

■ HANSHIN CHAMPIONS AGAIN, A CLUB FIRST ■ TYPHOON NO. 27 VERY STRONG, 945 hPa ■ NORTH KOREA FIRES MISSILE ■ JAPAN 83 GOLDS, A RECORD ■ FOOTBALL SILVER ■

Hanshin Win Their First Back-to-Back Pennant From a Hotel Room; 'Very Strong' Typhoon No. 27 Closes on the Ogasawara Islands

The Tigers lose 6-4 at Hiroshima and are champions two hours later when the Giants' bullpen gives up a lead at Tokyo Dome; Japan's footballers take silver against South Korea and the Asian Games team reaches a record 83 golds; the typhoon, at 945 hectopascals this morning, is forecast to pass east of Chichijima before dawn on Tuesday

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor, with Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk, and Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter



Hanshin players toss their manager in the air at Koshien after clinching the Central League pennant, in a photograph supplied for this edition. The manager wears No. 80 and the picture is from the club's celebration of 2023. Saturday's title, the club's first in consecutive years, was decided while the team was at its hotel in Hiroshima, when the Giants lost at Tokyo Dome. (Photo supplied)

The Hanshin Tigers became champions of the Central League for the second year running on Saturday night, which the club had never managed in the league's history, and they did it sitting in a hotel banquet room in Hiroshima watching another team's game on television.

They had lost their own. Needing a win or a draw at Mazda Stadium in the afternoon, they led Hiroshima 4-1 on a three-run home run by Teruaki Sato, his 39th of the season, and were beaten 6-4. The pennant then depended on the Yomiuri Giants losing to DeNA at Tokyo Dome in the evening, and the Giants, two runs ahead after six innings, gave up four in the seventh and lost 5-2.

So the title that Hanshin's supporters have waited for since the two-league system began in 1950 arrived without a final out, a mound or a crowd. Daily Sports reports that the players gathered in a room at the team hotel and followed the Tokyo game pitch by pitch, with cheers, applause and rhythmic clapping, and that the manager, Kyuji Fujikawa, wept when it was over and said only that it had been hard.

In Osaka the police had about 800 officers around the Ebisu Bridge. Some supporters went into the Dotonbori canal all the same.

At Toyota Stadium in Aichi Prefecture, at about the same hour, Japan's under-21 footballers were losing the Asian Games final to South Korea by a single goal, and far to the south a typhoon that the Japan Meteorological Agency now classes as large and very strong was moving towards the Ogasawara Islands. The map on Page 3 shows where it was at 3 a.m. today and where it is expected to go.

Decided at Tokyo Dome

The afternoon in Hiroshima followed the script for three innings. Hiroto Saiki, Hanshin's starter, gave up a run in the second on three straight hits with two out. In the third the catcher Seishiro Sakamoto tied the score with his tenth home run, Chikamoto walked, Nakano beat out an infield single, and Sato drove the second pitch he saw from Masato Morishita into the seats in right-centre.

A draw would have been enough. But Saiki could not hold a three-run lead, Hiroshima drew level, and in the eighth the reliever Rafael Dolis gave up the runs that decided it. Fujikawa said little afterwards, Daily Sports reports, and did not hide his disappointment.

The Giants' game began at 6 p.m. Their starter, Haruto Inoue, pitched six scoreless innings, and Yoshihiro Maru's home run into the upper deck in the sixth made it 2-0. In the seventh, with two out and the bases loaded, DeNA's pinch-hitter Keita Sano singled

to right to tie the score. Two more singles followed. A double by Yoshitomo Tsutsugo in the eighth completed the scoring.

Hanshin finish as champions for the twelfth time in the club's history, counting four titles in the single league that existed before 1950, and for the eighth time in the Central League. Sports Nippon notes that the club last won in consecutive seasons in the autumn of 1937 and the spring of 1938, eighty-eight years ago.

A harder year than the last

Last season's pennant was settled in the first week of September. This one went to the 139th game and to the Giants' 143rd.

The team lost its centre fielder, Koji Chikamoto, to a fracture in April and its reliever Daichi Ishii to a torn Achilles tendon, Sports Hochi recalls, and at one point lost seven games in a row. It was held together by the middle of the batting order, Shota Morishita, Sato and Yusuke Oyama, by a starter with 16 wins in Haruto Takahashi, by the league's lowest earned-run average from Shoki Murakami, and by a closer, Kudo, who had not been one before.

Sato leads the league in batting average, home runs and runs batted in with a handful of games left. He has 105 runs batted in, the most of his career, and is one home run from 40 for a second season running.

The Climax Series follows. Hanshin enter its final stage at Koshien with a one-win advantage.

Silver at Toyota, and a record haul

The men's football final was decided in the 61st minute, when Eom Ji-sung, one of South Korea's over-age players and a member of their World Cup squad, scored the only goal. Japan pressed afterwards and hit a post through Hisatsugu Ishii, and lost 1-0. All 37,866 tickets had been sold.

It is Japan's third silver medal in a row and their third consecutive defeat by South Korea in the final. South Korea have now won four straight titles, which no country had done before.

The men's volleyball team also took silver, beaten three sets to one by Iran at Okazaki. Iran, too, have won four in a row.

There was gold elsewhere. The mixed team won the judo for a third consecutive Games and Neo Suzuki won the men's lead climbing, and by the end of Saturday Japan had 83 gold medals and 269 in all. Both are records for a Japanese team at an Asian Games: the previous bests were 78 golds at Bangkok in 1966 and 218 medals at Hiroshima in 1994.

Continued on Page 2

INTERNATIONAL

North Korea Fires a Ballistic Missile Into the Sea of Japan; Kim Yo Jong Calls It an Intermediate-Range 'Strategic' Drill

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

North Korea launched at least one ballistic missile from its east coast at about 6:36 a.m. on Saturday. Japan's Defense Ministry said it rose to about 90 kilometres, flew about 680 kilometres and came down in the Sea of Japan, outside Japan's exclusive economic zone.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said a single missile had been fired from the Wonsan area and had flown more than 700 kilometres. They did not describe it as short-range. South Korean media reported that the military was examining whether it was a missile of medium or intermediate range flown over a shortened distance.

The answer came from Pyongyang later in the day. Kim Yo Jong, the sister of the country's leader, said in a statement that the launch was a drill of an intermediate-range strategic missile.

She said the missile was able to fly an irregular course that made it hard to track and hard to predict where it would land, and that the superiority of what she called the special flight mode of the North's missiles had been verified in practice, Nikkei reports.

She also seized on the difference between the two governments' figures. The enemy, she said, always offered the excuse that the curvature of the Earth limited what it could detect, and the discrepancy was proof of how complete the North's capability was.

A missile of intermediate range launched on a normal trajectory could reach the whole of Japan and the American bases on Guam, Sankei notes. Over 700 kilometres it puts the Sea of Japan coast of western Japan within reach, NTV observes.

Prime Minister Takaichi instructed officials to gather and analyse information, Kyodo News reports. The ministry said it had not confirmed anything entering the exclusive economic zone.

It was the second launch from Wonsan in two weeks. After the first, on September 20, the North's news agency published photographs of what analysts in Seoul judged to be an improved hypersonic missile, with a monitor in the frame showing a range of more than 900 kilometres.

The launch came nine days after President Trump received President Xi Jinping of China in Washington, and a little over two weeks before Japan and the United States begin the exercise Keen Sword, in which the Ground Self-Defense Force's new long-range missile is to be deployed for the first time.

A maximum altitude of 90 kilometres is low for a flight of that length. A missile that stays low is below the horizon of radars at sea for much of its flight, which is the practical meaning of the statement's taunt.

The governments of Japan, the United States and South Korea are analysing the flight together. Their published figures have differed before.

For Japan the claim, if true, bears on two decades of investment. The country's defences were designed to meet warheads at the top of a high arc, from ships at sea, and to catch what remained with batteries on the ground.

The government's answer since 2022 has been to add the means to strike launch sites. Hours after the launch, residents of Kumamoto were shown the ground equipment of the Type 25 missile, which has a range of about 1,000 kilometres, for the first time.

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WEATHER — TOKYO

24°C

Low 16°C · Bright start, cloud later

Sapporo
19°

Osaka
25°

Fukuoka
25°

Naha
31°

Tokyo: the record run of rainy days appears to have ended at 37. Rain in the west today. Typhoon No. 27 (Choi-wan): large, very strong, 945 hPa at 3 a.m.; forecast 925 hPa on Monday, east of Chichijima before dawn on Tuesday. Full weather, Page 13.

TODAY IN BRIEF

- Baseball: Hanshin lose 6-4 at Hiroshima and win the Central League when the Giants lose 5-2 to DeNA. It is their first pennant in consecutive years and their twelfth title in all.
- Typhoon No. 27: large and very strong, 945 hPa at 3 a.m., 840 km south-east of Chichijima. Forecast 925 hPa on Monday; east of Chichijima before dawn on Tuesday. Honshu: high waves.
- Security: North Korea fires a ballistic missile about 680 km into the Sea of Japan; Kim Yo Jong calls it an intermediate-range drill. Kumamoto residents see the Type 25 missile.
- Politics: Komeito elects Mitsunari Okamoto. The Diet opens Monday. A decision on American fresh potatoes may come in about a year. Xi criticised Japan to Trump, Yomiuri reports.
- Asian Games: Japan lose the men's football final 1-0 to South Korea and the volleyball final to Iran; 83 golds and 269 medals are records. The Games close tonight.
- Society: Tokyo's record run of rain appears to have ended at 37 days. Eleven hurt as a festival float overturns in Sakai. Doctors warn against Mounjaro for dieting.

TYPHOON NO. 27

- 3 a.m.: 945 hPa, winds 45 m/s, moving NE at 15 km/h.
- 3 p.m. today: 935 hPa.
- Monday 3 a.m.: 925 hPa, winds 50 m/s.
- Tuesday 3 a.m.: 935 hPa, east-north-east of Chichijima.

TODAY

- Asian Games closing ceremony, Nagoya.
- Rain from Kyushu to Tokai; Tokyo 24 degrees.
- Victory sales open in Kansai.

