflows in Akita, Prompting the Highest Level 5 Flood Warning; It Is Lowered by Morning as the Water Falls

Yurihonjo issued an emergency order to protect lives after record October rain; JR East suspended part of the Uetsu Line

By Aiko Tanaka | Society Correspondent

The Koyoshi River in Akita Prefecture overflowed on Wednesday night, and the Japan Meteorological Agency issued a Level 5 flood warning, the highest on its scale, before downgrading it on Thursday morning as the water level fell.

The land ministry said the river had overflowed near its left bank in the Moriko area of Yurihonjo City.

'Secure your safety'

The land ministry and the weather agency held a joint news conference on Wednesday night and urged residents to take immediate action to protect their lives, warning that flooding could spread.

Emergency order

Yurihonjo issued an emergency safety measures order, the highest level of evacuation information, which calls on residents to do whatever they can to save their lives. The city lifted the order after the water level dropped.

Roads under water

The prefecture and police said some roads in the city were partly flooded. No injuries or damage to buildings had been reported as of Wednesday night.

Downgraded

On Thursday the agency switched the Level 5 warning to a Level 2 flood advisory, the lowest level of flood information for a river. Residents are still urged to stay away from the river.

Record rain

A low and a front moving through the Tohoku region drew in warm, moist air, and rain fell continuously from Tuesday night. In the 24 hours to Wednesday afternoon, 151.5 millimetres fell in Nishiwaga, Iwate Prefecture, and 129 millimetres at Sasako in Yurihonjo, both records for October at those stations.

The government

The government set up a liaison office at the Prime Minister's Office's crisis management centre.

Trains

JR East suspended services on the Uetsu Line between Fukiura in Yamagata Prefecture and Araya in Akita City from 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

The river

The Koyoshi River rises near Mount Chokai and flows through Yurihonjo to the Sea of Japan.

After the water

Residents returning to flooded areas should watch for damaged roads and contaminated water, and municipalities usually offer disinfection and damage certificates for insurance and support claims.

SOCIETY

Level 2 to Level 5: How Japan's River Flood Warnings Work

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Japan's warnings for flooding from rivers are graded on the same five-level scale as evacuation information, so that residents can tell at a glance how serious the situation is.

For major rivers, the land ministry or prefectures and the weather agency issue flood forecasts together.

Level 2

A flood advisory means the water is rising toward the level at which caution is needed. Residents should check their evacuation routes.

Level 3

A flood warning means the water has reached the level at which elderly and disabled people and others who need time should begin to evacuate.

Level 4

A flood danger warning means the river could overflow at any time. Everyone in the area at risk should evacuate.

Level 5

A flood special warning, the highest level, means the river has already overflowed or a levee has broken. It is issued to tell people that a disaster is under way.

Too late to leave

By Level 5 it may be too dangerous to go outside. People should move to an upper floor or the safest place nearby instead of trying to reach an evacuation centre through flood water.

Evacuation orders

Municipalities issue their own evacuation information on the same scale. Level 4 is an evacuation order for everyone; Level 5 is an emergency safety measures order.

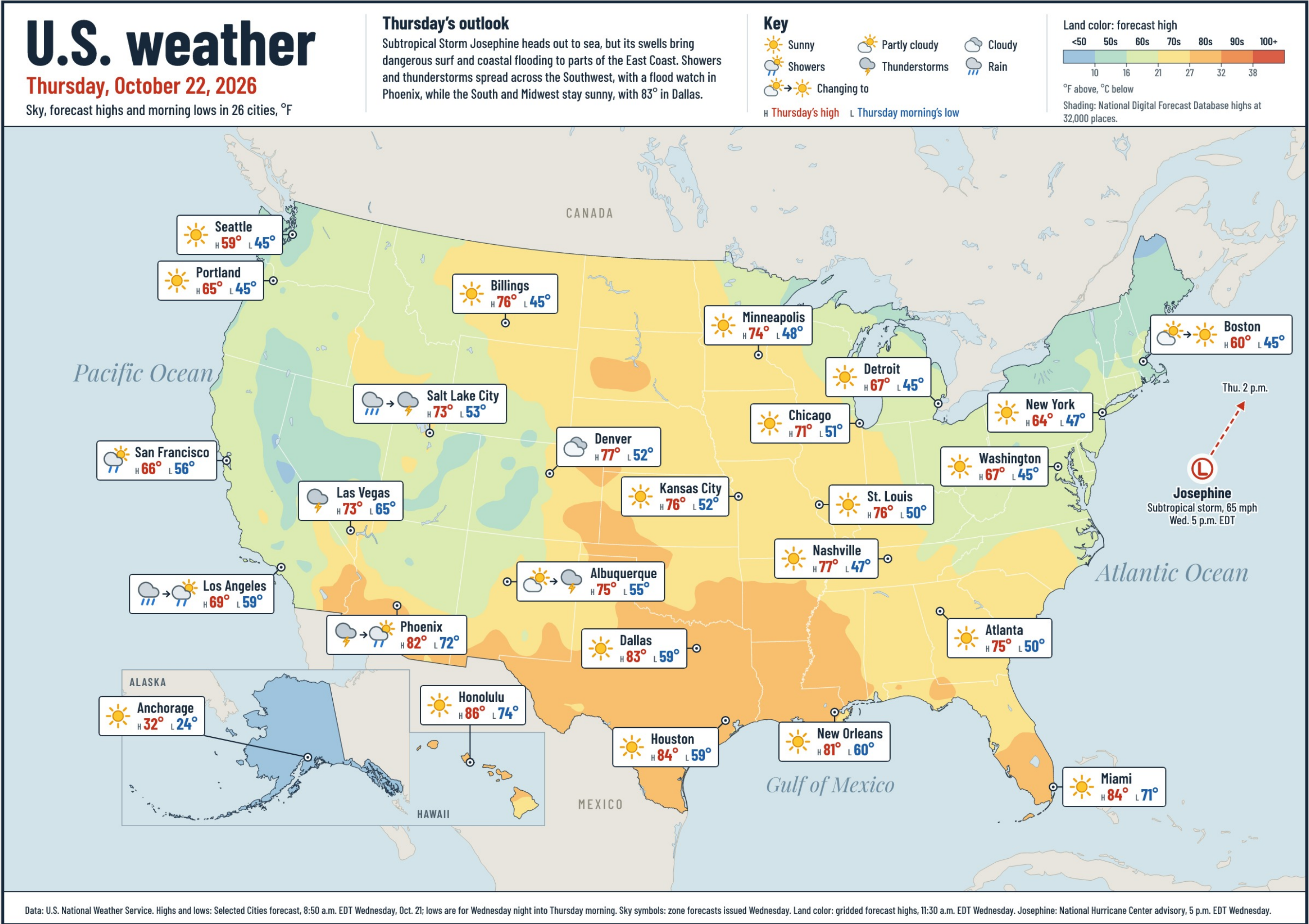
Know your map

Hazard maps published by each municipality show which areas could flood and how deep the water could become.

Wednesday

The Koyoshi River in Akita reached Level 5 on Wednesday night and was lowered to Level 2 on Thursday as the water fell.

WEATHER ABROAD



United States weather for Thursday, October 22, 2026: the sky, forecast highs and morning lows in degrees Fahrenheit for 26 cities, in the map supplied for this edition. (Data: U.S. National Weather Service Selected Cities forecast issued at 8:50 a.m. EDT on Wednesday, with lows for Wednesday night into Thursday morning; zone forecasts issued on Wednesday; gridded forecast highs at 11:30 a.m. EDT on Wednesday; Josephine from the National Hurricane Center advisory at 5 p.m. EDT on Wednesday)

SOCIETY

Josephine Heads Out to Sea but Its Swells Pound the East Coast; Storms Bring a Flood Watch to Phoenix While Dallas Reaches 83

The South and Midwest stay sunny; Billings warms to 76 and Anchorage stays below freezing at 32
By the Weather Desk

Subtropical Storm Josephine is heading out to sea, but its swells will bring dangerous surf and coastal flooding to parts of the East Coast of the United States on Thursday, according to the map supplied for this edition.

Josephine had winds of 65 miles an hour at 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on Wednesday and is forecast to move north-east, away from the coast, by 2 p.m. Thursday.

The Southwest

Showers and thunderstorms spread across the Southwest, and a flood watch is in effect in Phoenix, where thunderstorms give way to showers and the high is 82 degrees Fahrenheit after a warm night of 72.

Storms in the desert

Las Vegas has thunderstorms with a high of 73 and a low of 65, Salt Lake City rain turning to thunderstorms at 73, and Albuquerque partly cloudy skies giving way to thunderstorms at 75.

California

Los Angeles has rain turning to showers with a high of 69, and San Francisco showers at 66.

Sunny South

The South and Midwest stay sunny. Dallas reaches 83, Houston and Miami 84, New Orleans 81, Atlanta 75 and Nashville 77.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Editorial: whose rules?, Page 26.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 17.

The Midwest and Plains

Chicago has a high of 71, Minneapolis 74, Kansas City and St Louis 76, and Billings, in Montana, 76 in the sunshine. Denver is cloudy at 77.

The East

New York is sunny at 64, Washington 67 and Detroit 67. Boston starts partly cloudy, turns sunny and reaches 60.

The Northwest

Seattle and Portland are sunny, with highs of 59 and 65 and morning lows of 45.

Alaska and Hawaii

Anchorage is sunny but cold, with a high of 32 and a low of 24. Honolulu is sunny at 86, the warmest city

on the map.

The colours

The land colours show highs in the 80s, orange on the map, across Texas, the southern Plains, the lower Mississippi valley, the desert Southwest and southern Florida, and the 70s across much of the Midwest and the Southeast, with the 50s and 60s in New England and the mountain West.

even confirm whether he was alive.

The prefecture

Governor Motohiro Ono said the prefecture was examining the complaint and would respond appropriately.

The rescue

The rescue took months, because the hole kept widening and sewage continued to flow into it, and the driver's body was recovered from inside the pipe.

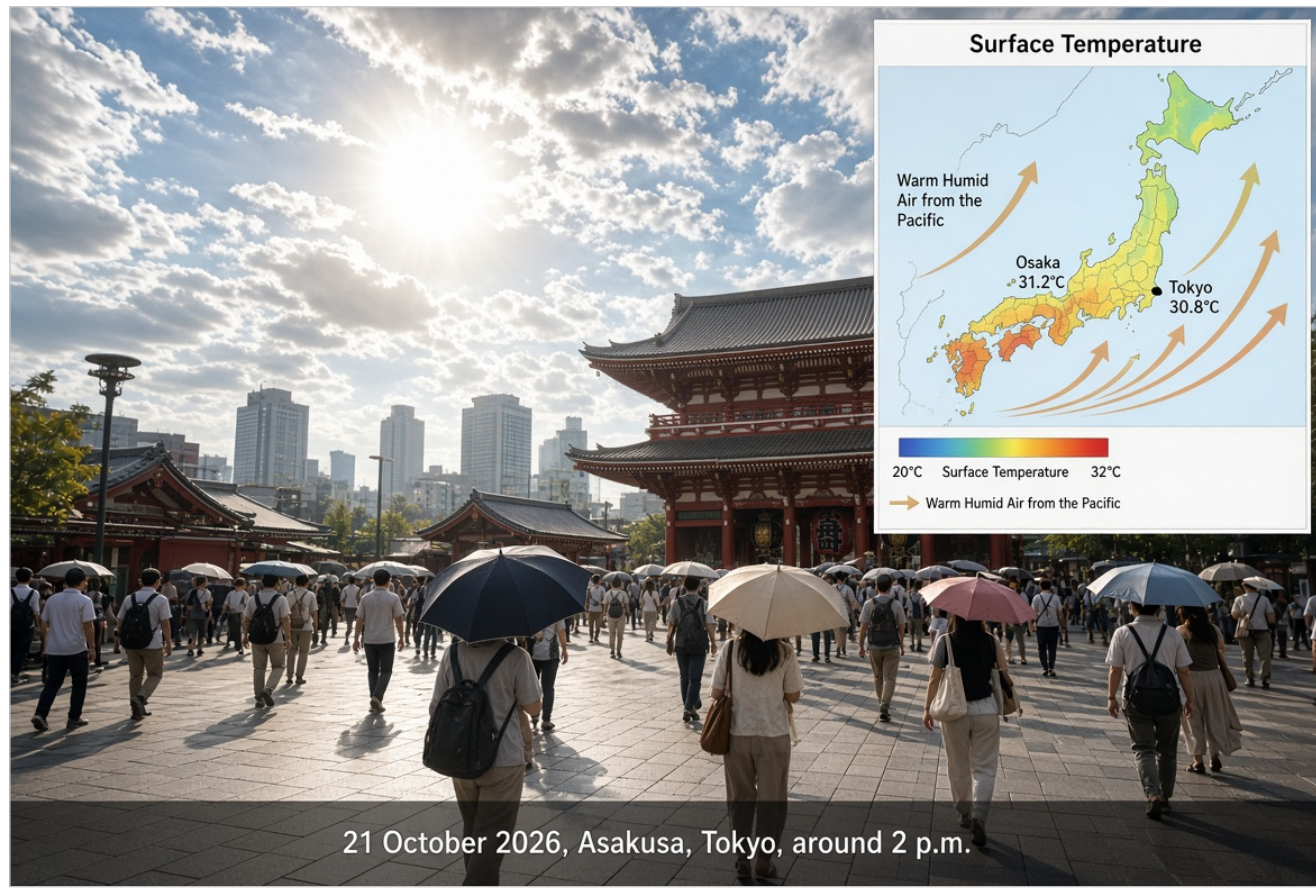
A national lesson

The collapse prompted the national government to order emergency inspections of large sewer pipes across the country, many of which were built decades ago.

Ageing pipes

Many local governments are also considering switching from sewers to septic tanks in areas where the population is falling, because maintaining ageing sewer networks is becoming expensive, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

SOCIETY



21 October 2026, Asakusa, Tokyo, around 2 p.m.

People shade themselves with parasols near the Kaminarimon gate in Asakusa, Tokyo, at around 2 p.m. on Wednesday, when central Tokyo had its latest 30-degree day since records began in 1875. The inset map, which is part of the image, shows surface temperatures and the warm, humid air flowing in from the Pacific; the readings reported by the weather agency and forecasters are given in the report below. (File image: WPM Productions)

SOCIETY

Tokyo and Osaka Have Their Latest 30-Degree Days Since Records Began, as Warm Pacific Air Brings Midsummer Heat to 157 Places

Osaka breaks a record that stood since 1933 and central Tokyo reaches 30 degrees in late October for the first time; cooler air arrives on Thursday, with highs several degrees lower

By the Weather Desk

Central Tokyo and Osaka recorded their latest days of 30 degrees Celsius or more since records began on Wednesday, as warm, humid air from the Pacific brought midsummer heat to much of the country, and observation points across the archipelago registered what Japanese forecasters call a manatsubi, a midsummer day.

Temperatures of 30 degrees or more were recorded at 157 observation points, Kyodo News reported, an unusual figure for the second half of October.

Tokyo

Central Tokyo reached 30 degrees at 1:05 p.m., the first time it has done so in late October. It was the latest such day since records began in 1875, breaking the previous record of October 19, set in 2024, according to the weather information company Japan Weather Association and Weathernews.

Osaka

In Osaka the temperature reached 30.8 degrees by 10:30 a.m., making it the city's latest 30-degree day on record and breaking a record of October 20 that had stood since 1933, 93 years ago.

The highest

By midday the highest readings were 31.5 degrees in Owase, Mie Prefecture, and 31.2 degrees in Yao, Osaka Prefecture. Nagoya also passed 30 degrees before noon.

Why it was so hot

According to the Japan Meteorological Agency, warm air flowed in around the edge of the Pacific high-pressure system to the south of Japan. A low and a front over the Sea of Japan drew the warm southerly winds northward, and sunshine added to the heat.

SOCIETY

The Records That Fell

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

- CENTRAL TOKYO: 30 degrees at 1:05 p.m. on October 21; latest 30-degree day since records began in 1875.
- THE OLD TOKYO RECORD: October 19, 2024.
- A FIRST: Central Tokyo's first 30-degree day in late October.
- OSAKA: 30.8 degrees by 10:30 a.m. on October 21; latest on record.
- THE OLD OSAKA RECORD: October 20, 1933, 93 years ago.
- NAGOYA: Passed 30 degrees before noon.
- OWASE, MIE: 31.5 degrees by midday, among the highest.
- YAO, OSAKA: 31.2 degrees by midday.
- POINTS AT 30 OR MORE: 157, according to Kyodo News.
- THE CAUSE: Warm, humid air flowing in around the Pacific high.

Heatstroke

The agency urged people to take care against heatstroke, which can strike even in autumn when people are no longer used to the heat.

The other side

The same system brought heavy rain to the Sea of Japan side and northern Japan. In Akita Prefecture the Koyoshi River overflowed on Wednesday night, prompting the agency's highest flood warning.

A sharp change

Cooler air replaces the warm air from Thursday. Today's highs are forecast at 25 degrees in Tokyo and Osaka and 24 in Nagoya, four to six degrees below Wednesday's forecasts, and much cooler air covers northern Japan, where Sapporo's high is only 10.

Swings

Forecasters advised people to take care of their health with such large swings in temperature from one day to the next.

A warming trend

Japan's average temperatures have risen markedly in recent decades, and summers have grown longer. The weather agency has forecast a warm start to winter, with temperatures above normal nationwide through January.

TODAY: Tokyo and Osaka forecast at 25 degrees.

SOCIETY

Kyoto's Jidai Matsuri: A 2-Kilometre Procession Through 1,000 Years of History Fills the City's Streets Today

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

About 2,000 people in historical costume take part in the Jidai Matsuri, the Festival of the Ages, in Kyoto on Thursday, forming a procession about 2 km long that depicts the city's history from the Heian period to the Meiji era.

The festival is the grand festival of Heian Shrine.

The sacred procession

In the morning, a sacred procession carrying two portable shrines for the spirits of Emperor Kammu, who founded Heian-kyo, and Emperor Komei, the last emperor to spend his whole reign in Kyoto, travels from Heian Shrine to the Kyoto Imperial Palace grounds.

The parade

From about noon, the historical processions, led by the Meiji-era loyalist troops, set out from the palace grounds and make their way to Heian Shrine.

The history

The festival began in 1895 to mark the 1,100th anniversary of the moving of the capital to Heian-kyo, the city now called Kyoto, and is held on October 22, the date the capital moved.

One of three

It is one of Kyoto's three great festivals, along with the Aoi Matsuri in May and the Gion Matsuri in July.

The costumes

The costumes and props are carefully researched reproductions, and the procession includes famous figures from Japanese history.

Fire festival

On the same night, the Kurama Fire Festival is held in the mountains north of the city.

Weather

Kyoto's forecast for Thursday is sunny with some cloud and a high of 24 degrees.

SOCIETY

The Emperor and Empress Will Visit Osaka in November for the Sea Festival; a University Visit Is Dropped After a Cyberattack

By the Society Desk

The Emperor and Empress will visit Osaka Prefecture on November 14 and 15 to attend the National Convention for the Development of an Abundant Sea, the Imperial Household Agency said on Wednesday.

On November 14 they will fly from Haneda Airport by special aircraft and meet representatives of the fishing industry at a hotel in Osaka City.

The ceremony

On November 15 the Emperor will speak at the convention's ceremony in Kishiwada.

Releasing fish

After the ceremony they will travel to a site in Izumisano and release flounder and other young fish.

Cancelled

A visit to Osaka Metropolitan University planned for November 14 was cancelled at the prefecture's request, after a cyberattack caused a failure of the university's systems.

The convention

The annual convention promotes the protection of fisheries resources and the marine environment, and is held in a different prefecture each year.

Royal tradition

The release of young fish is a traditional part of the event, which the imperial couple attend each year.

SOCIETY

Woman Who Received Heart Muscle Sheets Grown From iPS Cells Says She 'Can Breathe Deeply' as She Prepares to Leave Hospital

The operation at the Osaka Police Hospital was the first to use the sheets for a patient with severe heart failure

By the Science Desk

A woman in her 50s who received sheets of heart muscle cells grown from induced pluripotent stem cells is recovering well and is due to leave hospital on Thursday, the Osaka Police Hospital said on Wednesday.

The operation was the first use of the product for a patient with severe heart disease.

The patient

The woman, from Kanagawa Prefecture, has severe heart failure caused by ischaemic cardiomyopathy. She had an acute heart attack in 2022, and her heart function kept declining despite catheter treatment and medicines.

The operation

The sheets were attached to her heart in an operation lasting about 50 minutes on the morning of September 29.

Reheart

The sheets, called Reheart, were developed by Cuorips, a venture company that grew out of Osaka University.

'It feels different'

About a week after the operation she found she could breathe more deeply. "It feels different from before," she said. She hopes to walk her dog, run and enjoy her hobbies again.

Gradual improvement

Her symptoms are expected to improve gradually over several months.

A private hospital

Yoshiki Sawa, the hospital's president and a pioneer of the treatment, said it was highly significant that the procedure had been carried out at a mid-sized private hospital, and that he hoped more patients would be able to receive it.

How it works

The sheets are thought to work mainly by releasing substances that help damaged heart muscle recover and promote the growth of blood vessels, rather than by beating in place of the damaged tissue.

iPS cells

Induced pluripotent stem cells, which can become many types of cell, were first produced by Shinya Yamanaka of Kyoto University, who won the Nobel Prize in 2012.

The hope

Heart failure affects a large and growing number of older people in Japan, and options for those with the most severe forms are limited to devices and transplants, for which donors are scarce.

SOCIETY

At Least 145 Prefectural High Schools Will Close by 2040 as Pupils Dwindle, an Asahi Survey Finds; Free Tuition May Speed the Decline

By Aiko Tanaka | Society Correspondent

At least 145 prefectural high schools are expected to disappear by fiscal 2040 as the number of young people falls, according to a survey of all 47 prefectural boards of education by the Asahi Shimbun.

The newspaper reported that 17 prefectures plan to reduce the number of their high schools. The reductions would remove more than 4 per cent of the 3,196 prefectural high schools operating in fiscal 2026, not counting those that have stopped taking new pupils.

The biggest cuts

Shizuoka expects to lose 28 to 38 of its 88 prefectural high schools, Niigata 22 of 86 and Nagano 17 of 81. Saitama, in the Tokyo metropolitan area, expects to lose 15 to 19 of 131.

Not only rural areas

The inclusion of Saitama shows that the decline is not limited to the countryside.

The cause

The main reason is the falling number of teenagers, a result of the declining birth rate.

Free tuition

The expansion of free tuition at high schools may also speed the decline of public schools, because it makes private schools more affordable and may draw more pupils to them.

Planning ahead

Closures and mergers are planned years in advance. Boards of education estimate the number of junior high school graduates and check whether each school can keep enough classes in each year.

Could change

The figure of 145 is the number currently foreseen and could change as projections are updated.

Local impact

In many towns the high school is a centre of community life, and its closure can mean long journeys for pupils and a loss of young people for the area.

A wider trend

Elementary and junior high schools have also been merged and closed across the country as the number of children has fallen.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Nikkei rebounds 545 yen, Page 12.

Sato thanks Koshien, Page 22.

Women's gymnastics bronze, Page 22.

SOCIETY

SOCIETY

Weather Agency Chief Apologises for Last Week's Mistaken Earthquake Alert That Warned of Intensity 7 From Hokkaido to Tokai

By Aiko Tanaka | Society Correspondent

Ryuichi Nomura, the director general of the Japan Meteorological Agency, apologised on Wednesday for an earthquake early warning issued on October 16 that predicted shaking of up to intensity 7 over a wide area and was cancelled eight minutes later.

"We caused trouble and a burden to many people, and we take it seriously," he told a regular news conference.

What happened

The warning was issued at 12:40 p.m. on October 16 and cancelled at 12:48 p.m. It forecast a maximum intensity of 7, the highest on Japan's scale, from Hokkaido to the Tokai region.

The cause

The agency had overestimated the magnitude of the earthquake at 9.9.

Cannot be eliminated

Mr Nomura said false alarms could not be eliminated entirely, because the warnings are designed to tell people of possible strong shaking as quickly as possible.

Usually right

He said that in recent years strong shaking had followed more than 90 per cent of the warnings issued.

Act on it

"When you see or hear a warning, please take action to protect yourself," he said.

How warnings work

Early warnings use the first, faster waves of an earthquake to estimate its size and the shaking to come, giving people seconds to take cover before the stronger waves arrive. Errors in the first estimate can produce false alarms.

Trust

False alarms are a known trade-off for the system's speed. The concern is that repeated errors could lead people to ignore warnings when a real earthquake strikes.

SOCIETY

Police Rearrest a 79-Year-Old Former Gang Boss on Suspicion of Murder Over Kobe's Serial Shootings

By the Society Desk

Hyogo prefectural police on Wednesday rearrested a 79-year-old man on suspicion of murder in connection with a series of shootings in Kobe in September in which one person was killed and another injured.

The man, an unemployed former gang boss, is suspected of shooting dead a man who ran a company, using a handgun.

The shootings

The shootings in September alarmed residents of the city, and police have been investigating the motive.

'A real estate deal'

The man had earlier spoken of trouble over a real estate deal, according to investigative sources.

The charge

Police had already arrested him in connection with the case and prepared the murder charge, which carries heavier penalties.

The weapon

Police are also investigating how he obtained the handgun. Guns are tightly controlled in Japan, and shootings are rare.

The victim

The police did not release the victim's name or age.

Next

Prosecutors will decide whether to indict him after the period of detention.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

France's yields top 5%, Page 9.

Nikkei rebounds 545 yen, Page 12.

Record late heat, Page 19.

SOCIETY

Nagoya Considers Security Cameras in School Corridors After Teachers Were Charged Over Sharing Secret Photos of Pupils

By the Society Desk

Nagoya is considering installing security cameras in some of its kindergartens and elementary, junior high and high schools, the city's board of education said on Wednesday, after a case in which teachers shared secretly taken images of children.

The board intends to include the costs in its budget for fiscal 2027.

Corridors, not classrooms

The cameras would cover corridors from which the entrances to classrooms and changing rooms can be seen. They would not be placed inside rooms.

The survey

In a survey of city-run kindergartens and schools from mid-September to early October, several asked for cameras.

The case

Seven former teachers from five prefectures were indicted in connection with a group that shared secretly taken images. Four have been sentenced to prison and two have received suspended sentences.

New rules

The board has told schools to tighten the rules on handling images of children.

The debate

Cameras in schools raise questions about privacy and about the atmosphere in schools, and the board will have to decide who can view the recordings and when.

A national issue

The case has led to calls across the country for stronger measures to protect children from sexual abuse by staff.

SOCIETY

After a Fatal Capsizing Off Henoko, Okinawa Holds a Safety Study Session for Businesses That Host School Trips

By the Society Desk

Okinawa Prefecture and other organisers held a study session at the prefectural government office on Wednesday for businesses that host school trips, after a boat capsized off Henoko in Nago in March, killing two people.

One of those who died was a 17-year-old student at Doshisha International High School in Kyoto.

The parents

The student's parents met Governor Genta Koja on October 17 and asked for the safety of school trips to be ensured. The bereaved families have said they will not let the matter be swept under the rug, the Asahi Shimbun reported.

Lessons from police

Police described a real case in which high school students on a boat were swept out to sea, to illustrate precautions against accidents.

The advice

Participants were urged to plan tours with weather and sea conditions in mind and to consider checks on participants' health.

'Safety first'

"Please be careful not to put customers' requests first and neglect safety measures," a police officer said.

Why it matters

Okinawa is one of Japan's most popular destinations for school trips, and many include marine activities such as boat trips and snorkelling.

The investigation

The cause of the capsizing is under investigation.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Sato thanks Koshien, Page 22.

Women's gymnastics bronze, Page 22.

Editorial: whose rules?, Page 26.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 17.

Crossword, Page 25.

PHP flaws: what to do, Page 1.

SOCIETY

Health Ministry Proposes Extending the Levy on Firms That Fall Short of the Disability Hiring Quota to Those With More Than 80 Staff

By Aiko Tanaka | Society Correspondent

The health ministry proposed on Wednesday to extend a levy on companies that fail to employ enough people with disabilities to firms with more than 80 employees, from the current threshold of more than 100.

The ministry presented the plan to a subcommittee of the Labour Policy Council.

The levy

Companies that fall short of the statutory employment rate pay 50,000 yen a month for each disabled employee they are short.

The rate

The statutory rate for private companies was raised to 2.7 per cent in July, meaning one disabled employee for every 37.5 employees.

The aim

The ministry wants to encourage hiring at smaller companies and build momentum for employing more people with disabilities across society.

Opposition

A representative of small and medium-sized businesses said the group strongly opposed the plan, citing rising prices that are squeezing business and a shortage of staff to support disabled workers.

The money

The levy funds payments to companies that employ more disabled people than the rate requires, and grants for workplace adjustments.

Next

The council will continue to discuss the proposal.

SOCIETY

Mobile Battery Fires Have Delayed Trains at Least 36 Times in 10 Years, a Mainichi Investigation Finds

By the Society Desk

Fires involving mobile batteries have caused train delays at least 36 times over the past 10 years, according to an investigation by the Mainichi Shimbun.

The batteries, used to charge smartphones and other devices, contain lithium-ion cells that can overheat and catch fire if they are damaged or faulty.

On board

A fire in a crowded carriage can force a train to stop and passengers to evacuate, and smoke can spread quickly.

Planes too

Airlines have tightened rules on carrying mobile batteries after a series of fires on aircraft, including one on a plane in South Korea in January 2025.

Safe use

Buy batteries that meet safety standards, avoid using any that are swollen, hot or damaged, and do not leave them in hot places such as a car in summer.

Disposal

Used batteries should not be put out with ordinary rubbish, where they can start fires in garbage trucks and recycling plants. Many electronics shops and local governments collect them.

If one smokes

Move away from the battery, alert staff or use the emergency call button on a train, and do not try to pick it up.

A growing risk

The number of fires involving lithium-ion batteries has increased as devices that use them have spread.

SOCIETY

Sagamihara Garbage Collectors Try Electric Kickboards, a National First, to Spare Them Six Kilometres of Walking a Day

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

A waste collection company in Sagamihara, Kanagawa Prefecture, began a trial on Wednesday in which its workers ride electric kickboards between

collection points instead of walking, which the company says is the first such use in Japan.

The workers normally walk an estimated 6 km a day between collection points 5 to 30 metres apart while the truck moves along the route.

Why

The company hopes to reduce physical strain and the risk of heatstroke for its workers, and to help with labour shortages.

An older workforce

The average age of the company's workers is 58.

Heat

Garbage collectors work outdoors in all weather, and the long, hot summers of recent years have made heatstroke a serious risk.

Rules of the road

Electric kickboards can be ridden without a licence by people aged 16 and over under rules introduced in 2023, as long as they meet certain standards.

If it works

The company will assess the effect of the trial before deciding whether to use the boards more widely.

SOCIETY

Tsutenkaku Will Glow Purple for Its 70th Birthday, the Colour Traditionally Given to Mark 70 Years

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Tsutenkaku, the tower that stands over Osaka's Shinsekai district, will be lit in purple from October 28, its 70th anniversary, until November 12, its operator and Nankai Electric Railway said on Wednesday.

Purple is the colour associated with koki, the celebration of a person's 70th year.

The tower

The 108-metre tower in Naniwa Ward is the second to bear the name. The first Tsutenkaku, 75 metres tall, was completed in 1912 and was lost to fire in 1943. The present tower was built in 1956.

Free entry

For three days, October 28 to 30, the first 1,000 holders of Nankai group commuter passes each day can visit the observation deck free of the usual 1,500 yen.

Gifts

The first 100,000 visitors to the observation deck will receive commemorative gifts.

Trains

Nankai will run trains carrying commemorative headboards.

A symbol

The tower is one of Osaka's best-known landmarks, home to a statue of Billiken, a smiling figure said to bring good luck.

Shinsekai

The area around it, with its kushikatsu restaurants and old-fashioned arcades, is popular with visitors from Japan and abroad.

SOCIETY

A 'Peace Bell' Stolen in Turkey, a Symbol of Friendship With Tonami in Toyama, Is Found at a Scrap Dealer's

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

A bell given as a symbol of friendship between the city of Tonami in Toyama Prefecture and the Turkish city of Yalova, which was stolen from a park in Yalova in September, has been found at a scrap dealer's and returned to the city.

The Peace Bell was installed 37 years ago to mark the sister-city relationship.

The theft

On the night of September 14, three people arrived at the park on three-wheeled electric motorcycles, cut the bell, which weighs about 87 kg, from its mounting with tools and carried it off on a luggage rack.

Sold for scrap

The suspects told police they sold it to a scrap dealer for 26,000 lira, about 83,000 yen. Police found it there on the basis of one suspect's statement.

SOCIETY

Arrests

Police have detained two of the three suspects and are searching for the third.

Tulips

The friendship grew from tulips. Tonami is famous for growing them, and Turkey is regarded as the flower's homeland. The mayor of Tonami visited Turkey in 1988, and the two cities became sister cities in October 1989 at Yalova's request.

Metal thefts

Thefts of metal objects to sell as scrap have increased in many countries as metal prices have risen, including in Japan.

SOCIETY

Openwork Clay Earring From About 2,900 Years Ago, Found at a Saitama Shell Mound, Hints at Contact Between Distant Jomon Communities

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Saitama City Board of Education said it had found a clay earring decorated with openwork, made about 2,900 years ago in the final part of the Jomon period, at the Shinpukuji shell mound in Iwatsuki Ward, a nationally designated historic site.

It was found during an excavation on July 23.