MARKETS

Tokyo markets	closed today
Nikkei 225 (Fri.)	68,309.46 ▼647
TOPIX (Fri.)	4,091.00 ▼40.98
Yen (Fri.)	upper 157s per \$
Tokyo CPI, Sept.	+2.7% y/y
BOJ policy rate	1.25%
U.S. payrolls, Sept.	+29,000

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THE WEEK

- Mon. Oct. 5: the Diet convenes; Kirin Cup final.
- Tue. 6: typhoon passes; Japan Open final.
- Wed. 7: settled weather returns.

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FROM PAGE 1

Hanshin Win Their First Back-to-Back Pennant From a Hotel Room; 'Very Strong' Typhoon No. 27 Closes on the Ogasawara Islands

Continued from Page 1

The Games close in Nagoya this evening.

The typhoon

Typhoon No. 27, named Choi-wan, was 840 kilometres south-east of Chichijima at 3 a.m. today, at 20.8 degrees north, 146.7 degrees east, moving north-east at 15 kilometres an hour. Its central pressure was 945 hectopascals and its maximum sustained winds 45 metres a second, with gusts to 60. Winds of storm force extended 150 kilometres from the centre, and gales reached 850 kilometres to the south and 500 to the north.

That is 25 hectopascals deeper than at the same hour on Saturday, and the storm has moved up a class, from strong to very strong.

The agency's forecast, issued at 3:45 a.m., has it at 935 hectopascals by 3 p.m. today and at 925, with winds of 50 metres a second, at 3 a.m. on Monday. It then turns north-north-west. At 3 a.m. on Tuesday the forecast position is 28.1 degrees north, 145.3 degrees east, still very strong at 935 hectopascals.

On the forecast centre line the typhoon passes about 330 kilometres east-north-east of Chichijima before dawn on Tuesday and about 770 kilometres east-south-east of Tokyo on Tuesday evening, by the figures printed on the map. By Wednesday it is east of Japan, and by Thursday it is expected to be an extratropical low.

The islands will feel it well before Tuesday. Sankei reports waves of six metres around the Ogasawara Islands today and eight metres tomorrow, with gusts

of up to 35 metres a second on Monday, and asks for vigilance against high waves with swell and against strong winds.

For Honshu the forecasters still expect the centre to pass offshore, and describe the chance of a direct hit as low. The Pacific coast from Kanto northward will have high waves all the same, and rain clouds may reach Chiba on Tuesday.

Today, and the end of a record

The capital's run of rainy days appears to be over. Rain was recorded at the agency's Tokyo station on 37 consecutive days to Friday, the longest run since records began in 1886, and Saturday brought the clear weather that had been forecast. Tokyo Shimbun reported on Saturday evening that the run was expected to stop at 37.

Today's weather map, on the weather page, gives Tokyo sun through cloud this morning and cloud later, with a high of 24 degrees. The rain today is in the west: Fukuoka and Kochi from early morning, Hiroshima and Matsue from mid-morning, Takamatsu and Kyoto from about noon.

From Wednesday, tenki.jp reports, the whole country can expect settled autumn weather. Between now and then come the swell, the typhoon's passage, and whatever the Diet makes of its opening day.

of Hokkaido.

The remains of such storms cross the North Pacific and sometimes arrive in Alaska or Canada a week later as ordinary bad weather.

TYPHOON NO. 27

The Dashed Circles: Seventy Per Cent, and What the Other Thirty Means

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Every typhoon map shows a line of circles growing larger towards the future. They are the most misread feature of the forecast.

A forecast circle is the area within which the centre of the typhoon is expected to be at the stated time, with a probability of 70 per cent.

It does not show the size of the storm. A small circle means a confident forecast, not a small typhoon.

It also follows that three times in ten the centre will be outside the circle.

The radius is set from experience. The agency examines how far its past forecasts for each lead time were in error, and draws the circle to enclose 70 per cent of those errors. When the computer models disagree with one another more than usual, the circle is enlarged.

On today's map the circle for 3 p.m. today is small, a few tens of kilometres. That for Thursday is about 330 kilometres in radius.

The line joining the centres of the circles is the single most likely path. It is drawn dashed on the map as a reminder that it is not a prediction of where the storm will go.

The figures for closest approach printed on the map, 330 kilometres from Chichijima and 770 from Tokyo, are measured from that line.

A resident of Chichijima should therefore read the forecast as saying that the centre will most likely pass some hundreds of kilometres to the east, and that a much closer pass cannot be excluded.

The solid red outline answers the practical question. It encloses everywhere that could have storm-force winds if the centre goes anywhere within the circles.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

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The Diet opens tomorrow, Page 4.

Long-range missile shown to Kumamoto residents, Page 4.

Komeito elects Okamoto, Page 4.

TYPHOON NO. 27

'Very Strong', and 'Large': The Two Words in Today's Bulletin, and What Each Is Measuring

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Typhoon No. 27 is described this morning as large and very strong. The two adjectives measure different things and are assigned separately.

Strength refers to the maximum sustained wind near the centre, averaged over ten minutes. The agency uses three classes: strong, from 33 metres a second; very strong, from 44; and violent, from 54.

At 45 metres a second the storm has just crossed into the second class. The forecast peak of 50 keeps it there.

Size refers to the extent of the gales. A typhoon is large if winds of 15 metres a second or more extend, on average, 500 kilometres or more from the centre, and very large from 800.

The storm's gales reach 850 kilometres on its southern side and 500 on its northern. Averaged, that is large.

The two radii are given separately in the bulletin because the wind field is not a circle.

The storm-force area is much smaller, 150 kilometres in radius. Most of the area under the yellow disc on the map has winds that would be called a gale, not a storm.

Central pressure, the number most often quoted, is not part of either classification. It is a useful shorthand because it can be estimated from satellite images and because it falls as the wind rises.

A fall from 970 to 945 hectopascals in 24 hours is brisk but not exceptional. The fastest-deepening typhoons have dropped by more than twice that.

The American scale, which uses a one-minute average, would give a higher wind figure for the same storm. The two cannot be compared directly.

TYPHOON NO. 27

Typhoon No. 25: The Storm of Mid-September That the Ground in Chiba Still Remembers

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The caution about loose ground in Chiba and Kanagawa that accompanies every forecast this week refers to a storm that passed nearly three weeks ago.

Typhoon No. 25 approached Kanto in the middle of September and brought very heavy rain to the southern part of the region.

The number of people known to have died has reached 15, the morning's reports say, with the finding of another body.

The damage included flooding and landslides in Chiba and Kanagawa. Buildings at the imperial duck preserve in Chiba were flooded, Jiji Press reported at the time.

The storm was one of the reasons September was the wettest on record on the Pacific side of eastern Japan, and the least sunny.

Soil that has been saturated holds less of the next rain. Slopes that moved slightly, or cracked, may fail under much smaller amounts than would normally be needed.

For that reason the agency lowers the thresholds at which it issues landslide warnings in an area after a major storm or earthquake.

The typhoon now passing offshore is not expected to bring heavy rain to Honshu. The concern is that even the light rain possible in Chiba on Tuesday falls on ground that has not recovered.

Residents below slopes are asked to watch for cracks, for muddy water from a hillside, and for the sound of stones.

Municipal hazard maps show which houses are in landslide caution zones.

TYPHOON NO. 27

Six-Metre Seas Today, Eight Tomorrow: What the Ogasawara Islands Are Being Told to Expect

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The sea around the Ogasawara Islands is forecast to rise to six metres today and eight metres on Monday as Typhoon No. 27 approaches, Sankei reports.

Winds are expected to strengthen through Monday,

with gusts of up to 35 metres a second.

The agency asks for vigilance against high waves accompanied by swell and against strong winds, and expects the storm to be nearest the islands from Monday into Tuesday.

On the forecast centre line it passes about 330 kilometres east-north-east of Chichijima before dawn on Tuesday.

The qualification is the usual one. The forecast circle for 3 a.m. on Tuesday has a radius of more than 100 kilometres, and the centre may pass anywhere within it. A track on its western side would bring the strongest winds much closer.

Chichijima and Hahajima, the two inhabited islands, have about 2,500 residents between them and no airfield. The only regular transport is the ship from Tokyo, a voyage of 24 hours.

Eight-metre seas close the harbour. Fishing boats and the vessels that take visitors to see whales and dolphins will have been secured over the weekend.

The islands' houses are built for typhoons, with low roofs and storm shutters, and the village broadcasts instructions by loudspeaker.

Swell is the hazard that arrives first and leaves last. It can make the shore dangerous on a day when the sky is clear and the wind light.

Iwo To, about 280 kilometres to the south-south-west of Chichijima, has no civilian residents.

TYPHOON NO. 27

For Honshu: Swell From Kanto Northward, Possible Rain in Chiba on Tuesday, and Ground Still Loose

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The forecast for the main islands has not changed in its essentials. The typhoon is expected to travel north over the sea east of Honshu, and the probability of a direct hit is described as low.

Its effects will be felt at the coast. High waves are forecast on the Pacific side from Kanto northward, and will persist while the storm is passing even though it is hundreds of kilometres offshore.

Rain is a lesser concern but not absent. Rain clouds associated with the storm may reach Chiba on Tuesday, the forecasters say.

In Chiba and Kanagawa the ground is still loose after Typhoon No. 25, which struck in the middle of September. Caution is advised even in light rain, particularly below slopes.

The death toll from that storm has risen to 15 with the discovery of another body, the morning's reports say.

The capital's long run of rain adds to the concern. Tokyo recorded nearly 700 millimetres in September, about three times the normal amount.

The Izu Islands are nearer the track than Honshu, though still outside the area that the bulletin marks as liable to storm-force winds. Hachijojima appears on the map for reference.

Typhoon No. 26, which stopped ferries to the Izu Islands on Thursday, has become an extratropical cyclone east of Japan.

After the storm passes the outlook improves. From Wednesday, tenki.jp reports, most of the country can expect clear autumn weather.

Ports from Ibaraki to Sanriku face the open ocean and can expect the heaviest swell as the storm passes.

TYPHOON NO. 27

Typhoon No. 27 at a Glance

By the Weather Desk

Name: Choi-wan. Class at 3 a.m.: large, very strong.