The earring

The earring is up to about 8 cm across, with a section about 4 cm across that would have been inserted into the earlobe, and is about 1 mm thick in places. Traces of red pigment remain on part of it.

Similar finds

The board said it had the same shape as earrings found at the Chiamigaito site in Kiryu, Gunma Prefecture, and the Shimofuda site in Chofu, Tokyo; the earrings from both sites are designated important cultural properties.

Contact

"The decoration is very similar, which suggests there was exchange with distant areas," the board said.

A grave

The earring was found in what appears to be a grave, so the person buried there may have worn it.

What it meant

Some researchers believe such earrings showed a person's origin, marital status or experience of childbirth.

The Jomon

The Jomon period, which lasted for more than 10,000 years, is known for its pottery and its settled hunting, fishing and gathering communities.

The site

The Shinpukuji shell mound is a large settlement site from the late and final Jomon periods.

SOCIETY

Nearly Seven in 10 Children Say They Like Reading, but Most Read for Less Than an Hour a Week, a Survey Finds

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Nearly 70 per cent of children from the fourth year of elementary school to the third year of junior high school say they like reading, but more than 70 per cent read for less than an hour a week, according to a survey by the Hakuhodo Foundation's Children's Research Institute.

The online survey of 1,200 children was carried out in August.

How much they like it

In all, 69.3 per cent said they liked reading; 12.8 per cent said they loved it, 26.8 per cent that they liked it and 29.8 per cent that they quite liked it. Only 4.5 per cent said they did not like it at all.

Time spent

More than 70 per cent read for less than an hour a week, and 17.4 per cent did not read a book at all in a typical week.

The competition

The researchers said many children enjoyed reading but did not spend much time on it, partly because of videos, games and other forms of entertainment.

Reading week

The findings were published around the time of Japan's autumn reading week, which runs from October 27 to November 9.

Schools

Many schools hold reading time in the morning to encourage the habit.

Why it matters

Educators say regular reading builds vocabulary and concentration, and Japan's results in international reading tests have been watched closely.

SOCIETY

'Small Discoveries Add Up and Push Us Forward,' Nobel Laureate Shimon Sakaguchi Tells a Tokyo Symposium

By the Science Desk

Shimon Sakaguchi, the Osaka University immunologist who won last year's Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, told a symposium in Tokyo on Wednesday that small discoveries, accumulated over time, were what drove research forward.

He spoke about regulatory T cells, which keep the immune system from overreacting, explaining how they work and the state of research.

The joy of research

"The accumulation of small discoveries becomes the force that moves us forward," he said. "The moment a result comes out that feels solid is the happiest moment of doing research."

Treatments

He expressed interest in using the cells for treatment. "If we can increase them successfully, treatments for organ transplants and various immune diseases will become possible," he said.

The discovery

Professor Sakaguchi identified regulatory T cells in the 1990s, work that led to the 2025 Nobel Prize, which he shared with two American scientists.

Why they matter

When regulatory T cells fail, the immune system can attack the body's own tissues, causing autoimmune diseases. Boosting them could help prevent the rejection of transplanted organs, while suppressing them could help the immune system attack cancer.

Persistence

His work was long met with scepticism, and he has often spoken of the need for patience in basic research.

Japan's science

Japanese Nobel laureates have repeatedly urged the government to increase support for basic research and young scientists.

SOCIETY

Photo Exhibition Marking 70 Years of Japan's UN Membership Opens Today at the UN University in Shibuya

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

A photographic exhibition marking 70 years since Japan joined the United Nations opens on Thursday at the United Nations University in Shibuya, Tokyo, and runs until January 28.

Its theme is the United Nations in our daily lives, and it shows the organisation's work and its connections with Japan.

The photographs

The exhibition includes 25 photographs chosen from images submitted to UN headquarters in New York by photographers from the 193 member states.

The subjects

They include Japanese people whose lives were changed by their involvement with the United Nations, and relief for refugees in Palestine.

On tour

The exhibition will travel the country until the autumn of 2027, with stops planned in Miyagi, Kyoto, Osaka and Okinawa.

The anniversary

Japan joined the United Nations on December 18, 1956, as its 80th member, after the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration ended Soviet opposition to its membership.

Japan's role

Japan has been one of the largest contributors to the UN budget and has served many terms as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

The UN in Tokyo

The United Nations University, founded in 1973, has its headquarters in Tokyo, the only UN organisation headquartered in Japan.

SOCIETY

Two Japanese Climbers Missing in the Nepal Himalayas

By the Society Desk

Two Japanese climbers have gone missing in the Himalayas in Nepal, NHK reported.

Details of the climbers and the mountain where they were climbing were not immediately available.

The season

Autumn is one of the two main climbing seasons in the Himalayas, along with spring, when the weather is generally more stable.

Dangers

Climbers in the high mountains face avalanches, falls, sudden changes in the weather and altitude sickness.

Searches

Searches in the Himalayas are often carried out by helicopter, but they depend on the weather and can be limited at high altitude.

The embassy

The Japanese Embassy in Nepal is usually involved in confirming information and contacting families in such cases.

Japanese climbers

Japanese climbers have a long history in the Himalayas, and the first ascent of Manaslu, in 1956, was made by a Japanese expedition.

Updates

Further information is expected as the search continues.

SOCIETY

About 4 Billion Yen From Lottery Proceeds Will Support Reconstruction in Areas Hit by the Kumamoto Earthquakes

By the Society Desk

About 4 billion yen from lottery proceeds will be used to support reconstruction in areas hit by the Kumamoto earthquakes, The Japan Times reported.

The earthquakes struck in April 2016, with two powerful shocks, both measuring intensity 7, two days apart.

The damage

The earthquakes killed more than 270 people, including those who died later from related causes, and damaged or destroyed large numbers of homes.

Kumamoto Castle

The restoration of Kumamoto Castle, which was badly damaged, has become a symbol of the recovery and is expected to take many more years.

Lottery money

Profits from public lotteries in Japan are distributed to local governments and used for public works and other projects.

Ten years on

This year marks 10 years since the earthquakes, and much of the rebuilding of homes and roads has been completed.

Still needed

Some projects, including the restoration of cultural assets, are continuing.

Details

Details of how the money will be used were not immediately available.

SOCIETY

Around the Nation

By the Society Desk

MITO: Prosecutors sought 18 years in prison for a 42-year-old woman accused of killing her two children at their home in Mito in July 2023. The defence argues she was not criminally responsible because of severe depression; the verdict is due on

November 5.

GINOWAN, OKINAWA: A 75-year-old woman was found dead with cuts on her body at a house near the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station around noon on Wednesday. Police suspect she may have been involved in a crime.

SHIZUOKA: A high school teacher was arrested on suspicion of secretly filming a woman in her teens, police said.

TOKYO: Police arrested a 38-year-old woman on suspicion of assaulting and killing a 28-year-old woman she lived with.

UBE, YAMAGUCHI: A former employee with a disability who left a subsidiary of UBE has sued the subsidiary over power harassment.

SOTO ZEN: The chief priest of Enmei-ji temple in Yamagata Prefecture was chosen as the head of the administration of the Soto school of Zen Buddhism.

MORIOKA: A popular fox named Hassaku at Morioka's zoological park, known for its fluffy coat as it ran, has died.

TOTTORI: Governor Shinji Hirai announced that he would not seek a sixth term.

OSAKA: Tsutenkaku will be lit purple from October 28 for its 70th anniversary.

GRAVES: Services that close family graves or visit them on behalf of relatives are expanding as families shrink and move away, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

SHOSOIN: The Yomiuri Shimbun examined the durability of the washi paper preserved in the Shosoin treasure house, made to last for 1,000 years, ahead of the annual exhibition of its treasures in Nara.

SPORTS

Scoreboard

By the Sports Desk

GYMNASTICS: World Championships, Rotterdam, women's team final: 1 China 165.764; 2 United States; 3 Japan 164.063. All three qualify teams for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

SOCCER, J1 LEAGUE, MATCHDAY 11: Shimizu 0, Machida 5; FC Tokyo 0, Kashiwa 0; Hiroshima 0, Nagasaki 4; Kobe 1, Kawasaki 2; Kashima 2, Kyoto 2; Gamba Osaka 2, Fukuoka 1; Urawa 3, Chiba 2; Yokohama F. Marinos 2, Tokyo Verdy 2; Okayama 2, Mito 0; Nagoya 1, Cerezo Osaka 1. Leaders: Machida 26 points, FC Tokyo 24, Hiroshima 23.

SOCCER, CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Bayern Munich 2, Arsenal 2; Real Madrid 4, RB Leipzig 1; Aston Villa 3, Viking 1 (Zion Suzuki played the full match); Real Betis 1, Feyenoord 0 (Go Watanabe came on as a substitute); Galatasaray 4, Lille 2 (away win; Ayase Ueda injured); Como 4, Manchester United 1; Club Brugge 3, Lens 0; Inter Milan 1, Shakhtar Donetsk 0; Sporting 2, LASK 3.

SOCCER, WOMEN'S U-17 WORLD CUP (MOROCCO): Group D: Japan 2, France 0. Japan reach the knockout stage.

BASKETBALL, B PREMIER: Hiroshima 98, Akita 84 (Hiroshima 9-0); Nagoya Diamond Dolphins 98, Utsunomiya 69 (7-0); Tokyo SR 97, Shinshu 90.

NBA, OPENING GAMES: 76ers 106, Knicks 100 (LeBron James 14 points in his 76ers debut); Pistons 121, Celtics 113; Thunder 116, Spurs 104.

ASIAN PARA GAMES, ATHLETICS: Men's 100 m T51/52: 1 Tomoki Sato, 2 Yuki Oya, 3 Tomoya Ito, all Japan. Men's long jump T13: Ryota Fukunaga (Japan) wins.

ASIAN PARA GAMES, OTHER GOLDS FOR JAPAN: Naohide Yamaguchi (swimming, 100 m breaststroke, intellectual impairment); Akito Minai (100 m butterfly S10); Aira Kinoshita (women's 100 m breaststroke, intellectual impairment); Shota Kawamoto (cycling, road time trial C1-5).

WHEELCHAIR TENNIS: Yui Kamiji reaches the women's singles final; Tokito Oda reaches the men's semifinals.

SHOGI: Women's Ousho title, Game 3: Tomoka Nishiyama beat Nanami Naka to win 2-1 and keep the title for a fifth straight year.

COMING UP: Professional baseball draft, Thursday, 4:50 p.m. Japan Series, Game 1, Saturday at Yokohama Stadium. World Series, Game 1, Saturday morning Japan time. Kikuka Sho, Sunday at Kyoto.

SPORTS



Han Shin's Teruaki Sato, right, with Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts, in a file photo taken at the Tokyo Dome in March 2025, when the Tigers played the Dodgers in an exhibition game. On Wednesday Sato thanked the club and its fans as he prepares to move to the major leagues. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

'The Cheers at Koshien Are the Best in the World': Teruaki Sato Thanks Han Shin and Its Fans as He Prepares for the Majors

In his first interview since the club agreed to post him, the Triple Crown winner recalls the roar of the 2023 title and says the fans' support gave him strength every time he took the field

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Teruaki Sato, the Han Shin Tigers slugger who will try to move to the major leagues this winter, thanked the club and its fans on Wednesday in his first interview since the Tigers agreed to post him.

"The roar of the crowd at Koshien is the best in the world," the 27-year-old said at the club's training facility in Nishinomiya, Hyogo Prefecture. "Since I joined the team I have been looked after so carefully, and I feel nothing but gratitude."

Good times and bad

Sato appeared deeply moved as he spoke. "The fans cheered me through the good times and the bad," he said. "Every time I stood on the field, it gave me strength."

2023

He singled out the 2023 season, when the Tigers won the Central League for the first time in 18 years and went on to win the Japan Series. "When we won in 2023 the cheering was incredible," he said. "I will never forget it."

A home-town hero

Sato was born in Nishinomiya, the city where Koshien Stadium stands, and grew up supporting the club he went on to play for. He spent six seasons with the Tigers after they drafted him in the first round out of Kindai University.

The Triple Crown

This season he led the Central League with a batting average of .306, 39 home runs and 106 runs batted in, becoming the ninth player in the history of Japanese professional baseball to win the Triple Crown and the first Han Shin player to do so since Randy Bass in 1986. He was named the league's Most Valuable Player last year.

SPORTS

Japan's Women Win World Team Bronze for the First Time in 60 Years and Book Their Place at the Los Angeles Olympics

Aiko Sugihara, Rina Kishi and their teammates finish behind China, who end America's run of eight straight titles, and the United States in Rotterdam

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Japan's women won the bronze medal in the team final at the world gymnastics championships in Rotterdam on Wednesday, their first world team podium in 60 years, and secured a place at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Japan scored 164.063 points over the four apparatus. China won the gold with 165.764, their first world team title in 20 years, ending the United States' run of eight straight victories, and the Americans took silver.

The team

The Japanese team was made up of Aiko Sugihara, Misa Nishiyama, Haruka Nakamura, Rina Kishi and Makoto Okamura.

The posting

Han Shin announced on Monday that it had agreed to his wish to move to the majors through the posting system. Once he is formally posted, all 30 major league clubs will have 45 days to negotiate with him, and Han Shin will receive a release fee based on the value of his contract.

No limits

Because he is older than 25 and has six seasons of professional experience, he is not subject to the limits on bonuses that apply to younger international players, and can sign a contract of any size.

American interest

American media have described him as one of the most attractive hitters on the market this winter, helped by the success this season of Munetaka Murakami with the Chicago White Sox and Kazuma Okamoto with the Toronto Blue Jays.

The Murakami factor

Han Shin itself pointed to the success of Murakami and Okamoto as having raised the reputation of Japanese hitters in America when it announced its decision.

What fans lose

For the Tigers, Sato's departure leaves a gap in the middle of the order that will be hard to fill, a challenge for the club at Thursday's draft and beyond.

The format

In the team final, three gymnasts compete on each apparatus and all three scores count, so there is no room for a fall. Scores from qualifying are not carried over.

History

Japan finished third in 1966, and this was only the country's third world team medal, the first since then.

Olympic ticket

By finishing in the top three, Japan qualified a full team for Los Angeles, along with China and the United States, two years before the Games.

A double

The bronze completed a remarkable week for Japanese gymnastics. On Tuesday the men's team, led by Daiki Hashimoto, retained their world title and also qualified for Los Angeles.

Qualifying

Japan were fifth in the women's team qualifying round, in which Kishi and Okamura were among the early leaders in the all-around and on the balance beam, so the bronze was a climb up the standings.

What next

The individual finals, including the all-around, continue in Rotterdam over the coming days.

Two teams

Japan's men won the team gold at the Paris Olympics in 2024, and the women's bronze gives the country two medal-winning teams on the road to Los Angeles.

SPORTS

Draft Day With No First-Round Picks Announced in Advance, an Unusual Year That Could Bring Lotteries and Bold Choices

Aoyama Gakuin's catcher Kai Watabe is expected to go in the first round, while Yokohama High's Shoki Oda, who has spoken of wanting to play in America, is a question mark

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The 12 professional baseball clubs will choose new players at the annual draft meeting at a Tokyo hotel on Thursday, starting at 4:50 p.m., and for once no club has announced its first-round pick in advance.

In recent years clubs have commonly declared their first choice beforehand. This year none has, an unusual situation that has left observers guessing and raised the prospect of several clubs naming the same player, which would be decided by lottery.

The university players

Among university players, pitchers from Aoyama Gakuin University, Asia University and Kansai University are highly rated. Kai Watabe, a catcher at Aoyama Gakuin, is considered likely to be taken in the first round, and Meiji University's outfielder Nanato Sakakibara is valued for his power.

The high schoolers

Among high school players, Haruki Komoda, a two-way player at Yamanashi Gakuin who pitches and hits, is one of the most talked-about prospects. A pitcher from Takaoka Daiichi High School in Toyama is also highly regarded.

Oda's dream

Shoki Oda, a pitcher at Yokohama High School in Kanagawa, has said he wants to play in the United States, and it is unclear whether any club will risk a pick on him.

SoftBank

Kyodo News reported that SoftBank, which plays in the Japan Series from Saturday, might make a bold first-round pick, choosing a player despite the risk that he will not sign.

The stakes

For many clubs the draft is the main way to rebuild. Han Shin, which is losing Teruaki Sato to the majors, has a gap to fill in its lineup.

How it works

In the first round all clubs name their choices at the same time. If two or more name the same player, a lottery decides, and the clubs that lose name another player. From the second round, clubs take turns in an order based on the season's standings.

After the draft

Drafted players then negotiate contracts with the clubs that chose them. A separate draft for developmental players, who sign contracts with lower pay and are not registered for the first-team roster, follows the main draft.

Live

The draft will be broadcast on television and online, and the clubs' choices will be known by Thursday evening.

SPORTS

How Japan's Draft Works: Simultaneous First-Round Picks, a Lottery for Ties and a Cap on Signing Bonuses

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Japan's professional baseball draft, held each October, is the only way most amateur players can join one of the 12 clubs of Nippon Professional Baseball.