Centre: 20.8 N, 146.7 E; 840 km south-east of Chichijima.

Moving: north-east at 15 km/h.

Central pressure: 945 hPa.

Maximum winds: 45 m/s, gusts 60.

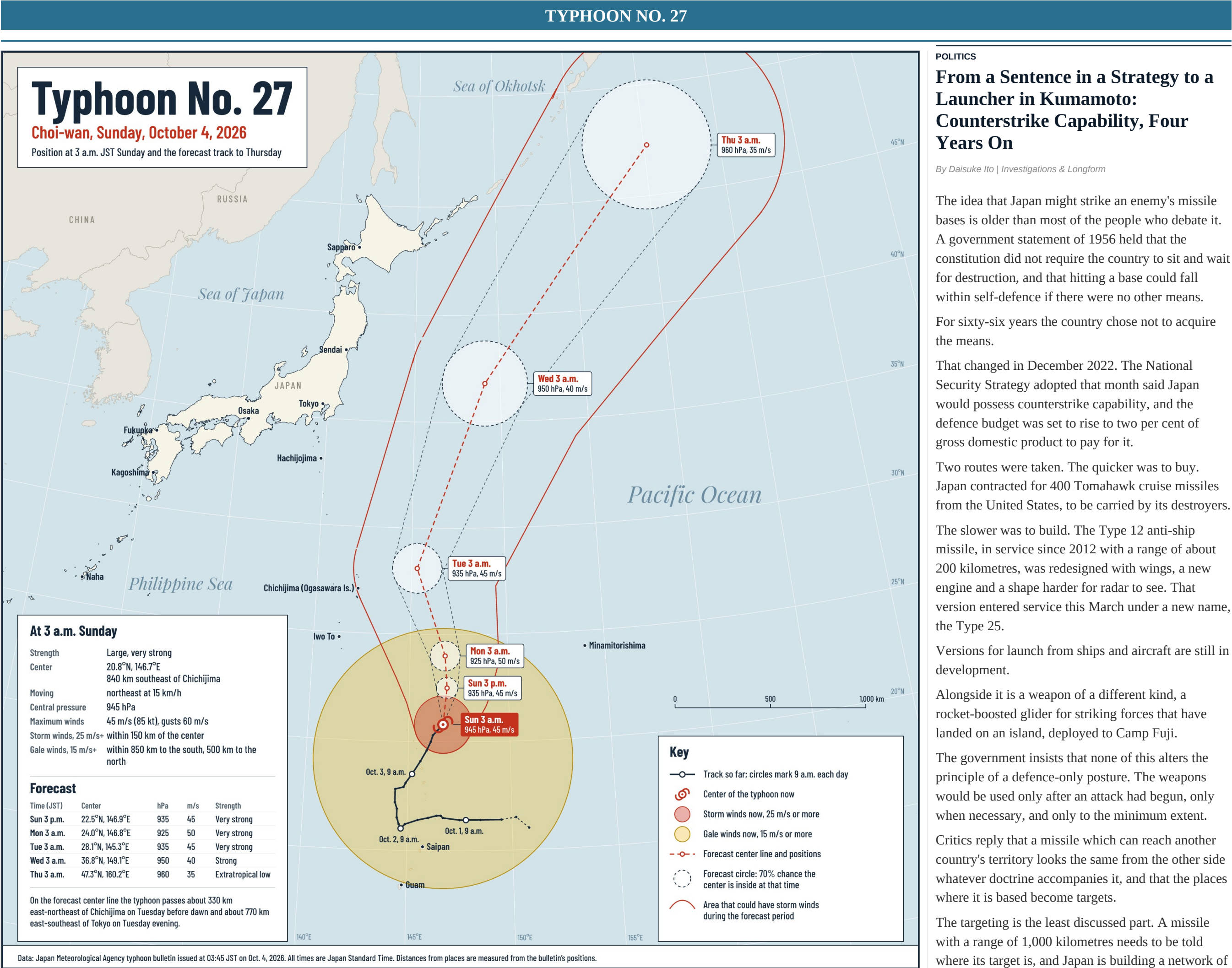
Storm-force winds: within 150 km.

Gales: 850 km to the south, 500 km to the north.

3 p.m. today: 935 hPa. 3 a.m. Monday: 925 hPa, 50 m/s.

3 a.m. Tuesday: 935 hPa; about 330 km east-north-east of Chichijima on the centre line.

Tuesday evening: about 770 km east-south-east of Tokyo. Wednesday: 950 hPa, east of Japan. Thursday: extratropical.



Typhoon No. 27 (Choi-wan): its position at 3 a.m. on Sunday, the track so far, and the Japan Meteorological Agency's forecast to Thursday, in the map supplied for this edition. The red and yellow discs are the present areas of storm-force winds and gales; each dashed circle is where the centre is expected to be at that time with a probability of 70 per cent; the red outline encloses everywhere that could have storm-force winds. (Data: Japan Meteorological Agency typhoon bulletin issued at 3:45 a.m. on October 4)

TYPHOON NO. 27

From 970 to 945 in a Day: The Bulletin of 3:45 a.m., Line by Line

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The typhoon bulletin issued by the Japan Meteorological Agency at 3:45 this morning, on which the map on this page is based, describes a storm a full class stronger than the one of a day earlier.

At 3 a.m. the centre of Typhoon No. 27 was at 20.8 degrees north, 146.7 degrees east. That is 840 kilometres south-east of Chichijima.

The central pressure was 945 hectopascals. At 3 a.m. on Saturday it was 970.

Maximum sustained winds were 45 metres a second, or 85 knots, with gusts to 60. That places the storm in the agency's very strong class, which begins at 44.

Storm-force winds of 25 metres a second or more extended 150 kilometres from the centre in all directions. Gales of 15 metres a second or more reached 850 kilometres to the south and 500 to the

north.

The agency also classes the typhoon as large, on the basis of that gale area.

It was moving north-east at 15 kilometres an hour. On Saturday morning it had been moving north-north-east at the same speed.

The forecast has it continuing to deepen for another day: 935 hectopascals at 3 p.m. today, and 925, with winds of 50 metres a second, at 3 a.m. on Monday, at 24.0 degrees north, 146.8 degrees east.

From there it weakens slowly as it moves into higher latitudes: 935 hectopascals at 3 a.m. on Tuesday, 950 and winds of 40 metres a second on Wednesday, by which time it is classed as strong, and 960 on Thursday as an extratropical low at 47 degrees north.

Weathernews, reporting slightly earlier figures, gave the storm radius as about 130 kilometres and the

direction of movement as north-north-east. The figures used in today's edition are those of the 3:45 bulletin.

On the map, the red symbol marks the centre at 3 a.m. The red disc is the area of storm-force winds and the yellow disc the area of gales, drawn to scale. The dark line behind the symbol is the track since the storm formed, with a circle at 9 a.m. each day.

Each dashed circle is a forecast circle, the area in which the centre is expected to lie at that time with a probability of 70 per cent. The solid red line encloses every place that could have storm-force winds during the forecast period.

Chichijima lies on the edge of that area. Iwo To and Hachijojima lie outside it.

The next full forecast is issued this morning.

TYPHOON NO. 27

A Little Further East: How the Forecast Has Moved Since Saturday

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Forecasts of a typhoon's track are revised every few hours, and the differences between one day's and the next are a guide to how much confidence to place in either.

Comparing the bulletin on which Saturday's front-page map was based with the one issued this morning, the main change is a small shift of the track to the east.

On Saturday's forecast positions, the line joining the centres passed about 280 kilometres east-north-east of Chichijima. On today's, the corresponding figure printed on the map is about 330.

For Tokyo the nearest point on the line has moved from about 730 kilometres to about 770.

The timing is nearly unchanged. Both forecasts put the storm abreast of Chichijima in the early hours of Tuesday and off Kanto on Tuesday evening.

The forecast of intensity has not changed at all at its peak: 925 hectopascals at 3 a.m. on Monday in both.

The storm has, if anything, strengthened a little faster than expected. Saturday's forecast for 6 a.m. today was 945 hectopascals, and that value was reached by 3 a.m.

The later part of the track has slowed. Saturday's forecast had the remains of the storm at 49 degrees north by 3 a.m. on Thursday. Today's has them at 47.

None of these differences is large beside the size of the forecast circles, which is the point. The centre line has moved by 50 kilometres. The circle for Tuesday is more than twice that in radius.

A shift to the east is welcome for the islands. It would take a shift of several times that size, in the other direction, to change the outlook for Honshu.

TYPHOON NO. 27

On the Islands, Today

By the Society Desk

Follow the village's announcements.

Keep away from the shore: six-metre seas.

Finish securing boats this morning.

Tie down or bring in loose objects.

Close storm shutters before dark tomorrow.

Fill water containers and charge batteries.

Check on elderly neighbours.

Visitors: follow your lodging's instructions.

Expect the ship's schedule to change.

Do not go to watch the waves.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Editorial: Easy to take, hard to fight, Page 20.

POLITICS

From a Sentence in a Strategy to a Launcher in Kumamoto: Counterstrike Capability, Four Years On

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The idea that Japan might strike an enemy's missile bases is older than most of the people who debate it. A government statement of 1956 held that the constitution did not require the country to sit and wait for destruction, and that hitting a base could fall within self-defence if there were no other means.

For sixty-six years the country chose not to acquire the means.

That changed in December 2022. The National Security Strategy adopted that month said Japan would possess counterstrike capability, and the defence budget was set to rise to two per cent of gross domestic product to pay for it.

Two routes were taken. The quicker was to buy. Japan contracted for 400 Tomahawk cruise missiles from the United States, to be carried by its destroyers.

The slower was to build. The Type 12 anti-ship missile, in service since 2012 with a range of about 200 kilometres, was redesigned with wings, a new engine and a shape harder for radar to see. That version entered service this March under a new name, the Type 25.

Versions for launch from ships and aircraft are still in development.

Alongside it is a weapon of a different kind, a rocket-boosted glider for striking forces that have landed on an island, deployed to Camp Fuji.

The government insists that none of this alters the principle of a defence-only posture. The weapons would be used only after an attack had begun, only when necessary, and only to the minimum extent.