High school and university players who want to turn professional must submit a declaration of their intention in advance. Players from company teams and independent leagues are also eligible.

The first round

In the first round, every club names its first choice at the same time. A player named by only one club goes to that club.

The lottery

If two or more clubs name the same player, the managers or club officials draw lots, and the winner gains the right to negotiate with him. The losing clubs then name other players, and lotteries are held again if necessary.

Later rounds

From the second round, clubs pick in turn in an order based on the season's standings, with the order reversed from round to round.

Signing bonuses

Signing bonuses for new players are capped at 100 million yen plus performance incentives, and the first-year salary is also limited.

Developmental players

After the main draft, clubs can choose developmental players, who sign cheaper contracts and must earn a place on the main roster. Several stars began that way, including Kodai Senga, who started at SoftBank and now pitches in the major leagues.

No guarantee

A drafted player is not obliged to sign. Some choose to go to university or to a company team instead and enter a later draft.

Going abroad

Some players have gone straight to American baseball or American universities instead of entering the Japanese draft. A rule that once penalised players who did so by barring them from the Japanese draft for several years was abolished in 2020.

Why it matters

The draft spreads talent among the clubs and keeps the league competitive, but players have no say in which club chooses them, a point that players' advocates have long criticised.

SPORTS

Surgery Is 'Not an Option' for Ohtani, the Dodgers Say, and He Will Be a Two-Way Player Again Next Season

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Shohei Ohtani will not have surgery and will continue as a two-way player next season, the Los Angeles Dodgers' president of baseball operations, Andrew Friedman, said at a news conference on Wednesday to review the season.

"Surgery is not an option," Mr Friedman said. "I fully expect him to pitch next year."

A difficult season

Ohtani, who began the season as both a pitcher and a hitter, struggled with inflammation in his left knee and right upper arm. He has not pitched since July 3 and was placed on the injured list in September.

Managing the load

Whether to limit his use next season will be decided later, Mr Friedman said. The challenge, he said, was getting through the long season and reaching October in peak condition.

His 10th season

Next season will be Ohtani's 10th in the major leagues.

Yamamoto and Sasaki

The general manager, Brandon Gomes, also spoke about the pitchers Yoshinobu Yamamoto and Roki Sasaki at the news conference.

The season's end

The Dodgers' season ended without a place in this year's World Series, which opens on Friday, U.S. time, between the Tampa Bay Rays and the Milwaukee Brewers.

The manager

Dave Roberts will continue as manager, according to reports.

The record

Ohtani has already had two operations on his right elbow in the majors, in 2018 and 2023, which is why any sign of arm trouble draws close attention.

SPORTS



SoftBank Hawks players celebrate a title, in a file photo. The Pacific League champions open the Japan Series against DeNA at Yokohama Stadium on Saturday. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

Moinelo Says He Is at '80 Per Cent' After Pitching Live Batting Practice, as SoftBank Prepare for the Japan Series

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Livan Moinelo, SoftBank's left-handed ace, pitched live batting practice at Mizuho PayPay Dome in Fukuoka on Wednesday as the Hawks prepared for the Japan Series against the Yokohama DeNA BayStars, which opens on Saturday.

He threw 35 pitches to developmental players and did not allow a hit.

'About 80 per cent'

"About 80 per cent," the Cuban said of his effort. "It felt the same as usual."

A rocky start

In his last outing, in the Climax Series on October 14, his control was unsteady and he gave up three runs before the middle of the third inning.

A fine season

His preparations were delayed during the regular season, but he was outstanding when he pitched, with an earned run average of 0.76 in seven games.

The coach

Shinji Kurano, the chief pitching coach, said Moinelo had reflected on his last outing and had thrown well. "His adjustment has gone well," he said.

SPORTS

Japan Series Guide: DeNA v SoftBank

By the Sports Desk

FORMAT: Best of seven.

GAMES 1 AND 2: Saturday and Sunday, October 24 and 25, at Yokohama Stadium; no designated hitter under Central League rules.

GAMES 3 TO 5: In Fukuoka at Mizuho PayPay Dome, where the designated hitter is used.

GAMES 6 AND 7: Back in Yokohama, if needed.

DENA: Third in the Central League; swept the Climax Series, beating champions Hanshin four straight in the final stage.

SOFTBANK: Pacific League champions for the third year running; Japan Series winners last year against Hanshin.

2024: The same clubs met; SoftBank won the first two games, and DeNA won the next four for their first title in 26 years.

WATCH: Former Hawks now with DeNA, including the infielder Mimori, against their old club.

SOFTBANK'S ACE: Livan Moinelo, who says he is at 80 per cent.

THE WEATHER: Typhoon Champi is forecast to pass near Kyushu on Monday as a weakening storm; the middle games are indoors.

SPORTS

Angels Announce That Kurt Suzuki Is Leaving as Manager After the Club's First 100-Loss Season

By the Sports Desk

The Los Angeles Angels announced on Wednesday that Kurt Suzuki, 43, was leaving his post as manager after a season in which the club lost 100 games for the first time in its history.

The series

Games 1 and 2 are at Yokohama Stadium on Saturday and Sunday, before the series moves to Fukuoka. DeNA, who finished third in the Central League, swept through the Climax Series.

Revenge

The two clubs met in the 2024 Japan Series, when DeNA lost the first two games and then won four in a row. SoftBank, champions of the Pacific League for the third straight year, beat Hanshin in last year's series.

A loss

SoftBank's Ryosuke Otsu, who contributed to the club's third straight league title, has had surgery on his right elbow and is expected to need four to five months to recover, according to reports.

The Angels finished last in the American League West.

His background

Suzuki, a third-generation Japanese American from Hawaii, was a catcher in the major leagues for 16 seasons, finishing his playing career with the Angels.

From the front office

After retiring he moved from a role as special assistant to the general manager to become the club's manager.

No reason

The club did not give a reason for his departure, and no comment from Suzuki was reported.

The Ohtani years

The Angels were the first major league club of Shohei Ohtani, who played there from 2018 to 2023 before moving to the Dodgers. They have not reached the playoffs since 2014.

A search

The club will now look for its next manager.

A tough job

The Angels have struggled for years despite having stars such as Mike Trout.

SPORTS

Hiroshima Make It Nine Wins Out of Nine in B Premier, and Nagoya Diamond Dolphins Stay Unbeaten at 7-0

By the Sports Desk

The Hiroshima Dragonflies beat the Akita Northern Happinets 98-84 on Wednesday to extend their unbeaten start to the B Premier season to nine games, keeping them top of the West.

The Nagoya Diamond Dolphins, second in the West, beat the Utsunomiya Brex 98-69 for their seventh straight win and remain unbeaten.

Tokyo

Tokyo SR beat the Shinshu Brave Warriors 97-90 to improve to 7-3. Shinshu are 2-8.

Nine games

Nine games were played on Wednesday.

The new league

B Premier is the new top division of Japanese professional basketball, launched this season with stricter requirements for arenas, attendance and finances.

Champions

Hiroshima won the B.League title in 2024.

Osaka

The league has deferred a decision on whether to admit Osaka to B Premier from the 2028-29 season, over its arena plans; the board will discuss it on October 28.

Next

The season continues at the weekend.

SPORTS

LeBron James Scores 14 in His 76ers Debut as Philadelphia Beat the Champion Knicks; Hachimura's Clippers Open Today

By the Sports Desk

LeBron James scored 14 points, with nine rebounds and seven assists, in his first game for the Philadelphia 76ers as they beat the New York Knicks, the defending champions, 106-100 in New York to open the NBA season on Tuesday, U.S. time.

Tyrese Maxey led Philadelphia with 28 points. Jalen Brunson scored 21 for the Knicks and Karl-Anthony Towns 19, with 12 rebounds.

The third quarter

The 76ers won the third quarter 29-18 to take control after trailing at halftime.

Embiid

Joel Embiid had 13 points and 11 rebounds for Philadelphia.

Other openers

The Detroit Pistons beat the Boston Celtics 121-113, and the Oklahoma City Thunder won 116-104 at the San Antonio Spurs.

Hachimura

Rui Hachimura, starting his eighth NBA season after joining the Los Angeles Clippers, plays his first game for his new team at home against the Sacramento Kings on Wednesday, U.S. time, Thursday in Japan.

Praise

Mark Tatum, the NBA's deputy commissioner, praised Hachimura's work coaching junior and senior high school students in Japan, saying his contact with young people would be a big inspiration to the next generation of Japanese players. The league has 125 international players, Mr Tatum said.

The season

Each team plays 82 regular-season games, ending on April 11.

The champions

The Knicks won the championship last season and are trying to win it again.

SPORTS

Why J1 Is Only 11 Rounds In: The J.League's First Season From Autumn to Spring

By the Sports Desk

The J1 League played its 11th round of matches on Wednesday, a point at which, in past years, the title race would have been nearly over. The reason is the J.League's switch to a new calendar.

From this season, the league runs from August to the following spring, with a break in the depths of winter, like most leagues in Europe.

Why change

The league says the change will let Japanese clubs and players fit more easily into the international calendar, including the transfer windows in Europe and the Asian club competitions, and avoid playing through the hottest weeks of summer.

The winter problem

The main objection was snow. Clubs in Hokkaido, Tohoku and along the Sea of Japan coast warned that

matches in January and February would be difficult, which is why the calendar includes a long winter break.

A bridge

To bridge the gap between the old and new calendars, the league held a special competition in the first half of 2026.

The table

Machida lead J1 on 26 points after 11 rounds, ahead of FC Tokyo on 24 and Hiroshima on 23.

Twenty clubs

J1 has 20 clubs, including newly promoted sides such as Chiba, Mito and Nagasaki.

The heat

Wednesday's match in Shimizu was played on a day when much of Japan recorded midsummer temperatures in late October, a reminder that the summers the new calendar is meant to avoid are getting longer.

What follows

The season will resume after the winter break and end in the spring, when the champions will be decided.

SPORTS

Fewer Jumps, More Artistry: ISU Technical Chief Explains This Season's Rule Changes Before the Grand Prix Series

By the Sports Desk

Figure skaters will perform one jump fewer in their free skates this season, under rule changes that put more weight on artistry, the chair of the International Skating Union's technical committee for singles and pairs, Lena Laaksonen of Finland, said in an interview with Kyodo News.

The number of jumping passes in the free skate falls from seven to six for both men and women.

Combinations

Free skates may now include two combinations instead of three: at most one of three jumps and one of two.

Repetition

The same type of jump may be performed no more than three times, regardless of the number of rotations.

The Euler

The Euler, a connecting half-loop jump, will no longer earn points. A sequence of a triple jump, an Euler and another triple will count as a two-jump combination, and skaters can add more jumps to it.

A new spin

A choreographic spin is being added, judged on how well it fits the music and how creative it is.

Why

Ms Laaksonen said the aim was to place more emphasis on artistry, which she said had been somewhat undervalued, to encourage more varied programmes and to reward skaters with a wider range of jumps.

The season

The Grand Prix series, in which Japanese skaters are among the leading contenders, is getting under way, and the Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina were held in February.

SPORTS

Posting Fees Through the Years

What Japanese clubs received when stars left early for the majors
By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1998: Posting begins; sealed bids.

2000: Ichiro Suzuki, \$13.1 million.

2006: Daisuke Matsuzaka, \$51.1 million.

2011: Yu Darvish, \$51.7 million.

2013: Fees capped at \$20 million.

2014: Masahiro Tanaka, \$20 million.

2017: Shohei Ohtani, \$20 million.

2018: Fees set as a share of contracts.

2023: Yoshinobu Yamamoto, \$50.6 million.

2025: Roki Sasaki, about \$1.6 million.

SPORTS



The emblem of the 5th Asian Para Games, Aichi-Nagoya 2026, which run until Saturday. (File image: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

Tomoki Sato Leads a Japanese Sweep of the Men's Wheelchair 100 Metres at the Asian Para Games

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Tomoki Sato won the men's 100 metres for wheelchair racers in the T51 and T52 classes at the Asian Para Games in Aichi and Nagoya on Wednesday, leading a Japanese sweep of the podium, with Yuki Oya second and Tomoya Ito third.

The Games, being held in Japan, continued to bring a steady stream of medals for the hosts.

Long jump

Ryota Fukunaga won the men's long jump for athletes with visual impairments in the T13 class.

Javelin brothers

In the javelin for visually impaired athletes, a pair of Japanese brothers won gold and bronze.

In the pool

In swimming, Naohide Yamaguchi won the men's 100 metres breaststroke for athletes with intellectual impairments, Akito Minai the men's 100 metres butterfly in the S10 class, and Aira Kinoshita the women's 100 metres breaststroke for athletes with intellectual impairments.

On the road

In cycling, Shota Kawamoto won the men's road time trial for the C1 to C5 classes.

Tennis

In wheelchair tennis, Yui Kamiji reached the women's singles final and Tokito Oda the men's semifinals.

Blind football

Japan's blind football team reached the final.

The anthems

The Games have been marred by mistakes with national anthems: on Monday the anthem of Iran was played at two taekwondo medal ceremonies instead of those of Taiwan and Mongolia, and South Korea's anthem was played before a sitting volleyball match instead of China's. Nagoya's mayor, Ichiro Hirofusa, apologised.

Home crowd

Japanese athletes have spoken of the support of home crowds, a legacy of the Tokyo Paralympics in 2021.

SPORTS

Machida Hit Five Past Shimizu to Return to the Top of J1 as FC Tokyo's Winning Run Ends in a Goalless Draw

By the Sports Desk

Machida Zelvia beat Shimizu S-Pulse 5-0 away on Wednesday to return to the top of the J1 League, with Takuma Nishimura scoring a hat-trick, as the 11th round of matches was played.

Machida have 26 points.

FC Tokyo held

FC Tokyo, who had won five in a row, were held 0-0 at home by Kashiwa Reysol and are second on 24 points.

Hiroshima beaten

Sanfrecce Hiroshima, who had won four straight, lost 4-0 at home to Nagasaki and are third on 23 points.

Kawasaki win in Kobe

Kawasaki Frontale won 2-1 at Vissel Kobe, who stay on 22 points, level with Kashiwa.

Gamba's relief

Gamba Osaka beat Avispa Fukuoka 2-1 for their first win in 10 matches.

The rest

Urawa beat Chiba 3-2, Okayama beat Mito 2-0, Kashima drew 2-2 with Kyoto, Yokohama F. Marinos drew 2-2 with Tokyo Verdy, and Nagoya drew 1-1 with Cerezo Osaka.

The new calendar

This is the first J.League season played from autumn to spring, a change intended to bring the Japanese league into line with Europe.

Next

The league continues at the weekend.

SPORTS

Zion Suzuki Plays the Full Match as Aston Villa Make It Three Straight Wins in the Champions League; Bayern and Arsenal Draw 2-2

By the Sports Desk

Aston Villa beat Viking of Norway 3-1 at home on Wednesday for their third straight win in the Champions League league phase, with Japan's goalkeeper Zion Suzuki playing the full match.

Villa have nine points from three matches.

Watanabe

Go Watanabe came on in the 79th minute for Feyenoord, who lost 1-0 away to Real Betis and have three points.

Lille

Ayase Ueda missed Lille's 4-2 home defeat by Galatasaray through injury. It was Lille's third straight loss.

The big game

Bayern Munich and Arsenal drew 2-2 in Munich.

Real Madrid

Real Madrid beat RB Leipzig 4-1 for their third straight win.

Como

Como beat Manchester United 4-1.

The rest

Club Brugge beat Lens 3-0, Inter Milan beat Shakhtar Donetsk 1-0, and LASK won 3-2 at Sporting.

Tuesday

On Tuesday, Kodai Sano played the full match as PSV won 1-0 in Porto.

Next

The fourth round of league-phase matches is played on November 3 and 4.

SPORTS

Japan's Under-17 Women Beat France 2-0 for a Second Win and a Place in the World Cup Knockout Stage

By the Sports Desk

Japan beat France 2-0 in their second Group D match at the women's Under-17 World Cup in Rabat, Morocco, on Wednesday, securing a place in the knockout stage with a second straight win.

Hanashiro of the JFA Academy Fukushima, who came on as a substitute in the second half, scored both goals.

The tournament

The tournament is being held in Morocco.

A strong record

Japan have a strong record at the event and won it in 2014.

The academy

The JFA Academy Fukushima, run by the Japan Football Association, trains promising young players.

A pipeline

Many members of Japan's senior women's team, the Nadeshiko, came through the youth teams.

Next

Japan play their final group match before the knockout rounds.

The senior team

The Nadeshiko are preparing for the 2027 Women's World Cup in Brazil.

SPORTS

With a U.S. Tour Win Behind Her, Yuna Nishimura Says She Will Concentrate 'on the Shot in Front of Me' at the Masters GC Ladies

By the Sports Desk

Yuna Nishimura, a winner on the American LPGA Tour, said on Wednesday that she would aim for victory at the Nobuta Group Masters GC Ladies, which opens on Thursday at Masters Golf Club in Hyogo Prefecture.

"I want to aim for the win and concentrate on the shot in front of me," she said.

No room to relax

"It was a big win, but I don't feel I have any more room to relax," she said of her American victory.

For the fans

"I hope I can play well for the people who are looking forward to seeing me," she added.

The tournament

The tournament is one of the autumn events of the Japan LPGA Tour.

The final round

The tournament ends on Sunday.

SPORTS

Robchen Works Well Before Sunday's Kikuka Sho, Bidding to Become the First Triple Crown Winner in Six Years

By the Sports Desk

Robchen, who is bidding to complete the Triple Crown of Japanese racing for three-year-olds, worked well in his final training before the 87th Kikuka Sho, which will be run over 3,000 metres on turf at Kyoto Racecourse on Sunday.

The colt is trained by Haruki Sugiyama.

The Triple Crown

The Triple Crown consists of the Satsuki Sho, the Tokyo Yushun, or Japanese Derby, and the Kikuka Sho, the Japanese equivalent of the St Leger. Winning all three is one of the hardest feats in Japanese racing.

Six years

A win would make Robchen the first Triple Crown winner in six years, and the ninth in history, since Contrail in 2020.

The distance

At 3,000 metres, the Kikuka Sho is longer than either of the first two races, testing stamina as well as speed.

The race

The Kikuka Sho is the 11th race on Sunday's card at Kyoto.

The trainer

Sugiyama is based at the Ritto training centre in Shiga Prefecture.

The weather

Champi is forecast to be a severe tropical storm over the East China Sea on Sunday, far from Kyoto.

SPORTS

The Eight Triple Crown Winners

Horses that have won the Satsuki Sho, the Tokyo Yushun and the Kikuka Sho in the same year; Robchen would be the ninth

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1941: St Lite, the first Triple Crown winner.

1964: Shinzan, a generation later.

1983: Mr. C.B.

1984: Symboli Rudolf, unbeaten in the three races and the first to follow another winner in successive years.

1994: Narita Brian.

2005: Deep Impact, unbeaten through the series.

2011: Orfevre.

2020: Contrail, a son of Deep Impact, also unbeaten in the three races.

THE RACES: The Satsuki Sho over 2,000 metres in spring, the Tokyo Yushun, or Japanese Derby, over 2,400 metres, and the Kikuka Sho over 3,000 metres

in autumn.

THE TEST: Speed in spring, class at Tokyo in early summer and stamina at Kyoto in the autumn.

SUNDAY: Robchen bids to become the ninth in the 87th Kikuka Sho at Kyoto.

SPORTS

Sports in Brief

By the Sports Desk

BASEBALL: Yusuke Oyama of Hanshin and Koki Yamaguchi of Lotte won the Sayonara Awards for September and October for walk-off home runs, Oyama's in the 11th inning against DeNA on September 21 and Yamaguchi's in the ninth against SoftBank on October 3. A fan vote for the year's best runs until November 3.

BASEBALL: SoftBank's Ryosuke Otsu has had surgery on his right elbow and faces a recovery of four to five months, according to reports.

BASKETBALL: Rui Hachimura's Los Angeles Clippers open their season at home against the Sacramento Kings on Wednesday, U.S. time.

MLB: The World Series between the Tampa Bay Rays and the Milwaukee Brewers opens in Milwaukee on Friday, U.S. time, Saturday morning in Japan.

ASIAN PARA GAMES: Nagoya's mayor, Ichiro Hirofusa, apologised for three mix-ups of national anthems at the Games on Monday.

SOCCER: Japan's women's Under-17 team beat France 2-0 to reach the World Cup knockout stage.

GOLF: The Nobuta Group Masters GC Ladies opens on Thursday in Hyogo Prefecture.

RACING: The Kikuka Sho, the last leg of the Triple Crown, is run at Kyoto on Sunday.

TENNIS: The Japan Open women's tournament continues in Osaka.

EKIDEN: The Yomiuri Shimbun examined how fast the Izumo Ekiden has become, with first-year runners winning several section awards this month.

FIGURE SKATING: Free skates have one jump fewer this season, the ISU's technical chief said.

CULTURE

Masashi Matsuie's Debut Novel Is Shortlisted for France's Prix Medicis and Prix Femina in Their Foreign Fiction Categories

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The French translation of Kazan no Fumoto de, the debut novel of Masashi Matsuie, has been shortlisted for the foreign fiction categories of two leading French literary prizes, the Prix Medicis and the Prix Femina, his publisher, Shinchosha, said on Wednesday.

The winners are due to be announced in early November.

The author

Matsuie, born in Tokyo in 1958, worked as an editor before publishing the novel in 2012. It won the Yomiuri Prize for Literature.

The novel

The book, whose title means "at the foot of the volcano," follows a young man who joins an architect's office and spends a summer at its villa in the mountains.

The translator

It was translated into French by Deborah Pierret-Watanabe.

The Medicis

The Prix Medicis was founded in 1958 and added its foreign fiction category in 1970. Sao Ichikawa's Hunchback was shortlisted last year, but no Japanese work has won it.

The Femina

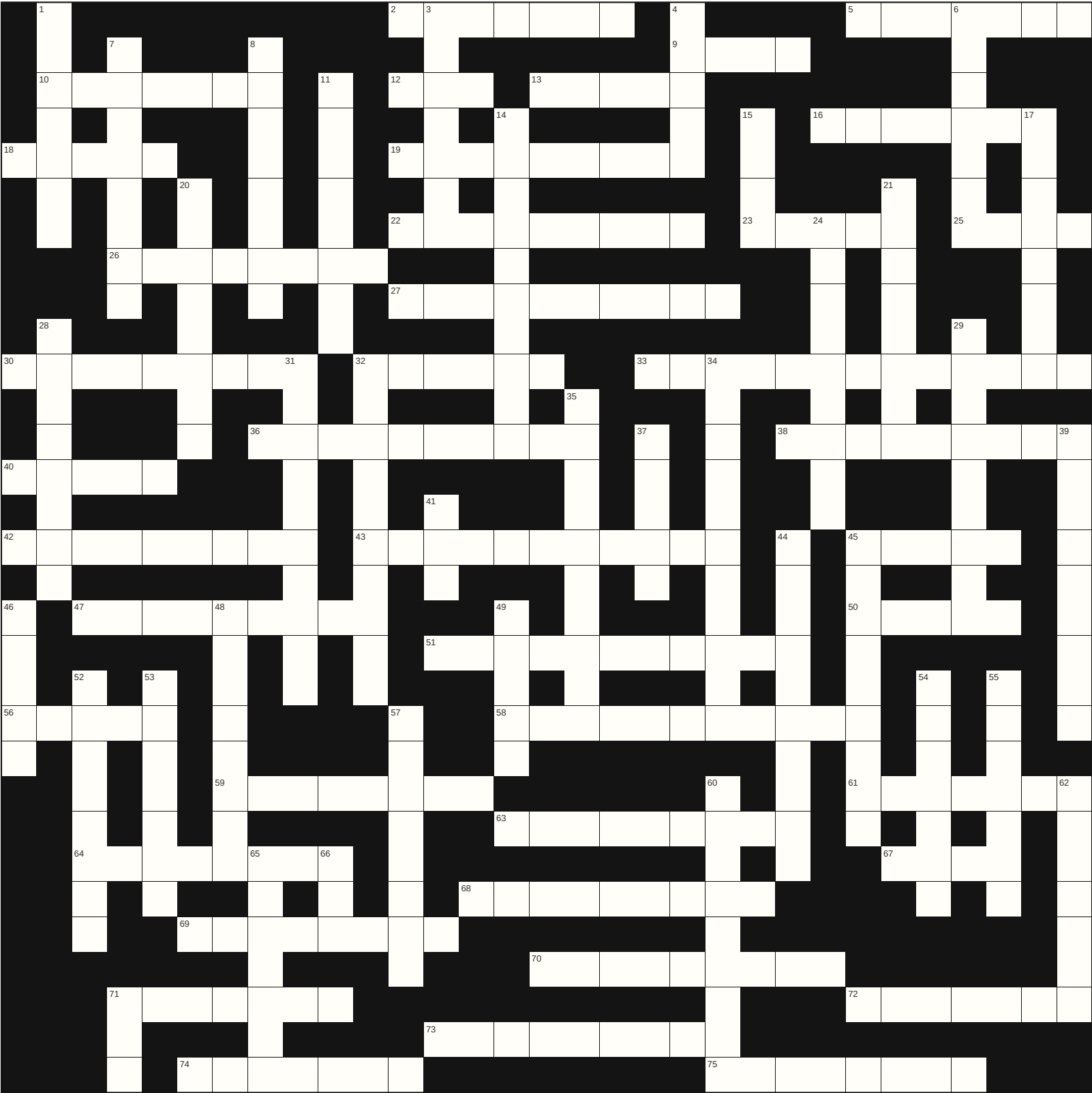
The Prix Femina, whose jury is made up entirely of women, has awarded a prize for foreign fiction since 1985. Hitonari Tsuji won it in 1999 with Le Bouddha blanc.

Japanese literature in France

Japanese fiction has a large readership in France, and translations of contemporary Japanese novelists have been increasingly successful.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 78 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional.

CULTURE

Tomoka Nishiyama Keeps the Women's Ousho Title for a Fifth Straight Year, Beating Nanami Naka in the Deciding Game

By the Culture Desk

Tomoka Nishiyama won the third and deciding game of the 48th Women's Ousho shogi title match against Nanami Naka at the Shogi Kaikan in Shibuya, Tokyo, on Wednesday, keeping the title for a fifth consecutive year.

Nishiyama, playing second, won in 108 moves, taking the best-of-three series 2-1.

'Happy'

"I'm glad to have achieved this result," Nishiyama said.

The challenger

Naka, 28, said she had been under pressure in all three games.

The sponsor

The match is sponsored by Kirishima Shuzo, the shochu maker.

Nishiyama's place

Nishiyama, a former member of the professional training league, is regarded as one of the strongest women players. No woman has yet become a full professional kishi.

Busy autumn

She is due to hold a news conference on Monday.

Women's titles

The women's shogi titles are separate from the eight major titles open to all professionals, which are currently dominated by Sota Fujii.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

October 22 in History

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

794: The capital moves to Heian-kyo, now Kyoto, the event the Jidai Matsuri commemorates on this date.

1797: Andre-Jacques Garnerin makes the first parachute descent, over Paris.

1836: Sam Houston is sworn in as the first president of the Republic of Texas.

1844: Followers of the preacher William Miller wait in vain for the end of the world, the Great Disappointment.

1883: The Metropolitan Opera House opens in New York.

1907: A run on the Knickerbocker Trust Company deepens the Panic of 1907 in New York.

1938: Chester Carlson makes the first xerographic copy.

1962: President Kennedy announces a naval quarantine of Cuba.

1964: Jean-Paul Sartre declines the Nobel Prize in Literature.

1975: Venera 9 sends the first picture from the surface of Venus.

2009: Windows 7 goes on sale.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Festivals and Events This Week

By the Culture Desk

THU. 22: Jidai Matsuri, Kyoto; the procession leaves the Kyoto Imperial Palace grounds around noon for Heian Shrine.

THU. 22: Kurama Fire Festival, in the mountains north of Kyoto, in the evening.

THU. 22: UN membership photo exhibition opens at the United Nations University, Shibuya, until January 28.

THU. 22: Professional baseball draft, from 4:50 p.m.

SAT. 24: Japan Series, Game 1, Yokohama Stadium.

SAT. 24: The Asian Para Games close in Aichi and Nagoya.

SUN. 25: Japan Series, Game 2; Kikuka Sho at Kyoto Racecourse.

TUE. 27: Autumn reading week begins, running to November 9.

WED. 28: Tsutenkaku, Osaka, glows purple for its 70th anniversary, until November 12.

FROM WEDNESDAY 28: Free entry to Tsutenkaku's observation deck for the first 1,000 Nankai commuter pass holders each day, until the 30th.

THU. 22-SUN. 25: Nobuta Group Masters GC Ladies golf tournament, Masters Golf Club, Hyogo Prefecture.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Sato thanks Koshien, Page 22.

Women's gymnastics bronze, Page 22.

Editorial: whose rules?, Page 26.

ACROSS

2. Island group centred on Ishigaki (7)
5. Novelist shortlisted in France (7)
9. Bus maker with fall-spotting AI (4)
10. SoftBank ace at 80 per cent (7)
12. Firm that said AI lowered the barrier (3)
13. JR East line partly suspended (5)
16. Pitcher posted for more than \$51 million in 2011 (7)
18. Period of the clay earring (5)
19. City that issued the emergency order (9)
22. Nobel laureate who praised small discoveries (9)
23. Emperor honoured with Kammu in the procession (5)
25. Retailer whose sites cannot be viewed (4)
26. Heating fuel at 2,573 yen a can (8)
27. Dry writing, invented in 1938 (10)
30. Best-known publishing system built on PHP (9)
32. Senator who told the envoy to look up a word (6)
33. Kind of low Champi should become by Tuesday (13)
36. Firm that said it was seeing early attacks (10)
38. Former UAE envoy in the UN race (9)
40. Today's event at a Tokyo hotel (5)
42. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman (9)
43. Sato's home city (11)
45. Security firm credited with finding the flaws (5)
47. Islands bracing for storm winds (9)
50. Moroccan city of the U-17 win (5)
51. Hiroshima's unbeaten basketball team (11)
56. ___ Drone, whose delivery angered Moscow (5)
58. Indian Moon mission launched in 2008 (11)
59. Nagoya mayor who apologised (8)
61. Komeito leader who calls the cut a bad move (7)
63. City hosting the sea festival (9)
64. Aide who may join the talks (8)
67. Celebration of a 70th year (4)
68. Pitcher whose 2006 fee topped \$51 million (9)
69. Island promised along with the Habomais (8)
70. Ride for garbage collectors (9)
71. What Takaichi says she delivers one by one (7)
72. ___ list that binds a player (7)
73. Subtropical storm heading out to sea (9)
74. Rasmus ___, who wrote the first PHP tools (7)
75. Tea name protected as a GI (8)

DOWN

1. Nuclear plant whose quake data will be recalculated (7)
3. Actor named tea ambassador (7)
4. Name of the planned joint group, the middle way (5)
6. Commander of Apollo 7 (7)
7. 2channel founder in the venture (8)
8. Hokkaido city of the donating shipping firm (8)
11. Soviet premier who signed it (8)
14. Flat coral island already in the gales (10)
15. Why the fixes came a day early (4)
17. Prime minister who signed the 1956 declaration (8)
20. First parachutist, over Paris in 1797 (8)
21. Down 2.9 per cent, but spending more (8)
24. A 30-degree day, in Japanese (9)
28. Venue of the EU-Canada summit (8)
29. Shochu maker sponsoring the Women's Ousho (9)
31. Contribution shared among training clubs (10)
32. Osaka tower turning purple (10)
34. Launch site of the H3 (11)
35. Bread mould of the one-gene experiments (10)
37. Illustration service that paused (5)
39. Clipper starting his eighth season (9)
41. Komeito's Shinichi ___, who wants numbers (3)
44. Indian foreign minister due in Tokyo (10)
45. Recruit's used-car site (9)
46. Forecast at up to 80 metres a second (5)
48. APEC host city in November (8)
49. Fix released at 11 p.m. on Wednesday (5)
52. Dodgers executive who ruled out surgery (8)
53. Back on top of J1 (7)
54. Sunshade seen in Asakusa (7)
55. Queens district of the first copy (7)
57. Iranian speaker (8)
60. ISU technical chief (9)
62. Where the prime minister suggested sites could go (7)
65. Missile in the Taiwanese drill (7)
66. Osaka Prefecture city at 31.2 (3)
71. Language behind seven in ten websites (3)

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Today's Numbers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

69.3: Per cent of websites with a known server-side language that use PHP, according to W3Techs.

9.2: The severity score given by PHP's security team to each of the two flaws, out of 10.

905: Typhoon Champi's central pressure in hectopascals at 6 a.m. Thursday.

80: Metres a second, the strongest gusts forecast near Champi's centre.

157: Observation points that reached 30 degrees on Wednesday, according to Kyodo News.

1875: The year central Tokyo's temperature records began; Wednesday's 30 degrees was the latest in the year since then.

545.82: Yen gained by the Nikkei average on Wednesday.

30.73 million: Foreign visitors from January to September, down 2.9 per cent.

13,926: Yen, the average monthly pay rise this year, a record.

164.063: Points scored by Japan's women to win world team bronze, their first team medal in 60 years.

141,000: Records of police staff and residents that may have leaked from 22 prefectural police forces.

4.2 million: Records that may have leaked from the Comic Cmoa e-book store.

3,000: Metres, the distance of Sunday's Kikuka Sho.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Quotes of the Day

By the Copy Desk

"I have kept running with the belief that delivering on my pledges, one at a time, is my mission." Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, on her first anniversary.

"However many times we ask, nothing concrete comes out." Shinichi Isa of Komeito, on the tax bill.