Critics reply that a missile which can reach another country's territory looks the same from the other side whatever doctrine accompanies it, and that the places where it is based become targets.

The targeting is the least discussed part. A missile with a range of 1,000 kilometres needs to be told where its target is, and Japan is building a network of small satellites to do that. Until it is complete the country depends on the United States for much of the picture.

POLITICS

From Tosu to Goldman Sachs to the Leadership: Who Mitsunari Okamoto Is

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The new leader of Komeito has a background unlike that of any of his predecessors.

Mitsunari Okamoto was born on May 5, 1965, in Tosu, a railway junction town in Saga Prefecture. He studied at Soka University, spent a year at the University of Glasgow, and joined Citibank on graduating in 1989.

He took a master's degree in business at Northwestern University's Kellogg School in 1998 and moved to Goldman Sachs, where he became an executive officer of its Japanese securities arm in 2005.

He entered politics in 2012, winning a seat in the House of Representatives, and is in his sixth term.

His government posts have followed his experience: parliamentary vice-minister for foreign affairs, during which he travelled widely in the United States, and state minister of finance. He has also chaired the lower house's committee on the economy and industry.

Within the party he became policy chief in September 2024, the post from which leaders are often drawn.

He is one of the few senior Japanese politicians at ease in English and in the vocabulary of markets, and has been the party's voice on taxation.

His proposal on the consumption tax is characteristic. It offers a cut that voters want, on food, and pairs it with an increase most politicians avoid mentioning.

He has represented constituencies in northern Kanto and in Tokyo, and now sits for the Tokyo proportional block.

By coincidence his home prefecture was in the news on the day of his election for another reason. Saga came last in the annual ranking of the prefectures' attractiveness.

POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at the rostrum of the House of Representatives, in a file image. The extraordinary session of the Diet convenes on Monday. (Photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

The Diet Opens Tomorrow to a Minister's Remark, a Missile and a Typhoon

The opposition will question the prime minister's choice of farm minister; the government wants the session to be about benefit payments and tax credits

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

The extraordinary session of the Diet convenes on Monday, and the agenda the government planned for it has been overtaken on three sides.

Prime Minister Takaichi, pictured here at the rostrum in a file image, had intended the session to be about household finances. On Friday her party approved outlines of two bills that would pay a benefit to low and middle earners once a year from fiscal 2030, as a bridge to a system of refundable tax credits.

She will instead begin by answering for her agriculture minister. Kazuo Yana admitted on Friday that he had told a party gathering in May that road budgets had been drastically cut for two towns whose mayors had not supported him. He denies having pressed the ministry concerned and has refused to resign.

The opposition parties have said they will ask the prime minister why she appointed him and why he remains.

The second intrusion is North Korea's missile launch of Saturday morning, which will bring demands for a statement on the government's reading of the weapon

and on the state of the country's defences.

The third is the weather. Typhoon No. 27 is forecast to pass east of the Ogasawara Islands, which are part of Tokyo, on the night of Monday to Tuesday, and the government's disaster officials will be watching it.

The party landscape has also shifted since the session was called. Komeito, the government's former coalition partner, elected a new leader on Saturday who says he will work with parties on either side.

His party intends to use the session to press a bill to cut the consumption tax, Nikkei reports, which cuts across the government's own plan.

The government has business of its own to complete. A senior Liberal Democrat said on Friday that the party would aim to pass a reduction in the number of lower-house seats, part of its agreement with its coalition partner, during the session.

Monday is also the 62nd birthday of Megumi Yokota, abducted by North Korean agents in 1977, a date on which prime ministers are customarily asked what they are doing to bring the abductees home.

target.

The camp is the headquarters of the Western Army and stands in a residential district.

The missile is to be taken to the Onohara training area in Nagasaki and Saga prefectures during the exercise Keen Sword later this month, the Defense Ministry has said.

A second new weapon, a high-speed gliding missile for the defence of islands, was deployed to Camp Fuji in Shizuoka on the same day in March.

The showing took place a few hours after North Korea fired a missile into the Sea of Japan. The timing was a coincidence.

POLITICS

Komeito Elects Mitsunari Okamoto, a Former Investment Banker, and Says It Will Work With Either Side

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

Komeito chose Mitsunari Okamoto as its leader at a party convention in Tokyo on Saturday. He is 61 and succeeds Toshiko Takeya.

Mr Okamoto told the convention that the party would co-operate widely, without regard to the line between government and opposition, and would seek to increase the number of people who supported centrist ideas and policies, Nikkei reports.

He is the party's third leader in a year. Tetsuo Saito, who led Komeito out of its coalition with the Liberal Democrats last October, left to join the Centrist Reform Alliance when it was formed in January. Ms Takeya took over in March.

The plan at that time was for Komeito itself to merge into the new grouping. That plan has collapsed, Nikkei reports, and the change of leadership follows from it.

Mr Okamoto was himself a senior figure in the alliance, serving as its policy chief until the middle of September, and has returned.

His immediate task is the unified local elections of

next spring. Komeito's strength has always been in municipal and prefectural assemblies, and its organisation has been unsettled by a year of manoeuvre at the national level.

He has a policy of his own to promote. He favours reducing the consumption tax on food to zero permanently and raising the standard rate from 10 to 12 per cent to pay for it, and said on September 30 that he wanted to start a national debate.

The party means to use a bill to cut the consumption tax, among other measures, to look for partners among both governing and opposition parties in the Diet session that opens on Monday.

Makoto Nishida remains secretary-general. Hiromasa Nakano is to become policy chief, Jiji Press reports.

Komeito was the Liberal Democrats' coalition partner for most of the period from 1999 to 2025. Its votes in the Diet are now available to whichever side offers it most.

POLITICS

Out of the Coalition, Into an Alliance, and Back: Komeito's Twelve Months

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

To follow what happened at Komeito's convention on Saturday it helps to set out the past year in order.

In October 2025 the party ended its coalition with the Liberal Democratic Party, a partnership that had lasted, with one interruption, since 1999. The Liberal Democrats formed a new coalition with the Japan Innovation Party.

In January this year a new grouping was launched, the Centrist Reform Alliance. Its first co-leaders were Tetsuo Saito, then the leader of Komeito, and Yoshihiko Noda, the former prime minister who led the Constitutional Democratic Party.

In February the alliance chose a single leader, Junya Ogawa.

Komeito continued to exist as a separate party. With Mr Saito gone, it held an extraordinary convention in March and elected Toshiko Takeya, a member of the upper house, as leader.

The expectation was that the party's national organisation, and in time its local branches, would be folded into the alliance. Ms Takeya was cautious about the local branches.

By September the merger had stalled. Mitsunari Okamoto, who had been the alliance's policy chief, left that post on September 16, and on September 30 Komeito's executive nominated him to lead the party.

He was confirmed on Saturday.

The outcome is a Komeito that is independent again, smaller in the Diet than it was, and free to deal with any party. The Centrist Reform Alliance continues without it.

For voters who backed the party through its affiliated lay Buddhist organisation, the year has been confusing. The new leader's first job is to give them a reason to turn out next spring.

POLITICS

Decision on American Fresh Potatoes May Come in About a Year, Not Two or Three, Under Pressure From Washington

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The government's final decision on whether to allow imports of fresh potatoes from the United States, which had been expected to take two to three years, may be brought forward, Kyodo News reports, citing several government and governing-party officials.

The reason given is pressure from the Trump administration, which is looking for results to show American farmers.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries moved the question to the last of three stages of its procedure in September. If the American side acts quickly on the measures Japan asks for, a decision could come in about a year at the earliest. A senior ministry official is quoted as saying it depends on how the United States responds.

The issue is pests. Fresh potatoes can carry insects, nematodes and diseases that are not present in Japan. On September 18 the ministry published a list of 21 pests on which quarantine measures must be agreed with the United States, and the two sides are now discussing what those measures should be.

Japan already admits frozen and processed potatoes from many countries. Fresh American potatoes have been allowed since 2006, but only for making potato crisps, under controls that send them directly to designated factories.

The United States formally asked for the wider opening in 2020, during Mr Trump's first term. Under international rules a country that receives such a request is obliged to enter consultations.

Growers are opposed. Resistance is strongest in Hokkaido, Nagasaki and Kagoshima, the main producing prefectures, where farmers fear both the pests and the price.

Consumers would have more choice and probably cheaper potatoes.

Before any decision the ministry plans further briefings in the producing regions, hearings with specialists and a period of public comment.

The minister responsible, Kazuo Yana, is the one whose remarks on road budgets the opposition will raise in the Diet on Monday.

POLITICS

Three Stages and Twenty-One Pests: How Japan Decides Whether a Foreign Vegetable May Come In

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

The argument over American potatoes is conducted in the language of trade. The decision is made in the language of plant quarantine.

Japan's Plant Protection Act prohibits the import of plants that could bring in pests or diseases capable of damaging domestic agriculture. A ban is lifted only when the exporting country shows that the risk can be managed.

The procedure has three stages. In the first, the ministry gathers information on the crop and on the pests found where it is grown. In the second, it assesses which of those pests could establish themselves in Japan and what harm they would do.

The third is the one reached in September: deciding, pest by pest, what measures would reduce the risk to an acceptable level, and agreeing them with the exporting country.

For American potatoes the ministry has identified 21 pests that need such measures.

The measures available are familiar. Potatoes can be required to come from areas certified free of a pest. They can be washed, treated to prevent sprouting, inspected before shipment and inspected again on arrival.

The existing arrangement for potatoes destined for crisp factories shows how strict the conditions can be. The potatoes travel in sealed containers to plants near the port, and the peelings and waste are destroyed.

The pest that Japanese growers fear most is the potato cyst nematode, a microscopic worm that lives in soil and can persist for many years. It was found in Hokkaido in the 1970s and has cost the island's farmers heavily since.

At an online briefing on September 18, for which about 700 people registered, participants asked whether it was possible to remove pests completely, Nikkei reports.

The honest answer in quarantine is always that risk is reduced and not eliminated. The political question is who decides what level is acceptable, and how fast.

POLITICS

Megumi Yokota Is 62 Tomorrow. A Missile Is North Korea's Only Message This Week.

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Megumi Yokota, who was 13 when North Korean agents took her from a street in Niigata in November 1977, will be 62 on Monday.

She has now spent nearly forty-nine years, by Japan's account, in the country that abducted her.

North Korea admitted in 2002 that it had taken Japanese citizens and returned five of them. It said that Megumi and seven others had died. The evidence it offered did not stand up, and Japan has never accepted the claim.

The government recognises 17 people as having been abducted. Twelve have not come home.

Her mother, Sakie, turned 90 this year. Her father, Shigeru, died in 2020 without seeing her again.

POLITICS

Of the parents of those officially recognised as abducted, Mrs Yokota is the only one still living.

Each prime minister since 2002 has described the abductions as the government's most important task. None has secured a meeting with the North's leader on the subject since 2004.

Ms Takaichi has said she is prepared to meet Kim Jong Un. There has been no public response.

The birthday falls this year on the day the Diet opens, two days after a missile launch, and in the same week as the anniversary of the North's ruling party.

The families' association has asked in recent years for one thing above all: that the matter be settled while the parents are alive.

POLITICS

The Week Ahead

By the Politics Desk

SUNDAY, OCT. 4: Asian Games close in Nagoya. Rain from Kyushu to Tokai. Typhoon No. 27 at 935 hPa by afternoon. Victory sales begin in Kansai.

MONDAY, OCT. 5: The extraordinary Diet session convenes. Megumi Yokota's 62nd birthday. Kirin Cup final, Japan v New Zealand. Typhoon forecast at its peak, 925 hPa. The obesity society's statement on weight-loss use of diabetes drugs is published.

TUESDAY, OCT. 6: Typhoon No. 27 forecast to pass east-north-east of Chichijima before dawn and east-south-east of Tokyo in the evening. Japan Open tennis final and Kei Nishikori's farewell ceremony.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 7: The typhoon east of Japan. Settled weather expected to return.

FRIDAY, OCT. 9: Wake for Masayoshi Otaki, Shizuoka.

SATURDAY, OCT. 10: Anniversary of the founding of North Korea's ruling party.

MONDAY, OCT. 12: Sports Day, a public holiday.

OCT. 18: Asian Para Games open in Aichi and Nagoya.

OCT. 19 TO 29: Exercise Keen Sword.

NOV. 3: United States midterm elections. Culture Day in Japan.

INTERNATIONAL

'The Excuse of the Earth's Curvature': What Kim Yo Jong Said, and What She Was Pointing At

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The statement issued in Pyongyang after Saturday's launch was unusual in being addressed, in effect, to the radar operators of two countries.

Kim Yo Jong, the sister of Kim Jong Un and a senior official of the ruling party, said the missile was of intermediate range, that the launch was a drill, and that the weapon could fly in a way that made it difficult to follow and difficult to predict.

She then turned to the announcements made in Tokyo and Seoul. Japan's Defense Ministry had given the distance flown as about 680 kilometres. South Korea's Joint Chiefs had said more than 700.

The enemy, she said, always fell back on the excuse that the curvature of the Earth limited its ability to detect. The discrepancy, in her words, was in fact proof of the completeness of the North's missiles, Nikkei reports.

There is a real point beneath the mockery. A radar cannot see over the horizon. A missile flying a low course is hidden from a radar on a ship or on the ground until it is relatively close, and may be lost again as it descends.

The two governments observe from different places. South Korea's radars are nearer the launch site. Japan's ships and ground stations see the later part of the flight better. When the missile manoeuvres, each is left to estimate the part it could not see.

Neither government disputes that the flight was unusual. Japan gave the highest point as about 90 kilometres, which is low.

North Korea has claimed since 2021 to be developing weapons of this kind, in which a warhead separates and glides, changing direction, instead of falling on a predictable arc.

Whether Saturday's missile did what the statement says is a matter the three governments are now examining.

What can be said is that the North chose to draw attention to the gap, which suggests it regards the difficulty of tracking as the message.

INTERNATIONAL

Kim Yo Jong: The Sister Who Speaks for Pyongyang

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The statement on Saturday's launch came from a person who holds no post that would normally entitle her to comment on missiles.

Kim Yo Jong is the younger sister of Kim Jong Un. She is believed to have been born in the late 1980s and to have been educated, like him, partly in Switzerland.

Her formal title is vice department director of the central committee of the ruling Workers' Party. She has also been a member of the State Affairs Commission, the country's highest governing body.

She came to international notice in 2018, when she attended the opening of the Winter Olympics in South Korea, the first member of the ruling family to cross the border since the war.

Since about 2020 she has been the regime's principal voice towards South Korea and the United States, issuing statements under her own name in a style that is personal, sarcastic and often abusive.

The statements are published by the state news agency and are understood to carry her brother's authority.

She has commented on Japan before. In 2024 she said that a visit to Pyongyang by a Japanese prime minister was possible if Tokyo dropped its insistence on the abduction issue, and withdrew the suggestion when it was not taken up.

Her comments on military matters have usually been political: warnings, threats, ridicule. Saturday's was unusual in making a technical claim, about the missile's flight path and about the limits of her opponents' radars.

Analysts regard her as the second most powerful person in the country. She is not thought to be in line to succeed.

Her brother's daughter, who has appeared with him at launches, is the figure most often discussed in that connection.

INTERNATIONAL

Why No Alarm Sounded: When J-Alert Is Issued for a Missile, and When It Is Not

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Residents of Japan did not hear sirens on Saturday morning, and the reason is in the design of the warning system.

J-Alert is the national system that sends emergency messages from the government, by satellite, to municipal loudspeakers, broadcasters and mobile telephones. It has been in operation since 2007 and is used for earthquakes and tsunami as well as for missiles.

For missiles it is issued when a launch is judged likely to fall on Japanese territory or in its territorial waters, or to pass over the country.

A missile that will come down in the open sea short of Japan, as Saturday's did, does not meet that test. The government announces the launch through the prime minister's office and the coast guard warns ships.

When the alert is issued it names the prefectures concerned and tells people to take shelter in a solid building or underground.

The time available is short. A missile from North Korea reaches Japan in under ten minutes, and the alert follows the launch by a few minutes.

The system has had failures. On several occasions an alert has been issued and then withdrawn when the missile's course became clear, and on others it has reached residents after the missile had passed.

The criteria were adjusted after those episodes to give earlier warning at the price of more false alarms.

Advice on what to do is published by the Cabinet Secretariat. In the open, lie down and cover your head. Indoors, move away from windows.

Whether a low-flying, manoeuvring missile of the kind described on Saturday could be assessed in time to warn anyone is a question the system's designers have not had to answer in public.

INTERNATIONAL

Ninety Kilometres Up: Why a Low-Flying Missile Is a Harder Problem Than a High One

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The figure in Saturday's announcement that drew the attention of specialists was not the distance. It was the height: about 90 kilometres.

A ballistic missile fired 700 kilometres on the most efficient path would rise to roughly 180 kilometres. It behaves like a thrown stone, and once its motor has burned out its path can be calculated.

Japan's missile defence was built for that case. Destroyers equipped with the Aegis system carry interceptors that strike a warhead in space, above the atmosphere, at the top of its arc. Patriot batteries on the ground deal with what gets through, in the last seconds of flight.

A missile that stays at 90 kilometres or lower spends its flight at the upper edge of the atmosphere. That is near or below the lowest height at which the ship-borne interceptors are designed to work, and far above the reach of the Patriot.

If the warhead can also glide and turn, the calculation that tells the defender where to aim no longer holds.

Detection is the other half. Because the Earth curves, a radar at sea level cannot see an object 90 kilometres up until it is within about 1,100 kilometres, and cannot see one at 30 kilometres until it is much closer.

The responses under development are of two kinds. One is to watch from above. Japan and the United States are working on satellites in low orbit that would track such weapons by their heat.

The other is a new interceptor. The two countries agreed in 2023 to develop one jointly for use against gliding warheads, with a target of the 2030s.

Until then the practical defence is the one Japan adopted in 2022: the ability to strike the launchers.

That is the purpose of the missile shown to the public in Kumamoto on the same day.

INTERNATIONAL

How the Chill Set In: Japan and China Since Last November

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The complaint that President Xi is reported to have made to President Trump has a history of eleven months.

Sanae Takaichi became prime minister last October and met Mr Xi within days, at a regional summit in South Korea. The meeting was correct and brief.

A week later, answering a question in the Diet, she said that a Chinese blockade of Taiwan involving the use of force could amount to a situation threatening Japan's survival, the legal condition under which the Self-Defense Forces may act alongside an ally.

Previous prime ministers had avoided giving examples. Beijing demanded a retraction. She declined to withdraw the remark, while saying that the government's position had not changed.

China's response came in stages. It advised its citizens not to travel to Japan. It suspended imports of Japanese seafood, which it had only just begun to readmit. Cultural events and exchanges were cancelled.

Its diplomats and state media began to describe the Takaichi government's defence policy as a revival of militarism.

Japan's position has been that the remark described the law as it stands and that it remains open to dialogue.

The two economies are too closely tied for the dispute to have been allowed to spread to trade in general, and it has not.

Reports in recent days suggest some easing. A commentator on Abema noted on Saturday that slower growth in China may be giving Beijing reasons to lower the temperature.

Whether the two leaders meet at the Asia-Pacific summit next month, which China is hosting, is the test.

INTERNATIONAL

The Launch in Numbers

By the International Desk

6:36 a.m.: time of launch, Saturday.

1: missiles fired, at least.

About 90 km: highest point, by Japan's estimate.

About 680 km: distance flown, Japan.

More than 700 km: distance flown, South Korea.

Wonsan: launch area.

Outside the EEZ: where it fell.

September 20: previous launch.

More than 900 km: range shown then.

October 10: party anniversary.

INTERNATIONAL

Wonsan: A Beach Resort, a Port and a Place Missiles Are Fired From

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The name in Saturday's announcement, Wonsan, belongs to a city that the North Korean government has spent a decade trying to turn into a holiday destination.

It lies on the east coast, on a sheltered bay, about 150 kilometres east of Pyongyang. It has a population of several hundred thousand and is the chief port on the Sea of Japan.