"Even if we are persuaded by the benefit system, we cannot support it as it is." Komeito's leader, Mitsunari Okamoto.

"The roar of the crowd at Koshien is the best in the world." Teruaki Sato of Hanshin.

"Surgery is not an option." Andrew Friedman of the Dodgers, on Shohei Ohtani.

"Nothing justifies violence in a democratic society."

President Emmanuel Macron of France.

"A giant monster." Tom Fletcher of the United Nations, on El Nino.

"When you see or hear a warning, please take action to protect yourself." Ryuichi Nomura, director general of the weather agency.

"It feels different from before." A woman who received heart muscle sheets grown from iPS cells.

"I'm glad to have achieved this result." Tomoka Nishiyama, after keeping the Women's Ousho title.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Words in the News

By the Copy Desk

PHP: A programming language that runs on web servers and assembles pages before they are sent to readers.

REMOTE CODE EXECUTION: A flaw that lets an attacker run commands on a computer from across the internet.

PATCH: A corrected version of software that fixes a flaw.

MANATSUBI: A midsummer day, one on which the temperature reaches 30 degrees Celsius or more.

FLOOD SPECIAL WARNING: The highest, Level 5, warning for a river, issued when it has overflowed.

EXTRATROPICAL LOW: A storm that has lost its tropical character over cooler water; it can still bring wind and rain.

POSTING SYSTEM: The route by which a Japanese player can move to the major leagues early, with his club's consent.

TWO-PLUS-TWO: A meeting of two countries' foreign and defence ministers.

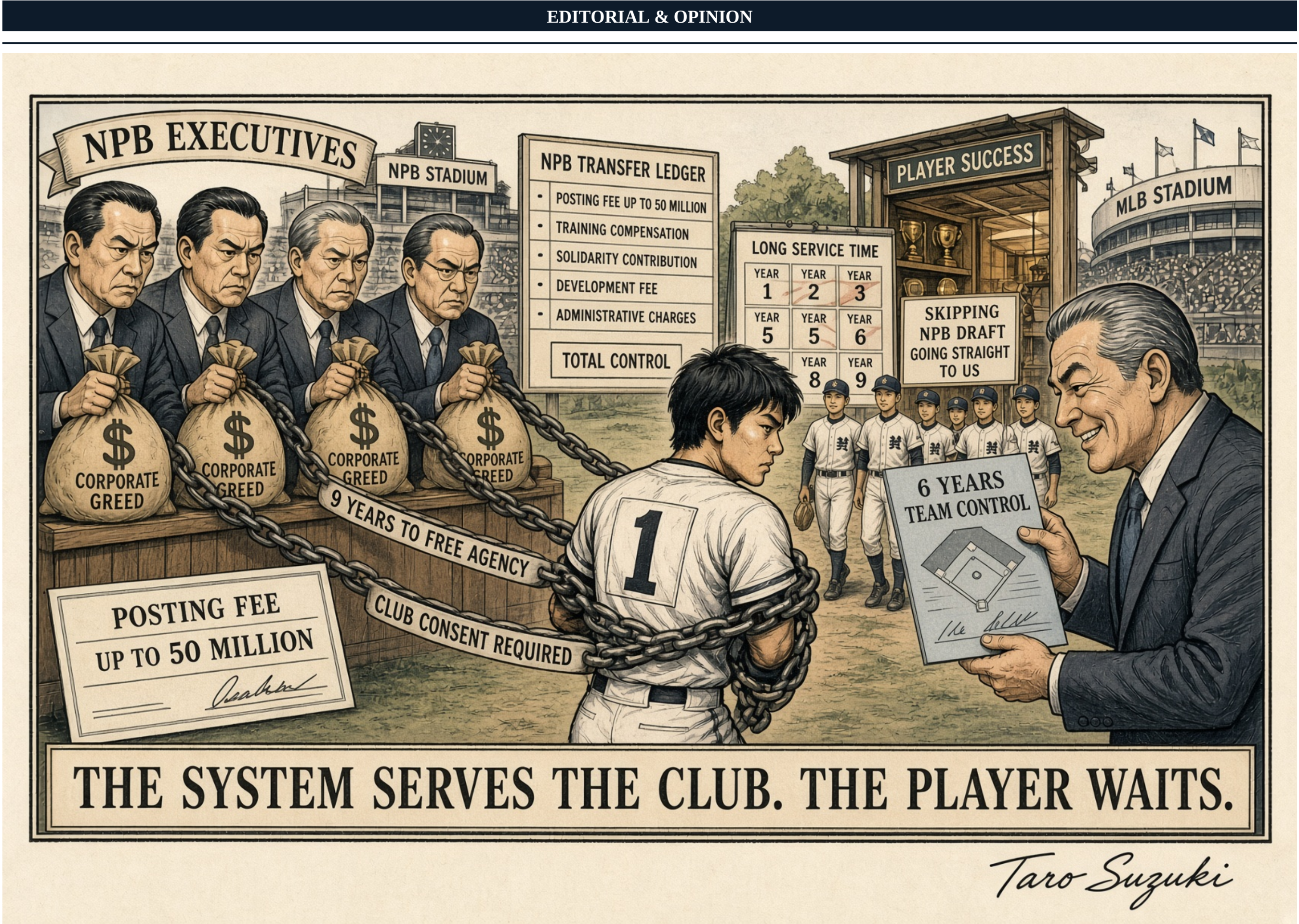
GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION: A protected label for products whose quality is tied to where they are made.

KOKI: The celebration of a person's 70th year, marked with the colour purple.

AI AGENT: Software that carries out a series of tasks with some independence.

PHAGE: A virus that infects and kills bacteria.

CORE CITY: A city of 200,000 people or more given extra powers, such as running its own public health centre.



Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki for The Japan Morning Post.

On Draft Day, Japanese Baseball Should Ask Whom Its Rules Really Serve. A Player Should Not Need a Decade and a Club's Permission to Choose

The draft, nine years to overseas free agency and a posting system that runs on club consent have helped build a strong league. They have also left players waiting for freedoms that other workers take for granted, and the most talented teenagers are starting to look elsewhere

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

At 4:50 this afternoon, in a hotel ballroom in Tokyo, the 12 clubs of Nippon Professional Baseball will decide where more than a hundred young men will live and work for most of the next decade. The young men themselves will have no say. Some will learn their fate from a television screen in a school gymnasium, surrounded by teammates and reporters. A few will watch a club they never wanted draw their name from a box.

Yesterday, at the Hanshin Tigers' training facility in Nishinomiya, Teruaki Sato, the Central League's Triple Crown winner, spoke with obvious emotion about the roar of the crowd at Koshien and thanked the club for caring for him since he joined. It was a gracious farewell from a player who has given Hanshin everything, and it deserves to be taken at face value. It is also worth remembering that Sato is leaving only because the club agreed to let him, and that Hanshin will be paid for agreeing.

Today's cartoon puts the matter bluntly. The system serves the club; the player waits. That is a caricature, as cartoons are meant to be, and the people who run Japanese baseball would protest that it ignores what the clubs give players: training, wages, fame and a league that fills its stadiums. They would have a point. But a caricature works when it exaggerates something true, and this one does. Draft day, with Sato's farewell still fresh, is a good day to look honestly at the rules that bind a Japanese professional baseball player, and to ask which of them still make sense.

The draft: no choice at the start

The draft is where control begins. High school and university players who want to turn professional must declare their intention in advance, and then wait. In the first round every club names its choice at the same time; when two or more name the same player, the matter is settled by lottery. From the second round, clubs pick in turn. A player who does not like

the club that chooses him can refuse to sign, but the price is high: he must go to university or join a company team and try again years later, at an age when professional careers are already short.

Drafts exist in most professional leagues, and for a defensible reason. If the richest clubs could sign every promising teenager, the league would lose the competitive balance that keeps fans interested. The lottery is a peculiarly Japanese touch, but the principle, that the weak should have a fair chance at the best young talent, is widely accepted. We accept it too. The question is not whether a draft is justified, but how long its grip should last once a player has proved himself.

Nine years

In Japan, the answer is a very long time. A player becomes eligible for domestic free agency only after eight seasons on a club's first-team roster, or seven for those drafted from university or company teams. To move abroad as a free agent he needs nine. A season, for this purpose, means at least 145 days registered on the first team, so time spent in the minor leagues, or recovering from injury off the roster, does not count.

The result is that a player drafted out of high school at 18 cannot normally choose his employer before his late twenties, and many never reach free agency at all. Careers in professional baseball are short and uncertain; a large share of players are released before they accumulate the required seasons. For them, the reserve system, under which a club holds the exclusive right to renew their contracts year after year, is the whole of their professional life.

No other employer in Japan could treat a worker this way. A company cannot prevent an engineer from leaving for a rival, or require a competitor to pay compensation for hiring her. Sports leagues are treated differently around the world because of the special nature of competition between clubs, and

some restrictions are reasonable. But the burden of proof should lie with the restriction, not with the person who wants to change jobs.

The reserve list

The mechanism that makes this possible is simple. Each winter, every club submits a list of the players it wishes to retain, and a player on that list cannot negotiate with any other club, at home or abroad, until he qualifies for free agency or is released. He may argue about his salary, and in rare cases take a dispute to arbitration, but he cannot test his value by talking to a rival. The club is both his only employer and the only judge of what he is worth to the market.

Most players accept this without complaint, partly because the alternative is unknown and partly because complaining is not the done thing. Young players, in particular, are keenly aware that their place on the first team depends on the goodwill of the same people who set their pay. That imbalance of power is the real subject of the cartoon, and it is rarely discussed openly.

The domestic market's hidden tax

Even free agency in Japan comes with strings. A club that signs a domestic free agent from another club may have to pay compensation, and, for the most highly paid players, the losing club can choose to take a player from the signing club's roster instead of, or as well as, money. This human compensation, as it is known, is meant to protect clubs that lose stars. In practice it can deter signings and turn a player's decision to move into an unpleasant lottery for a teammate who suddenly finds himself sent away.

It is little wonder that domestic free agency in Japan has never produced the kind of open market seen in the United States, and that many players decline to declare it, choosing instead to sign multi-year contracts with their existing clubs.

The posting system: permission and a price

For a star who wants to play in the major leagues before he reaches nine seasons, there is one route: the posting system, which requires his club's consent. Sato is taking it. So did Shohei Ohtani, Yoshinobu Yamamoto, Roki Sasaki and, last winter, Munetaka Murakami and Kazuma Okamoto.

The system has changed several times. From 1998, Japanese clubs posted players and American clubs

submitted sealed bids for the right to negotiate; the highest bidder won exclusive rights. That produced the famous fees of more than 51 million dollars paid for Daisuke Matsuzaka in 2006 and Yu Darvish in 2011, and it left players with little leverage, because only one club could talk to them. From 2013, the Japanese club could set a release fee of up to 20 million dollars, and every major league club willing to pay it could negotiate. Masahiro Tanaka and Ohtani moved under that system.

Since 2018, the fee has been calculated as a percentage of the contract the player signs: 20 per cent of the first 25 million dollars, 17.5 per cent of the next 25 million and 15 per cent of anything above that, with separate rules for minor league contracts. When Yamamoto signed a 325 million dollar contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers, the Orix Buffaloes received about 50 million dollars. When Sasaki, still under 25, signed a minor league contract with the Dodgers, the Chiba Lotte Marines received a fraction of that.

The current system is fairer to players than its predecessors. Once posted, they can negotiate with all 30 major league clubs for 45 days, and the market sets their price. But the decision to post remains entirely the club's. There is no right to be posted after a given number of seasons, no published criteria, and no appeal. Some clubs have been generous; others have made stars wait, or refused for years. The Yomiuri Giants did not post a player until 2019.

The fee and the player

Consider what the fee represents. A club that has paid a player's salary and trained him receives a large sum when he leaves early. That is a reasonable return on an investment, and the money can support the development of the next generation. But the size of the fee rises with the size of the player's contract: the more the American market values him, the more his Japanese club collects for letting him go. The player's talent is, in effect, being sold twice.

Nobody should begrudge clubs compensation. The question is balance. When a club can withhold permission entirely, and collect a fee that grows with the player's value, the incentive is to hold on to a star until the moment when his departure is most lucrative or least damaging to the team. The player's own career, which may peak earlier or later than the club's plans, is not the deciding factor.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

The teenagers who look elsewhere

The strongest argument for reform is not moral but practical. Talented young players are beginning to vote with their feet.

In 2008 the pitcher Junichi Tazawa skipped the Japanese draft and signed with the Boston Red Sox. Japanese baseball responded with a rule that barred players who went abroad without passing through the draft from being drafted by a Japanese club for several years after their return. The rule was intended to deter others, and for a decade it did. It was abolished in 2020, amid questions about whether such a restriction could be justified.

Since then the door has been open. Rintaro Sasaki, one of the most celebrated high school sluggers of recent years, chose an American university over the Japanese draft. This year, Shoki Oda, a pitcher at Yokohama High School, has said he wants to play in the United States, and nobody knows whether a club will risk a pick on him today.

These are still exceptions, and the American route is no paradise. A Japanese teenager who signs with a major league organisation enters the minor leagues, where pay is modest and the odds of reaching the top are long. Once he reaches the majors, his club controls him for six years of service time before he can become a free agent, with salary arbitration only after the first few. The cartoon's second scene, in which high school players walk past the Japanese stadium toward a man offering six years of team control, makes the point with some irony: the alternative to one system of control is another.

But the comparison is not as unflattering to America as Japanese clubs might hope. Six years of service is shorter than nine seasons, and a player who reaches the majors young can be a free agent before he is 30. American players can be traded, which they often dislike, but they also have a strong union that negotiates every rule with the owners. Most importantly, the major leagues are where the money and the prestige are, and the success of Ohtani, Yamamoto and Murakami has convinced a generation of Japanese teenagers that they can succeed there too.

If Japanese baseball wants its best young players to begin their careers at home, it must offer them a deal that makes sense on its own terms, not one that relies on the absence of alternatives.

What the clubs get right

It is only fair to acknowledge what the current system has achieved. Japanese professional baseball is in good health. Attendance this year passed 27 million, a record, and even clubs that are struggling on the field have drawn record crowds. The pennant races are fiercely followed. The Japan Series that opens on Saturday between DeNA and SoftBank will be watched by millions.

The draft and the reserve system have helped keep the league balanced: SoftBank and the Giants spend heavily, but smaller-market clubs such as Orix have built championship teams through development. Clubs invest in their farm systems, their academies and their coaching because they can expect to keep the players they develop for a long time. Take that security away entirely, and some would invest less.

Nor is it true that Japanese players are mistreated in any ordinary sense. They are well paid by the standards of the country, and stars are national celebrities. Many, like Sato, express genuine affection for their clubs. The question is not whether players are exploited, but whether they are given the freedom that their talent and their contribution have earned, at the point in their careers when it matters.

Five reforms

We would propose five changes, none of them radical.

First, shorten the road to free agency. Nine seasons for overseas free agency and seven or eight for domestic free agency are among the longest waits in professional sport. A single threshold of seven seasons for both, with partial credit for time spent on the second team after a set number of years, would still give clubs a long period of control while letting players make choices in their prime.

Second, give players a right to request posting after a fixed period, say seven seasons, with the club obliged to post them unless it offers a contract that matches a fair valuation, or unless an independent panel accepts its reasons for refusal. The decision to post should not depend on a club's mood, its standings or its

accountants alone.

Third, publish the criteria. Every club should set out, in advance and in writing, the conditions under which it will post a player. Players and agents could then plan their careers, and fans would understand what to expect.

Fourth, reform human compensation in domestic free agency. Money is a fair form of compensation. Forcing a third player, who has done nothing, to change clubs is not. Replacing player compensation with money, or limiting it to cases where the receiving club consents, would make domestic free agency a genuine option.

Fifth, use part of the posting fees for the good of the game as a whole. A share of every fee could go into a fund for youth baseball, for independent leagues or for players who are released early with little to show for their years in the game. The talent that earns the fee was nurtured long before the club drafted it, by high school coaches, parents and local leagues.

A lesson from soccer

Japanese soccer offers an instructive comparison. Since the Bosman ruling in Europe in 1995, footballers whose contracts have expired have been free to move, and the world governing body's rules have adapted to protect the clubs that develop them in other ways. When a young player moves, the clubs that trained him are entitled to training compensation, and every later transfer fee carries a solidarity contribution, a small percentage shared among the clubs that developed him between the ages of 12 and 23.

The J.League has lost a steady stream of young players to Europe, sometimes before they have played a full season at home. Its clubs have responded by signing players to longer contracts, by selling them for fees and by investing in academies that produce the next generation. The league has survived and grown, and the national team has become stronger for having so many players abroad.

Baseball is a different sport with a different market, and nobody is proposing that Japanese clubs should lose their players for nothing. But the soccer model shows that freedom of movement and the reward of development are not opposites. Rules can protect the clubs that invest in young players without binding those players for a decade.

The parent companies

It must also be said that most Japanese clubs are owned by large companies, which have traditionally treated them partly as advertising. That model has strengths: it has kept clubs afloat in lean years. But it has also meant that decisions about players are made with one eye on the parent company's priorities, whether that means keeping a star to sell tickets and broadcasting rights or collecting a posting fee to balance a budget. A clearer, rules-based system would protect players and clubs alike from those pressures.

The players' voice

None of this can happen without negotiation. The Japan Professional Baseball Players Association has long called for shorter free agency requirements and greater freedom of movement, but its leverage has been limited. In the United States, the rules are set in a collective agreement that the union can refuse to sign. In Japan, the clubs set most of them, and players have little recourse.

A league that wants to keep its stars should want them to feel that they chose to stay. That requires a relationship of greater equality, in which the players' association is treated as a partner rather than a petitioner. The commissioner's office could start by convening a formal review of the free agency and posting rules, with players, clubs and independent experts at the table, and a deadline to report.

The national team

There is a national interest here too. Japan's victory at the World Baseball Classic in 2023, with Ohtani on the mound for the final out, was built on players from both leagues and from both sides of the Pacific. The best Japanese players will keep going to the major leagues whatever the rules, and that is not a loss for the country. What matters is that Japanese baseball remains the place where they are formed, and where the next generation wants to begin.

A league that is seen as a waiting room, which players endure until they are allowed to leave, will struggle to keep that position. A league that offers

fair terms, clear rules and a real choice will keep many of its stars longer, and will part with the others on good terms, as Hanshin and Sato are doing now.

A gracious exit should not depend on grace

Sato's farewell was moving because it was sincere. He thanked the fans who cheered him in good times and bad, and the club that developed him. Hanshin, for its part, has handled his departure well, agreeing to his wish in the off-season after a title-winning year, so that he can test the market at its peak.

But a good outcome should not depend on the goodwill of a particular club in a particular year. Rules exist precisely for the cases where goodwill runs short. The young men whose names are drawn today deserve to know that if they give their best years to the club that chooses them, they will one day be free to choose for themselves, and not only when the club decides that the price is right.

The cartoon says the player waits. Japanese baseball should aim for the day when the player decides.

ANALYSIS

A Year of Promises Kept Is a Good Story. Year Two Will Be Judged on Prices, Payments and Whether the Numbers Add Up

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Sanae Takaichi chose her words carefully on Wednesday. Delivering on her pledges one by one, she said, was her mission, and her second year began that day. It was a reminder that she sees herself as a politician who does what she says, and on the evidence of her first year she has a case.

She promised to abolish the provisional gasoline tax rate, and she did. She promised help with electricity and gas bills, and it came. She promised a cut in the consumption tax on food, and a bill is before the Diet. She promised to revise the security documents, and talks begin next month. For a prime minister who took office without a reliable majority, then won one, that is a respectable record.

The harder part

But keeping promises is not the same as solving problems. The cost of living, which she named as her most pressing concern, is driven by forces no Japanese government controls: the war in the Middle East, the price of crude oil, and a yen that has drifted to 158 to the dollar. Each subsidy eases the pain for a few months and then must be renewed. The government is already considering another round of help with winter power bills.

The food tax cut is the clearest test. It will cost about 10 trillion yen. The government says it will not borrow to pay for it but has not said how it will. It promises an income-linked benefit to follow, but will not say who will receive it or how much. Komeito, whose votes may be needed in the upper house, says it cannot continue the debate without numbers. That is a reasonable demand, and the prime minister should meet it.

The communications problem

Ms Takaichi named better government communication as a task for her second year. She is right that policies are not always explained well. But communication is easier when the policy itself is complete. A tax cut without a funding plan, and a benefit without a definition, are hard to explain because they are not yet finished.

Where her strength lies

Her strengths are real. She has a disciplined party behind her, a coalition partner in Ishin that wants to govern, and an opposition divided into small groups that agree on little except that payments would be better than a tax cut. The Liberal Democrats' leadership election next September will be her next big test inside the party, and on current form she is well placed.

What to watch

Three things will tell us whether year two is a success. First, whether the tax bill passes by December 12 with a credible plan to pay for it. Second, whether winter energy support is designed to fade rather than become permanent. Third, whether her diplomacy, from Vietnam's To Lam to the Quad in Manila, produces results that steady relations in Asia, including with China.

A prime minister who keeps her promises deserves credit. A prime minister who makes the right promises, and pays for them, deserves more. That is

the standard for year two.

ANALYSIS

The Web's Plumbing Failed in Plain Sight. The PHP Scare Shows Why Boring Maintenance Is a Matter of National Security

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

On Wednesday night, banks in Sendai and Shizuoka, railways in Osaka, a government ministry and the City of Sapporo took websites and services offline because of two flaws in a programming language most of their customers have never heard of. The prime minister herself advised companies that could not patch quickly to pull the plug.

It was the right advice, and the speed of the response was encouraging. But the episode should prompt some uncomfortable reflection.

Invisible dependencies

PHP runs on about seven in ten websites. It is maintained by a small core of developers, supported by a foundation funded by companies and individuals. Much of the world's digital economy rests on software like this: free, widely used and maintained by people whose work is invisible until something goes wrong.

Japanese organisations depend on it as much as anyone, yet many could not say quickly which of their systems used PHP or which version. That is why some chose to shut down whole websites rather than fix specific programs. An inventory of software, kept up to date, is the most basic element of cyber security, and it is still missing in too many places.

The old versions

The most worrying systems are not the big banks' sites, which have teams and budgets, but the forgotten ones: old company pages, small online shops, local government services built years ago by contractors who have since moved on. The project has published only minimal fixes for versions 7.4 to 8.1 and nothing for older ones. Systems running them will stay vulnerable until someone upgrades them.

AI on both sides

The flaws were found with the help of AI, according to the researchers and OpenAI. That is good news for defenders, who can now search old code for weaknesses faster than ever. It is also a warning: the same tools are available to attackers, and the time between the discovery of a flaw and its exploitation is shrinking. This week the details leaked before the fix was ready.

What to do

The government's new cyber defence regime and the Liberal Democrats' proposals for supply-chain monitoring are steps in the right direction. But the most effective measures are unglamorous: knowing what software you run, updating it promptly, retiring what you no longer need, and paying for the maintenance of the open-source projects on which everyone depends.

Japanese companies and ministries spend heavily on new systems. They should spend a little more on keeping the old ones safe.

ANALYSIS

Komeito Is Right: A 10 Trillion Yen Tax Cut Cannot Be Debated Without Numbers. The Government Should Publish Them Now

By Ethan Cole | Economics Correspondent

"However many times we ask, nothing concrete comes out." Shinichi Isa of Komeito was speaking for more than his own party when he complained, after Wednesday's committee session, that the government would not give figures on its tax bill.

The bill would cut the consumption tax on food from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027, at a cost of about 10 trillion yen, and promises an income-linked benefit to follow. Two days into the debate, the government has not said how the cut will be paid for, who will receive the benefit, or how much they will get.

Why the silence

There may be tactical reasons. People in the ruling parties see the design of the benefit as a bargaining chip to win over Komeito or the Democratic Party for the People in the upper house, where the coalition lacks a majority. Revealing the numbers early would

ANALYSIS

give that chip away.

But a bill is not a negotiating position. Lawmakers are being asked to vote for a large and lasting change to the tax system, and the public is entitled to know what it means for them.

Will prices fall?

The finance minister said on Wednesday that competition among shops should ensure that the cut is passed on, and that the government would check. That is welcome, but it is an assurance, not a mechanism. Experience abroad shows that cuts in consumption taxes are not always passed on in full, especially when other costs are rising.

The alternative

The opposition's alternatives deserve serious attention. Komeito proposes payments of about 80,000 yen per person over two years; the Democratic Reform Association 40,000 yen now and an income-linked benefit later. Payments can be targeted, can be paid quickly and end when they end; a tax cut that expires in two years invites a political fight over whether to restore the rate.

What should happen

The government should publish three things before the committee votes: the sources of funding, the eligibility rules and amounts for the benefit, and how it will monitor prices. If its plan is sound, the numbers will strengthen it. If they do not, better to find out now than in April 2027.

ANALYSIS

Asking Better-Off Older Patients to Pay More Is Fair, but the Line Must Be Drawn by Income, Not by Age Alone

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The Liberal Democrats and Ishin have given themselves until the end of the year to decide whether more people over 70 should pay 30 per cent of their medical bills at the clinic. The question is overdue, and the answer should depend on what people can afford rather than how old they are.

Today, most people aged 70 to 74 pay 20 per cent, and most people over 75 pay 10 per cent. Working-age people pay 30 per cent. The difference is funded largely by the premiums of employees and employers, which have risen steadily as the population ages.

The case for change

Many older people are not poor. Some have substantial savings and pensions, and some continue to work. Asking them to pay the same share as working people, when they can afford it, is a matter of fairness between generations. Ishin's call for 30 per cent as the norm has the virtue of simplicity.

The case for care

But many older people do have low incomes, and illness is more common and more expensive in old age. A sharp increase in charges could lead some to put off treatment, with worse results and higher costs later. That is the Liberal Democrats' worry, and it is legitimate.

Income, not age

The answer is to use income and, where possible, assets as the test. Japan already has a threshold for those with incomes comparable to working people's, set at 3.83 million yen a year for a single person. It could be lowered, and the 20 per cent tier for those over 75 could be extended, while protecting those with the lowest incomes through the existing caps on monthly medical costs.

Be honest about the aim

The parties say their goal is to lower premiums for working people. They should say by how much, and publish the effect on older patients at each income level. Reform that is explained clearly is more likely to be accepted than reform that arrives as a surprise.

ANALYSIS

The Sakishima Islands Know Typhoons. The Rest of the Country Should Help Them Get Through a Long One

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

Few places in Japan know typhoons as well as the Sakishima Islands. Their houses are built of concrete, their residents stock water and food as a matter of habit, and their records include gusts of 85.3 metres a

second on Miyakojima and 81.1 on Yonaguni.

Champi, forecast to bring gusts of up to 80 metres a second, is still a serious threat. What makes it particularly dangerous is its size. Its gales reached 650 km from the centre on Thursday morning, and Miyakojima and Ishigaki were already inside them more than 500 km away. The islands may spend two or three days inside strong winds.

The long haul

Long storms are hard on islands. Ferries and flights stop early, so supplies cannot be replenished. Power and water can fail, and repairs must wait until the wind drops and crews can arrive. Older residents living alone, and tourists unfamiliar with the islands, are the most vulnerable.

What the state can do

The national government and Okinawa Prefecture should be ready to move quickly once the storm passes: power company crews and supplies positioned in advance, Self-Defense Force transport on standby, and clear information for visitors who find themselves stranded.

After the islands

The forecast takes Champi north across the East China Sea and close to Kyushu on Monday, as a weakening storm. Weakening does not mean harmless; rain from a dying typhoon has caused floods before. Residents of Kyushu and western Japan should use the weekend to check their preparations.

A broader lesson

Japan has become good at forecasting typhoons and warning people. It is less good at helping remote communities recover quickly. The Sakishima Islands, on the front line of both typhoons and national security, deserve infrastructure that can withstand what nature sends them, and support that arrives on time.

ANALYSIS

A 30-Degree Day in Late October Is a Warning, Not a Curiosity

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

On Wednesday afternoon, visitors to Asakusa walked under parasols, and central Tokyo recorded 30 degrees later in the year than at any time since records began in 1875. Osaka broke a record that had stood since 1933. On the same day, the United Nations Environment Programme said that warming beyond 1.5 degrees was now unavoidable.

One hot day proves nothing about the climate. A pattern does, and the pattern in Japan is clear: summers that begin earlier and end later, record heat that is broken again a year or two later, and autumns that feel like summer well into October.

The everyday costs

The effects are practical. Heatstroke now threatens people in months that used to be safe. Schools reschedule sports days. Farmers struggle with rice that ripens in heat and loses quality. Outdoor workers, from garbage collectors to construction crews, need new ways of working, as a company in Sagamihara recognised this week by giving its collectors electric kickboards.

Adaptation

Japan has become better at adapting: heatstroke alerts, cooling shelters and air-conditioned classrooms have saved lives. But adaptation needs to be planned for a longer hot season, not just a hotter summer. School calendars, outdoor events and labour rules should assume that late-season heat is normal.

And mitigation

Adaptation is not enough. The UN report says current policies lead to warming of 2.8 degrees by the end of the century. Japan's own commitments, and its delivery on them, matter, even as high energy prices tempt governments to put climate policy on hold.

The swing

On Thursday Tokyo's high is forecast at 25 degrees, and Sapporo's at 10. The swings are part of the story too. The weather we grew up with is changing, and our habits and plans need to change with it.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Crossword, Page 25.

PHP flaws: what to do, Page 1.

Champi nears Sakishima, Page 3.

Takaichi: promises kept, Page 5.

ANALYSIS

A One-Year Route Into Teaching Is a Good Idea. It Will Not Work Unless the Job Itself Becomes More Attractive

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The education ministry wants to let working adults earn a teaching licence after one year of graduate school, counting their work experience toward the required credits. It is a sensible response to a shortage of teachers, and it could bring valuable experience into classrooms.

A former engineer teaching mathematics, a former nurse teaching health or an accountant teaching social studies can bring the world of work into the classroom in ways that teachers who have spent their whole careers in schools may not.

The real obstacle

But the main reason people avoid teaching is not the difficulty of getting a licence. It is the job itself: long hours, club activities at weekends, mountains of paperwork and growing demands from parents. Mid-career professionals with families are unlikely to give up a stable job for that, however quick the licence.

Pay and hours

The government has begun to raise teachers' pay and to reduce their workloads, but progress has been slow. A one-year course will attract more people only if the job at the end of it looks sustainable.

Quality

The ministry must also make sure the new route produces good teachers. Classroom management and understanding how children learn are skills, not instincts. The course should include substantial supervised teaching, and new teachers from other careers should receive mentoring in their first years.

A welcome step

Done well, the plan could help schools and enrich children's education. Done in a hurry, it could add to the burden on schools that are already stretched. The legislation is due next year. The details matter.

ANALYSIS

Tourism Has Weathered the Loss of Half Its Chinese Visitors. Japan Should Use the Lull to Spread Visitors More Widely

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

The figures released on Wednesday tell two stories. The number of foreign visitors from January to September fell for the first time since the pandemic, by 2.9 per cent, because visitors from China fell by more than half. Yet visitors spent more than ever, about 7.06 trillion yen.

The first story is about politics: Beijing's advice to its citizens to avoid Japan, after the prime minister's remarks about Taiwan, has had a large effect. The second is about resilience: visitors from elsewhere have continued to come, and they are spending more.

Less dependence

Before the pandemic, Chinese visitors accounted for a large share of tourist spending, and businesses that relied on them were vulnerable to exactly the kind of political shock that has now occurred. A more diverse mix of visitors is a strength, and Japan should keep building it.

The crowding problem

The lull also offers a chance to address the problems that tourism has created. Kyoto's buses, Mount Fuji's trails and the streets of Asakusa have been crowded to the point of frustration for residents. Policies such as Kyoto's plan to charge residents less than visitors on its buses, and charges for climbing Mount Fuji, deserve to be tested now.

Beyond the golden route

Most visitors still follow a narrow route between Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka. Regions with much to offer, from Tohoku to Shikoku, see a fraction of them. Better transport passes, information in more languages and support for regional accommodation could spread the benefits.

And China

Chinese visitors will return when relations allow, and they should be welcome. When they do, Japan will be better placed if its tourism industry no longer depends on any single market.

ANALYSIS

Sixty Years Is a Long Wait. Japan's Women Gymnasts Have Shown That Patient Investment Pays

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

The last time Japan's women stood on a world championship team podium, in 1966, the Tokyo Olympics were two years in the past. On Wednesday in Rotterdam, they did it again, finishing behind China and the United States and booking a place at the Los Angeles Olympics.

It was a remarkable result for a team that was fifth in qualifying. In a team final, where three gymnasts compete on each apparatus and every score counts, consistency matters as much as brilliance, and Japan's gymnasts held their nerve.

A double

The bronze, together with the men's team gold on Tuesday, means both Japanese teams have qualified for Los Angeles two years early. That gives coaches time to plan, to develop young gymnasts and to give experienced ones the competition they need.

Depth

The challenge now is depth. Five gymnasts competed in Rotterdam; Los Angeles will require a team that can withstand injuries and the rise of rivals. China's victory, ending the United States' run of eight titles, shows how quickly the balance can shift.

The clubs

Japanese gymnastics rests on a network of clubs and schools, where children train for years before reaching the national team. Support for coaches and facilities at that level is the best investment the federation and the government can make.

Inspiration

A world medal also inspires. Girls who watched on Thursday morning will remember it, and some will be in the gym this weekend. That is how a 60-year wait becomes the start of something.