For Japanese of an older generation it is the port from which a ferry sailed to Niigata, carrying Koreans resident in Japan to and from the North, until Japan banned the ship in 2006.

Kim Jong Un spent part of his childhood at a family villa there. Under his rule a long sandy peninsula at the edge of the city has been built up with hotels, and the resort opened to visitors in the summer of 2025.

The same peninsula holds an airfield, and the airfield has been used for missile launches for many years. Mobile launchers are driven on to the runway or the beach and fired out to sea.

The advantages are practical. The area is well provided with roads and hangars, the leader can watch from a residence nearby, and the flight path lies entirely over water.

An intermediate-range missile was tested there in 2016.

The combination of resort and firing range is deliberate. The regime presents both as achievements.

South Korean and American satellites watch the area continuously, and preparations for a launch are often detected in advance.

Whether they were on Saturday has not been said.

INTERNATIONAL

Eight Destroyers and the Patriot: What Japan's Missile Defence Consists Of

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

The system that Saturday's missile is said to have been designed to evade has been built up over twenty years.

Japan decided to acquire a ballistic missile defence in 2003, five years after North Korea fired a missile over the country without warning.

It has two layers. The upper layer is at sea. The Maritime Self-Defense Force operates eight destroyers fitted with the American Aegis system, whose radar tracks a missile and whose interceptors strike the warhead outside the atmosphere.

Two or three of these ships, suitably placed, can cover the whole country.

The lower layer is on land. Batteries of Patriot missiles operated by the Air Self-Defense Force are stationed around the country and can be moved. They engage a warhead in the last moments of its descent and protect an area of a few tens of kilometres.

Radars on the ground and satellites operated by the United States provide warning.

A plan to add two land-based Aegis sites was abandoned in 2020. In their place two large ships dedicated to missile defence are being built, the first due in service in the next two years.

The system has never been used in earnest. Interceptors have been readied on several occasions when North Korea announced satellite launches.

It was designed for missiles that follow a ballistic arc. Its makers have always acknowledged that large salvos, steep trajectories and manoeuvring warheads would strain it.

That acknowledgement is the origin of the decision, in 2022, to add the ability to strike back.

INTERNATIONAL



Military aircraft over the White House during September's state visit, in a file image. President Trump told President Xi to speak directly to Japan's prime minister, Japanese officials say, according to Yomiuri Shimbun. (White House Official)

INTERNATIONAL

Xi Criticised Japan at the White House; Trump Told Him to Talk to Takaichi, Tokyo Officials Say

The president called the prime minister 'a strong leader', according to Yomiuri; the account comes from the Japanese side and has not been confirmed in Washington

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

When President Xi Jinping of China met President Trump at the White House on September 24, he complained about Japan. Mr Trump did not take up the complaint, and urged him to speak to Prime Minister Takaichi directly.

That is the account given by several Japanese government officials and reported by Yomiuri Shimbun. It is based on what Mr Trump told Ms Takaichi when the two spoke by telephone on September 26.

According to that account, Mr Xi criticised Japan's conduct in connection with the situation in East Asia. His government has taken to describing the Takaichi cabinet's security policy as a new type of militarism, and has stepped up its criticism through the year.

Mr Trump is said to have declined to agree, to have described the prime minister as a strong leader, and to have asked that the leaders of Japan and China talk to each other.

After the telephone call Ms Takaichi told reporters only that she had received a detailed account of the summit and that Japan and the United States had confirmed they would contribute together to the peace and stability of the region and the world.

It is the second time such a report has appeared. After the two presidents met in Beijing in May, diplomatic

sources in Tokyo said Mr Xi had criticised Ms Takaichi by name and that Mr Trump had called her a wonderful leader.

The pattern has drawn a note of caution. A commentator writing for Yahoo News pointed out that both accounts originated in Tokyo, that neither has been confirmed by the American side, and that the public disclosure of what one leader tells another in confidence carries a cost of its own.

The photograph with this article shows military aircraft over the White House during the state visit, in a file image.

The substance matters more than the provenance. If the account is accurate, the Chinese leader used time with the American president to press a complaint about a third country, and was told to take it up himself.

No meeting between Ms Takaichi and Mr Xi has been announced. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, which China hosts in November, is the next occasion on which both are due to be in the same place.

Neither government has commented on the report in public.

marked with displays of weaponry.

Japan's government customarily protests through its embassy in Beijing after each launch.

South Korea and the United States are analysing Saturday's flight together, Seoul said.

INTERNATIONAL

'Outside the EEZ': What the Phrase in Every Missile Announcement Means

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

The first thing the Japanese government says after a North Korean launch is where the missile came down in relation to the exclusive economic zone. On Saturday the answer was outside it.

The zone is an area of sea extending 200 nautical miles, about 370 kilometres, from a country's coast. Within it the coastal state has rights over fish, oil, gas and minerals. It is not territory, and foreign ships and aircraft may pass freely.

Japan's zone is among the largest in the world because of its outlying islands.

In the Sea of Japan the zones of Japan, the two Koreas and Russia meet, and whether a missile fired from the North's east coast falls inside Japan's depends on its direction as much as on its distance.

A missile that lands inside is not an attack in law. It is, though, a danger to the fishing boats that work those waters and to aircraft, none of which receive warning.

The first North Korean missile to fall inside Japan's zone did so in August 2016, off Akita. Since then there have been many, including several of intercontinental range fired on very steep trajectories. Japanese governments treat a landing inside the zone

as more serious and say so in stronger language.

North Korea is aware of the line. Saturday's flight, of about 680 to 700 kilometres, came down outside it.

The territorial sea, where sovereignty applies, extends only 12 nautical miles.

No North Korean missile has fallen in Japan's territorial sea. Several have flown over Japanese territory at high altitude.

INTERNATIONAL

Why the Security Council Will Not Respond: Twenty Years of Resolutions, and a Veto

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Every North Korean ballistic missile launch breaks a decision of the United Nations Security Council. The council has not acted on one for years.

The first resolution was adopted in July 2006, after a round of tests, and the first to impose sanctions followed that October, after the North's first nuclear explosion.

A series of further sanctions resolutions was adopted over the next eleven years, each with the agreement of China and Russia. The last, in December 2017, capped the North's imports of oil and ordered its workers abroad to be sent home.

Together they prohibit any launch that uses ballistic missile technology, including those the North describes as satellite launches.

The consensus ended in 2022. In May of that year China and Russia vetoed an American proposal for further sanctions after a series of intercontinental tests, the first time a resolution on the subject had been blocked.

In March 2024 Russia vetoed the renewal of the panel of experts that had monitored compliance since 2009. The panel ceased to exist the following month.

Russia's position reflects its own dealings with the North, which has supplied it with munitions and troops for the war in Ukraine.

Japan, the United States, South Korea and eight other countries set up a monitoring group of their own outside the United Nations.

The council still meets after major launches, at the request of its Western members. The meetings end without a statement.

For a launch of the kind made on Saturday, a meeting is unlikely to be requested.

INTERNATIONAL

Keen Sword: The Exercise in Which Japan's New Missile Will First Take the Field

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

The exercise that Japan and the United States begin on October 19 is the largest the two countries hold together.

Keen Sword takes place roughly every two years and has done so since the 1980s. It involves the ground, maritime and air forces of both countries, and in recent editions tens of thousands of personnel.

This year's runs until October 29, the Joint Staff announced on September 29.

Its scenario is the defence of Japan, and in recent years particularly of the islands in the south-west.

The novelty this time is a single piece of equipment. The Type 25 surface-to-ship missile, which was deployed to Camp Kengun in Kumamoto in March, will be moved to the Onohara training area on the border of Nagasaki and Saga prefectures, Jiji Press reports. It is the first time it has been deployed in a large exercise.

No firing has been announced. Deployment in this sense means driving the launchers and their supporting vehicles to a position, setting up, and practising the procedures for receiving a target and preparing to launch.

The point is mobility. A launcher that remains at its base can be found and struck. One that can disperse to training areas, ports and roads is harder to find.

The Defense Ministry describes the aim as improving counterstrike capability.

China and North Korea habitually criticise the exercise. Local governments near the training areas are informed in advance.

The showing of the equipment to residents at Kengun on Saturday was part of the answer to that request.

INTERNATIONAL

ANALYSIS: A Missile After a Summit and Before an Exercise. The Timing Is Part of the Statement.

By William | Senior Political Analyst

North Korea does not explain the timing of its launches, and those who read meaning into dates are often wrong. There are nonetheless four dates around Saturday's that are worth setting side by side.

The first is September 24, when the presidents of the United States and China met in Washington. Whatever was said there about the Korean peninsula, Pyongyang was not in the room.

The second is October 10, the anniversary of the ruling party, which the North likes to approach with something to show.

The third is October 19, when Japan and the United States begin Keen Sword and Japan first takes its long-range missile into the field.

The fourth is November 3, when Americans vote in midterm elections that will decide how much attention their president has to spare.

A launch described as a drill of an intermediate-range weapon, accompanied by a statement mocking the radars of Japan and South Korea, speaks to all four. It tells Washington and Beijing that the North is not an item on someone else's agenda. It supplies the anniversary. It answers the exercise in advance.

For Japan the uncomfortable part is the technical claim. The country has spent two decades and a great deal of money on a defence designed to hit warheads at the top of a high arc. A missile that flies low and turns is aimed at the gap in that design.

That is why the government's emphasis has shifted from interception to the ability to strike back, and why a missile with a range of about 1,000 kilometres was being shown to residents of Kumamoto on the same morning.

The two events were not connected by anyone's plan. They are connected by logic. Each side is displaying what it would use against the other's launchers.

The danger in that logic is the premium it places on going first. The safeguard, such as it is, lies in the alliances on one side and in the caution of Beijing on the other, and it was the health of both that the summit of September 24 was supposed to be about.

Mr Trump is reported to have told Mr Xi to talk to Japan's prime minister. If the report is right, that was the most useful sentence of the month.

INTERNATIONAL

ANALYSIS: A Long-Range Missile Was Shown to the People Who Live Beside It. That Is How a Democracy Should Arm.