MORE INSIDE TODAY

Critical Flaws in PHP, the Language Behind Seven in Ten Websites, Send Banks, Railways and Ministries Rushing to Patch or Pull Sites Offline — Page 1

Champi Bears Down on the Sakishima Islands With Gusts of 80 Metres a Second; Storm Winds Could Reach Miyakojima, Ishigaki and Yonaguni by Friday Morning — Page 1

The PHP Flaws at a Glance — Page 2

Who Paused What on Wednesday Night — Page 2

What PHP Is, and Why a Flaw in It Reaches So Far — Page 2

Remote Code Execution: Why the Most Serious Kind of Flaw Earns a Score Above 9 — Page 2

Champi Passes Its Peak but Keeps a Huge Wind Field: The Forecast, Step by Step, From the Sakishima Islands to the Sea of Japan — Page 3

Champi at a Glance — Page 3

What 'Violent' Means, and How Strong a Gust of 80 Metres a Second Really Is — Page 3

The Sakishima Islands: Japan's Front Line in Typhoon Season — Page 3

Before the Wind Arrives: A Checklist for the Islands and for Kyushu Next Week — Page 4

How Governments Responded — Page 4

The Week Ahead — Page 4

Komeito's Okamoto Calls the Food Tax Cut 'a Bad Move' and Says His Party Cannot Back a Bill That Ties It to the Benefit — Page 4

Rengo Asks the Constitutional Democrats to Press for Cash Payments Rather Than a Cut in the Food Tax — Page 4

Agriculture Minister Takebe Returns a Donation From a Government Contractor and Apologises; Opposition Demands an Explanation — Page 4

'Keeping My Promises One by One Is My Mission,' Takaichi Says as Her Second Year Begins With Prices Still the Top Priority — Page 5

What the Prime Minister Said — Page 5

Liberal Democrats and Ishin Aim to Decide by Year-End Whether More People Over 70 Should Pay 30 Per Cent of Their Medical Bills — Page 5

Komeito and Two Allies Agree Payments Would Work Faster Than a Tax Cut, and Plan a Joint Lower House Group Called 'Chudo' — Page 5

EDITORIAL & OPINION

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Japan Morning Post corrects errors of fact as soon as they are identified: corrections@japanmorningpost.com. The notes supplied for today's edition again call Typhoon No. 30 Champa; its international name is Champi. They describe about 140,000 police officers' and staff members' details leaking from 22 prefectural police forces through a cloud service; according to the National Police Agency, about 125,000 records concern officers and staff of 20 forces, while about 16,000 are the email addresses of residents registered for crime-alert emails with four forces, and the system involved is a disaster information service run by Arcadia of Minoh, Osaka Prefecture. The notes say the Koyoshi River flood warning was downgraded; the river first overflowed on Wednesday night, when the Level 5 warning was issued. The September figure for foreign visitors, about 3.1 million and around 5 per cent down, is reported as given in the notes, as the official release we could check gave only the January-to-September total. The temperatures shown in the inset of today's Asakusa image, 31.2 degrees for Osaka and 30.8 for Tokyo, are part of the image: by midday on Wednesday 31.2 had been recorded in Yao, Osaka Prefecture, and the city of Osaka reached 30.8 by 10:30 a.m. The descriptions of the two PHP flaws printed on the front-page illustration do not match the PHP security advisory, as explained in the front-page report.

Not repeated today because they were reported in earlier editions: the half-year trade deficit, the education ministry's request to the University of Tokyo, the Quad summit in Manila, the SpaceX and Tesla talks, the Uniqlo price rises, the MMX launch, the end of the term 'abnormal delivery', Typhoon No. 25 one month on, and the first reports of the attack on Iwai Cosmo Securities. The technology notes list Edison's lamp under October 22; it was covered yesterday. The IBM 1620's announcement and the decisions of the International Meridian Conference are not included because we could not confirm that they fall on October 22. Items attributed to other newspapers, including the reduction of 31 lower house seats, the counter-drone system for Malaysia, the missing climbers in Nepal and the crash of a Russian fighter jet, are reported as those papers gave them.

THE WEEK AHEAD

THU. 22: Baseball draft, 4:50 p.m.; Jidai Matsuri and Kurama Fire Festival in Kyoto; UN membership photo exhibition opens in Shibuya; Clippers' opener with Rui Hachimura (U.S. Wednesday night). FRI. 23: Champi about 290 km south-south-east of Yonaguni at dawn; World Series opens in Milwaukee (Saturday morning, Japan time). SAT. 24: Japan Series opens in Yokohama; Champi near Yonaguni; demonstration in Paris; Asian Para Games close. SUN. 25: Kikuka Sho at Kyoto; Fukushima governor and Naha mayoral elections; Europe's clocks go back. MON. 26: Champi, as a tropical storm, near Fukuoka; Tomoka Nishiyama's news conference. TUE. 27: Autumn reading week begins. OCT. 27-28: Federal Reserve. OCT. 28: Tsutenkaku turns purple for its 70th anniversary; B.League board on Osaka. OCT. 29-30: Bank of Japan, with a judgment on its 2 per cent target; EU-Canada summit in Montreal. NOV. 3: U.S. midterms. NOV. 5: Verdict in the Mito trial. NOV. 8-11: Vietnam's To Lam in Japan. NOV. 14-15: The Emperor and Empress in Osaka. MID-NOVEMBER: Japan-India two-plus-two; Quad summit, Manila. NOV. 19-20: Peru's President Keiko Fujimori in Japan. DEC. 12: Diet session ends.

TYPHOON AND MARINE ADVISORIES

6 a.m. Thursday. No. 30, Champi: large, violent typhoon south of Okinawa, 20.2N, 126.5E; 905 hPa; winds 55 m/s, gusts 80; north-west at 20 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: 925 hPa and 50 m/s, very strong, at 6 p.m. Thursday; 940 hPa and 45 m/s, very strong, at 6 a.m. Friday, about 290 km south-south-east of Yonaguni; 965 hPa and 40 m/s, strong, at 3 a.m. Saturday, about 70 km west-south-west of Yonaguni; 985 hPa and 30 m/s, severe tropical storm, at 3 a.m. Sunday over the East China Sea; 996 hPa and 20 m/s, tropical storm, at 3 a.m. Monday, passing about 50 km north-north-west of Fukuoka on the centre line that morning; extratropical low of 1,004 hPa over the Sea of Japan by 3 a.m. Tuesday. Miyakojima and Ishigaki already inside the gale area at 6 a.m.; Ishigaki, Miyakojima

THE JAPAN MORNING POST

Japan-first, alliance-first. Founded in service of accurate coverage of Japan's security, industry, families and culture.

OWNER: Paul Carter | **PUBLISHER:** WPM Productions

MANAGING EDITOR: Dixon Yan

SENIOR EDITOR, INTERNATIONAL DESK: Jonathan Mercer

POLITICS & POLICY: Michael Hayes, Deputy Editor | William, Senior Political Analyst

JAPAN BUREAU: Aiko Tanaka, Senior Japan Correspondent | Emi Kondo, Society & Local News

ECONOMICS & FINANCE: Yuki Saito | DATA & VISUALIZATION: Kenta Sakamoto

JAPAN-U.S. COVERAGE: Rachel Kim, Washington-Tokyo Liaison

INVESTIGATIONS & LONGFORM: Daisuke Ito

TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE: Ethan Cole, Editor | Maya Suzuki, Science & Innovation

CULTURE & SOCIETY: Naomi Kato, Editor

SPORTS: Oliver Brooks, Desk Editor | Haruto Yamamoto, Reporter

FOOD & RESTAURANTS: Grace Park | REAL ESTATE & URBAN DEVELOPMENT: Kenji Fukuda

EDITORIAL PAGE: Samantha Ortiz, Editor

PHOTO EDITOR: Hiroshi Nakamura, Tokyo | GRAPHICS DIRECTOR: Claire Reynolds

STAFF CARTOONIST: Taro Suzuki | CROSSWORD: James O'Neill, Editor & Constructor

COPY DESK: Benjamin Lee, Chief | Olivia Martinez, Features

MULTIMEDIA & VIDEO: Akira Watanabe | RESEARCH & ARCHIVE: Hana Ito

PAGE DESIGN & PRODUCTION: Daniel Foster

1-2-3 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0004 | www.japanmorningpost.com | newsdesk@japanmorningpost.com

SUBSCRIBE TO THE JAPAN MORNING POST

Japan's security, industry, families and culture, reported every morning. Choose the subscription that suits you.

DIGITAL
¥3,900 per month

Full access to the daily edition on web and mobile, the article archive, the crossword and the puzzle archive.

PRINT + DIGITAL
¥6,800 per month

Home delivery of the broadsheet edition every morning, plus everything in the digital subscription.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

Online at www.japanmorningpost.com/subscribe, by email to subscriptions@japanmorningpost.com, or by telephone through Reader Relations during business hours.

HOME DELIVERY

Available across the Tokyo metropolitan area and major cities nationwide. Delivery to other areas is by post and arrives the following day.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Digital and print subscriptions may be purchased as gifts for any term from one month. The recipient receives a welcome note with the first delivery.

CORPORATE, EDUCATIONAL AND LIBRARY RATES

Available on request for organisations requiring multiple copies or seats. Contact Reader Relations for terms.

CANCELLATION

Subscriptions may be cancelled at any time. Print subscriptions require five business days' notice to stop delivery.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Reader Relations handles delivery problems, address changes, holiday suspensions and billing queries. subscriptions@japanmorningpost.com

and Yonaguni inside the storm-wind area by 6 a.m. Friday, Taipei by 3 a.m. Saturday; by 3 a.m. Sunday the storm-wind area comes within about 120 km of Naha. The 70 per cent circle for 3 a.m. Tuesday, 460 km in radius, takes in Osaka and Tokyo. The Okinawa Meteorological Observatory has said storms or warning-level heavy rain are possible in the Miyako region around Friday and the Yaeyama region on Friday and Saturday. Emergencies at sea: 118.

MARKET REFERENCE

Wednesday close: Nikkei 225 64,621.24, up 545.82; Topix 4,043.73, up 34.52; prime market volume about 2.179 billion shares. Morning close: Nikkei 64,823.55, up 748.13. Thursday, 9:20 a.m.: Nikkei up 9 yen. New York, Wednesday: Dow 52,856.09, up 360.21; Nasdaq 26,702.86, up 278.04; WTI crude, December, \$97.15, down 67 cents. Dollar 158.12-14 yen at 5 p.m. in Tokyo; 158.11-21 yen at 5 p.m. in New York. Euro 177.50-54 yen. Regular gasoline, national average, October 19: 170.20 yen a litre; subsidy for October 22-28: 42.80 yen a litre. Federal Reserve meets October 27-28; Bank of Japan October 29-30.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

Front: illustration of the PHP flaws, file image, WPM Productions. Typhoon map, Japan and United States weather maps: supplied for this edition. The Asakusa crowd with parasols and its inset map, the prime minister at a podium and in the Diet, President Macron, the briefing room at the Prime Minister's Office, the H3 launch, the SoftBank Hawks, Teruaki Sato with Dave Roberts and the Asian Para Games emblem: file photos and images, WPM Productions. Tokyo Stock Exchange: photo by TG2 (CC). Cartoon: Taro Suzuki. U.S. government works are public domain and credited; agency news photographs are not reproduced.

SYMBOLS, UNITS AND TIMES

Map symbols: sun, sunny; cloud, cloudy; cloud with strokes, rain; an arrow, one sky giving way to another; a slanting stroke, one sky with the other at times. Highs in red, this morning's lows in blue, in degrees Celsius; the U.S. map is in Fahrenheit. Wind in metres a second (1 m/s is 3.6 km/h); 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. River flood warnings run from Level 2, an advisory, to Level 5, a special warning that a river has overflowed. 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. Website owners: check your PHP version and update to 8.5.12, 8.4.27, 8.3.36 or 8.2.35, or ask your hosting company whether it has done so; if you cannot, consider taking the site offline until you can. Anyone whose personal data may have leaked should change reused passwords and watch for phishing messages.

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 Thursday morning papers, including the Yomiuri Shimbun, the Asahi Shimbun, the Mainichi Shimbun, the Sankei Shimbun and the Nikkei; on Kyodo News, NHK and The Japan Times; on the Japan Meteorological Agency, the Okinawa Meteorological Observatory, the Japan Weather Association and Weathernews; on the PHP project's security advisory, Help Net Security and Tenable; on the Japan National Tourism Organization, the Japan Tourism Agency, the health and industry ministries, the National Police Agency and the Board of Audit; on official statements in Japan and abroad; and on the U.S. National Weather Service and National Hurricane Center for the American map.

READER SERVICES

The Japan Morning Post, Volume 2026, Number 294, is published daily by WPM Productions, Tokyo. Subscriptions: subscriptions@japanmorningpost.com. Letters: letters@japanmorningpost.com. Advertising: advertising@japanmorningpost.com. Today's crossword solution appears tomorrow; Wednesday's solution is published today.

TOMORROW'S EDITION

Friday: Typhoon Champi's approach to the Sakishima Islands, the results of the professional baseball draft, the restoration of services after the PHP flaws, the third day of questioning on the food tax cut, a preview of the Japan Series and the World Series, Rui Hachimura's first game for the Clippers and the individual finals of the gymnastics world championships.

MORE INSIDE TODAY (CONTINUED)

Working Adults Could Earn a Teaching Licence in One Year of Graduate School Under an Education Ministry Plan — Page 5

Katayama Promises to Check That Food Prices Really Fall After the Tax Cut, but Opposition Warns Debate Will Stall Without Figures — Page 6

The Food Tax Cut: Where the Parties Stand — Page 6

Japan and India Plan Two-Plus-Two Talks in Tokyo in Mid-November, With China's Pressure in Mind — Page 7

Vietnam's To Lam Is Expected to Address the Diet During His Visit to Japan in November — Page 7

Air Self-Defense Force Shows Photos of Global Hawk Fuselage Being Raised From the Seabed off Tottori — Page 8

Witkoff Thanks Putin for Freeing an American and Calls Him a 'Humanitarian,' Drawing Fury From Both Parties in Washington — Page 8

France's Borrowing Costs Top 5 Per Cent for the First Time Since 2002 as Riots Deepen Doubts About Its Finances — Page 9

Russia, America and Ukraine: Where the Talks Stand — Page 9

Russia Says It Will 'Try to Provide Information' on the Detained Hokkaido Shimbun Reporter as Tokyo Demands His Release — Page 10

The Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration at 70 — Page 10

Taiwan's Army Shows Japanese Reporters Its Stinger Drills on Penghu, a Tour Arranged by the American Side — Page 11

The Plaza Hotel, Where the 1985 Plaza Accord Was Signed, Will Close for at Least Four Years for Restoration — Page 11

Nikkei Rebounds 545 Yen to 64,621 as Hopes of an End to U.S.-Iran Fighting Cool Oil Prices — Page 12

Markets at a Glance — Page 12

Tesla's Profit Drops 43 Per Cent as AI Spending Bites; Meta's Jumps 3.6 Times but a New Mexico Court Orders It to Pay \$25 Billion — Page 13

MMX Is Working Normally on Its Way to Mars, JAXA Says, With Its Solar Power, Steering and Radio Link All in Order — Page 14

Digital Agency Adds AI Agents to 'Gennai,' the Generative AI Used Across Ministries, and Publishes Rules for Its Use — Page 15

1968: Apollo 7 Splashes Down After 163 Orbits, Proving the Spacecraft That Would Carry Astronauts to the Moon — Page 16

Cooler Air Sweeps In After the Record Heat, Taking Highs Down by Up to 10 Degrees; Rain in Sapporo, Sunshine From Sendai to Kagoshima — Page 17

Josephine Heads Out to Sea but Its Swells Pound the East Coast; Storms Bring a Flood Watch to Phoenix While Dallas Reaches 83 — Page 18

Tokyo and Osaka Have Their Latest 30-Degree Days Since Records Began, as Warm Pacific Air Brings Midsummer Heat to 157 Places — Page 19

Weather Agency Chief Apologises for Last Week's Mistaken Earthquake Alert That Warned of Intensity 7 From Hokkaido to Tokai — Page 20

Openwork Clay Earring From About 2,900 Years Ago, Found at a Saitama Shell Mound, Hints at Contact Between Distant Jomon Communities — Page 21

'The Cheers at Koshien Are the Best in the World': Teruaki Sato Thanks Hanshin and Its Fans as He Prepares for the Majors — Page 22

Moinelo Says He Is at '80 Per Cent' After Pitching Live Batting Practice, as SoftBank Prepare for the Japan Series — Page 23

Tomoki Sato Leads a Japanese Sweep of the Men's Wheelchair 100 Metres at the Asian Para Games — Page 24

Tomoka Nishiyama Keeps the Women's Ousho Title for a Fifth Straight Year, Beating Nanami Naka in the Deciding Game — Page 25

On Draft Day, Japanese Baseball Should Ask Whom Its Rules Really Serve. A Player Should Not Need a Decade and a Club's Permission to Choose — Page 26

A Year of Promises Kept Is a Good Story. Year Two Will Be Judged on Prices, Payments and Whether the Numbers Add Up — Page 27