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Two things happened on Saturday morning that belong together. North Korea fired a missile from a beach, without notice, and announced afterwards that it could not be tracked. Japan invited 220 residents of Kumamoto into an army camp to look at the launch equipment of the weapon it has bought in response.

The contrast is not flattering to Pyongyang, and it is worth dwelling on, because the open way is also the harder one.

The Type 25 is the most consequential weapon Japan has fielded since the war. With a range of about 1,000 kilometres it can reach another country's territory, and the doctrine that goes with it, counterstrike, reverses a restraint the country had observed for two generations.

A government could have deployed such a weapon behind a fence and said nothing. This one put it in a camp in a residential district, and has had to answer for that ever since.

The answers have been slow. The launcher arrived in March and was shown at first only to the governor, the mayor and local association heads. It took until October, and repeated requests, for ordinary residents to be let in.

What they saw was reassuring in one respect and sobering in another. The equipment is real, mobile and professionally handled. It is also a target, and the people who live around Camp Kengun know it.

The honest argument to make to them is that the missile's value lies in never being fired. An adversary

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who knows that his launchers can be struck must think twice. That is deterrence, and it works only if the adversary believes both in the weapon and in the will behind it.

Belief in the will depends on consent. A capability that the public has seen, questioned and accepted is more credible than one imposed on it.

So the showing at Kengun was not a courtesy. It was part of the weapon.

The government should do it again, in every place where these missiles are based or exercised, beginning with the towns around the Onohara training area before Keen Sword opens on the 19th.

ECONOMY

Six Thousand Metres Down: The Rare Earth Mud off Minamitorishima, and the Doubts About Mining It

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Japan's best hope of a domestic supply of rare earths lies under nearly six kilometres of water, around a coral island 1,900 kilometres south-east of Tokyo.

Researchers at the University of Tokyo reported in the early 2010s that the mud on the sea floor near Minamitorishima contained rare earths at high concentrations, including the heavy elements that are hardest to obtain elsewhere. The deposits lie within Japan's exclusive economic zone.

A government programme has since been working on how to raise the mud. The drilling ship Chikyu lowers a pipe to the bottom, and the mud is pumped up as a slurry.

A test of continuous retrieval from 6,000 metres is scheduled for February, according to the reports. Toyo Keizai Online has examined the plan and raises two sets of doubts.

The first is ecological. Little is known about life on the abyssal plain, and what is known suggests that it recovers from disturbance very slowly. Mining stirs up plumes of sediment that can travel far beyond the site.

Rules for mining in international waters are still being negotiated, and a number of countries have called for a pause. Minamitorishima is in Japanese waters and outside those rules, but the scientific concerns are the same.

The second doubt is commercial. Lifting mud through six kilometres of pipe is expensive, and the mud must then be shipped and processed. Whether the product can compete with Chinese material at ordinary prices is far from clear.

The government's answer is that the purpose is security and not profit. A source of supply that cannot be cut off has a value that does not appear in a price comparison.

The island itself is a flat triangle with a runway, a weather station and no civilian residents.

It appears on today's typhoon map. The forecast track passes well to its west.

ECONOMY

Recycling and Substitution of Rare Earths Spread Through Japanese Industry, and Into Electric Cars

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

Japanese manufacturers are widening their efforts to recover rare earth elements from used products and to design them out of new ones, TV Asahi reports, and the results are beginning to appear in electric vehicles.

Rare earths are a group of 17 metallic elements. The most commercially important are those used in powerful permanent magnets, which are at the heart of the motors in electric and hybrid cars, of wind turbines and of many industrial machines.

China mines most of the world's supply and refines an even larger share. It has used that position before. In 2010, during a dispute over the Senkaku Islands, shipments to Japan were halted for a period, and since 2025 Beijing has tightened export controls on several of the heavier elements.

Japan's response after 2010 became a model for other countries. It invested in a mine in Australia, built stockpiles and funded research into using less.

Two approaches are now being pursued together. The first is recycling: recovering magnets from the motors of scrapped hybrid cars, air-conditioners and hard

disk drives, and extracting the elements for reuse.

The second is substitution. Magnet makers have developed grades that need little or none of the scarcest heavy elements, dysprosium and terbium, which are added to keep a magnet working at high temperature.

Some motor designs avoid rare earth magnets altogether, using ferrite magnets or none at all.

The trade-off is usually size or efficiency. A motor without rare earths tends to be larger for the same power, which matters in a car.

The report says that such technologies are being adopted in electric vehicles. It does not, in the summaries available, name the companies or give volumes.

The economics depend on the price and availability of the Chinese material. When supplies are easy, recycling struggles to compete. When they are restricted, as now, it becomes a matter of security.

ECONOMY

Hokkaido Is Japan's Most Attractive Prefecture for the 18th Year Running; Saga Falls to Last

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

Hokkaido has been named the most attractive of Japan's 47 prefectures for the eighteenth consecutive year in the annual survey by the Brand Research Institute, a private research firm in Tokyo. It has held first place in every year since the prefectural ranking began in 2009.

Kyoto was second and Okinawa third, as they were last year. Saga, which was 45th a year ago, came last.

Hokkaido scored 68.0 points. Kyoto scored 53.5 and Okinawa 49.1. Saga's score was 15.1, Diamond Online reports.

Below the top three the order changed. The institute's own summary picks out Osaka and Nagasaki as having risen strongly.

Niigata, Miyagi and Kochi also gained, in both attractiveness and in the share of respondents who said they would like to visit. The institute links Niigata's rise to the listing of the Sado gold mines as a World Heritage site and Kochi's to a television drama set there.

The survey was conducted on the internet between June 23 and July 17 and drew 31,666 valid responses from people in their twenties to their seventies. It asks 91 questions about each of the 47 prefectures and 1,000 municipalities.

The ranking is published every October and is received with more seriousness than its method might seem to warrant. Governors comment on it. Prefectures near the bottom have in the past complained about it, commissioned their own surveys, and in one case built an advertising campaign around coming last.

For the prefectures at the top it is a marketing asset. For those at the bottom it is a prompt to ask why people elsewhere have no picture of them.

The institute's president, Akio Tanaka, has said in the past that a low score reflects the lack of a clear image and not a lack of merit.

Hokkaido's score, though still far ahead, was a little lower than last year's 70.7.

ECONOMY

Zero on Food, Twelve on Everything Else: The Arithmetic of the New Komeito Leader's Tax Idea

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Mitsunari Okamoto, elected leader of Komeito on Saturday, has a proposal on the consumption tax that is simple to state: abolish it permanently on food, and raise the standard rate to 12 per cent.

The tax is at present charged at 10 per cent on most goods and services and at 8 per cent on food and non-alcoholic drink bought to take home, and on newspaper subscriptions.

It raises about 25 trillion yen a year for the national government, more than income tax or corporation tax, and the receipts are assigned by law to social security.

Removing the tax from food would cost roughly 5 trillion yen a year. That is the figure usually cited, and it explains why proposals to do so have always stalled at the question of how to pay.

Mr Okamoto's answer is the other half of the proposal. Each percentage point on the standard rate brings in something under 3 trillion yen. Two points would roughly cover the loss.

The effect on households would differ by income. Poorer households spend a larger share of their budgets on food and would gain. Richer households spend more on everything else and would pay more.

That makes the proposal a way of reducing the regressive character of the tax without reducing its yield.

The objections are practical. A zero rate needs a definition of food, and the present two-rate system already produces disputes about where eating in ends and taking away begins. Businesses would have to change their systems again.

The government's own plan, approved by the governing party on Friday, takes a different route: keep the tax and return money to low and middle earners through an annual payment and, later, a refundable tax credit.

Mr Okamoto says he wants a national debate. The Diet session that begins on Monday will show whether anyone else does.

ECONOMY

Four Potatoes in Five: Hokkaido, the Island the American Request Lands On

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

The prefecture named on Saturday as the country's most attractive is also the one with most to lose from the opening of the potato market reported on the same day.

Hokkaido grows about four-fifths of Japan's potatoes. The crop is concentrated on the Tokachi plain and in the Okhotsk region, where it rotates with wheat, sugar beet and beans.

The harvest runs from August to October and is now in its last weeks. The photograph distributed with Kyodo's report shows potatoes lifted last month in a field at Obihiro.

Not all of those potatoes are sold as vegetables. A large share goes to starch factories. Another goes to processors, for crisps, chips and salads. The remainder, the table potato of the supermarket, is the part that would compete most directly with imports.

Japan already imports potatoes in quantity, but frozen. Most of the chips sold in fast-food restaurants are American.

The country learned how dependent it is on the Hokkaido crop in 2017. A series of typhoons the previous summer flooded fields in Tokachi, and by spring manufacturers had suspended sales of many kinds of potato crisps for want of raw material.

That episode cuts both ways in the present argument. Importers cite it as a reason to diversify supply. Growers cite it as proof of how much the country relies on them.

The growers' deeper fear is biological. The island has spent decades containing a soil nematode that arrived half a century ago, and regards any new pest as a threat to the whole rotation.

The other producing regions, Nagasaki and Kagoshima, supply the early potatoes of spring.

The decision, when it comes, will be taken in Tokyo by a ministry whose minister is at present defending himself over something else.

ECONOMY

The Lesson of 2010: How Japan Cut Its Dependence on Chinese Rare Earths, and How Far It Got

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The efforts reported this weekend to recycle and replace rare earths have a history that begins with a fishing boat.

In September 2010 a Chinese trawler collided with Japanese coast guard vessels near the Senkaku Islands, and its captain was arrested. In the weeks that followed, shipments of rare earths from China to Japan stopped.

Japan at that time bought about nine-tenths of its supply from China. Prices of some elements rose tenfold.

The government and industry responded on four fronts. A state resources agency and a trading company together financed Lynas, an Australian

mining company that was developing a deposit in Western Australia and a refinery in Malaysia. That company became the largest producer outside China.

Stockpiles were built up. Research was funded into magnets and other products that needed less.

Recycling was started, on a small scale.

And Japan, with the United States and the European Union, took China's export restrictions to the World Trade Organization and won in 2014.

Within a few years the share of Japan's supply coming from China had fallen to about six-tenths.

It did not fall much further. For the heavy elements in particular, China remains almost the only source, because the ores that contain them are processed there even when mined elsewhere.

That is the gap the present measures, and the mud off Minamitorishima, are meant to close.

ECONOMY

Zero on Food Is Not a New Idea: How Other Countries Tax What People Eat

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The proposal by Komeito's new leader to remove the consumption tax from food would bring Japan into line with a practice that several countries have followed for decades.

Britain has charged no value-added tax on most food bought in shops since the tax was introduced in 1973. Its standard rate is 20 per cent.

Australia exempts basic food from its goods and services tax of 10 per cent. Canada does the same.

South Korea, whose value-added tax is 10 per cent, exempts unprocessed foodstuffs.

Most countries of the European Union do not go to zero but apply a reduced rate to food, typically between 5 and 10 per cent, against standard rates of around 20.

The experience of those countries is instructive on two points. The first is that the boundaries are troublesome. British courts have been asked to rule on whether a particular product was a cake, which is untaxed, or a chocolate-covered biscuit, which is not.

The second is that an exemption for food is an expensive way of helping the poor, because the better-off, who spend more on food in absolute terms, receive more of the benefit.

Economists generally prefer a single rate with direct payments to low-income households, which is close to what the Japanese government has proposed.

Voters generally prefer the exemption, which they can see at the till.

New Zealand is the usual example of the economists' model: one rate of 15 per cent on almost everything, food included.

SOCIETY

The Day in Figures

By the Data Desk

945 hPa: the typhoon at 3 a.m.

925 hPa: forecast for 3 a.m. Monday.

37: days of rain in Tokyo's record run.

12: Hanshin's titles, all told.

88: years since their last back-to-back.

83: Japan's golds at the Asian Games.

680 km: North Korea's missile, by Japan's count.

1,000 km: range of the Type 25.

120,000: staff records at Dai-ichi Life.

18: years Hokkaido has ranked first.

SOCIETY

Today's Cautions

By the Society Desk

Ogasawara: seas of six metres today.

Keep off breakwaters and rocks there.

Western Japan: rain from morning.

Carry rain gear from Kyushu to Tokai.

Chiba, Kanagawa: slopes still unstable.

Pacific coasts: swell building from Monday.

Mountain districts: bears are about.

Do not approach wild monkeys.

Suspicious messages citing your employer: verify.

Kansai: victory sales will be crowded.

ECONOMY



The Tokyo Stock Exchange at Kabutocho. Markets are closed today and reopen on Monday; the Nikkei average ended last week at 68,309.46. (Photo: TG2 (CC))

ECONOMY

Markets Are Shut Today. On Monday They Reopen to a Weak American Jobs Report, a Missile and a Storm

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The Tokyo Stock Exchange, pictured here at Kabutocho, is closed for the weekend, and when it reopens on Monday it will have three days of news to absorb.

The Nikkei average ended last week at 68,309.46 after falling 647 yen on Friday, its first decline in three sessions. More than four in five shares on the Prime market fell.

The most important item arrived after that close. The United States reported that employers added 29,000 jobs in September, far fewer than forecast, and that the unemployment rate rose to 4.2 per cent.

A weak American labour market cuts two ways for Tokyo. It raises the likelihood of lower American interest rates, which supports share prices generally. It also tends to weaken the dollar against the yen, which hurts Japanese exporters.

The yen was in the upper 157s to the dollar on Friday, and carmakers were sold on that account even before the figures.

The second item is North Korea's missile launch of

Saturday. Markets have learned to look past such events, and a launch that falls outside the exclusive economic zone has rarely moved prices.

The third is Typhoon No. 27. Its forecast track keeps the centre well offshore, and the effect on business is likely to be confined to shipping, to fishing and to the islands.

Domestic politics supplies a fourth uncertainty. The Diet opens on Monday with the opposition pressing the prime minister over her agriculture minister.

The figures already in hand point both ways. Consumer prices in Tokyo rose 2.7 per cent in September, the fastest in eight months, which keeps alive the question of when the Bank of Japan next raises its policy rate from 1.25 per cent.

Among individual companies, attention remains on Nidec, which has reported a net loss of 564.6 billion yen and whose auditors have declined to express an opinion on its accounts for a second year.

ECONOMY

What 'Attractiveness' Measures: One Question, Five Answers and a Weighted Score

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

The prefectural ranking that produces so much comment each October rests on a single question.

Respondents are shown the name of a prefecture and asked how attractive they find it. They choose one of five answers, from very attractive to not at all attractive.

The answers are converted into points. The top answer scores 100, the second 50 and the rest nothing, and the average across all respondents is the prefecture's score.

A score of 68, like Hokkaido's, therefore means that a clear majority gave one of the two positive answers and that many gave the stronger one.

A score of 15, like Saga's, does not mean people dislike the place. It means that most respondents chose the neutral answer or said they did not know.

That is the feature critics object to. The survey measures what people who mostly do not live in a prefecture think of its name. Residents' satisfaction is measured separately and produces a quite different order.

The institute asks 90 other questions, about recognition, about willingness to visit or to live there, about what products the respondent would buy. Those results are sold to local governments and are the commercial purpose of the exercise.

The headline ranking moves slowly at the top and quickly in the middle. A prefecture can rise ten places on the strength of a television series or an anniversary and fall back the next year.

The bottom places have been shared over the years among a small group: Ibaraki, Saga, Saitama, Gunma, Tochigi and Tokushima.

Most of them sit beside a much better-known neighbour.

ECONOMY

Fewer Chinese Visitors This National Day, but the Individuals and the Regulars Still Came

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

China's National Day holiday, which began on Thursday, has brought fewer Chinese visitors to Japan than in past years, the morning's reports say. It has not brought the collapse the tourism industry feared.

The decline is in group travel. Individual travellers and those who have visited before have continued to come, and the industry is likely to escape a major blow.

The holiday is one of the two long breaks in the Chinese calendar and has traditionally been a peak for Japanese hotels, department stores and tour operators.

This year it comes nearly a year into a chill in relations. Beijing advised its citizens against travel to Japan last November, and group tours and some flights were withdrawn.

What has changed over that period is the composition of the Chinese market. A decade ago most visitors came in groups, on visas that required it, and shopped in bulk. Many now hold multiple-entry visas, travel independently, book their own accommodation and return to places they know.

Those travellers are less responsive to official advice. The overall number of foreign visitors to Japan has also become less dependent on China. Arrivals from South Korea, Taiwan, the United States and south-east Asia have grown, and the weak yen has made the country inexpensive for all of them.

The regions feel the difference unevenly. Areas that built their trade on Chinese tour groups, and the duty-free counters that served them, have had a harder year than cities with a mixed clientele.

The reports available this morning do not give figures for the holiday.

Monthly arrival statistics for September are due later

in October.

ECONOMY

China's October Holiday: What 'Golden Week' Is, and Why Japan's Shops Watch It

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

The holiday that is bringing fewer Chinese tourists to Japan this year marks the founding of the People's Republic on October 1, 1949.

It has been a week-long break since 1999, when the Chinese government lengthened it to encourage people to travel and spend. The term golden week, borrowed from the Japanese spring holiday, dates from then.

This year it runs from October 1 to 7.

Hundreds of millions of journeys are made within China during the week. A small fraction of travellers go abroad, and for the countries nearby that fraction is a large number.

Japan became a favoured destination in the 2010s as visa rules were relaxed and the yen weakened. In 2019, the last year before the pandemic, more than nine million Chinese visited, the most from any country.

The word bakugai, explosive buying, entered Japanese in 2015 to describe what they did in the shops.

Travel stopped in 2020 and recovered slowly. By last year Chinese visitors had returned in numbers, though the groups that once filled the duty-free stores had largely given way to individuals.

Then came the advice against travel issued in Beijing last November.

Department stores, cosmetics makers and the operators of airports and hotels in Osaka, Tokyo and Hokkaido still plan around the week.

The lunar new year holiday, in late January or February, is the other peak.

ECONOMY

The Sales Began Before the Players Were Dry: Kansai's Shops Open Their Victory Discounts

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

The commercial celebration of Hanshin's pennant began within hours of the final out at Tokyo Dome.

Joshin, the Osaka electrical retailer whose name the team carries on its uniform, opened its victory sale late on Saturday night.

The Hanshin department store in Umeda, which shares the club's name and its corporate family, begins a seven-day sale today, and its online shop opened at midnight. Kobe Hankyu is holding a three-day event.

Supermarkets across the region follow, with the discounts on beer and prepared food that a title conventionally brings.

Retailers plan for this. Stock is ordered and banners printed as the magic number falls, on the understanding that everything goes back into the warehouse if the title is lost.

This year the uncertainty lasted longer than last. The pennant was not settled until the 139th game, and until Saturday evening it was not clear on which night the sales would begin.

A sale on a Sunday is the best outcome a store could have asked for.

Sankei printed 2,000 copies of a special edition and handed them out in Namba. Supporters gathered there and in Amagasaki, the city beside Koshien, where the shopping arcade is decorated in the team's colours all year.

They had spent the evening following a game between two other clubs, which is not something Hanshin supporters often do.

Whether the Climax Series and Japan Series bring further sales depends on the team.

ECONOMY

What a Pennant Is Worth: The Economics of a Hanshin Title

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Each time Hanshin win a pennant, an estimate of its economic effect appears, and each time it is a large number.

The best known come from Katsuhiko Miyamoto, a

professor emeritus at Kansai University, who has made such calculations for decades. For the pennant of 2023 he put the effect at about 87 billion yen.

The figure is built from several parts: additional ticket sales and spending at the ballpark, sales of merchandise, eating and drinking by supporters, victory sales at retailers, travel, and the further spending those receipts set off as they pass through the economy.

Hanshin's titles produce larger estimates than other clubs' for two reasons. The supporters are numerous and concentrated in a region of twenty million people. And until recently titles were rare, so that each was treated as an occasion.

The second reason is weakening. This is the third pennant in four years, and a celebration repeated annually loses some of its force.

There are also reasons to treat any such figure with care. Money spent on a victory sale is to some extent money not spent elsewhere, or spent a month earlier than it would have been.

The effect on the owners is easier to see. Hanshin Electric Railway and its parent, Hankyu Hanshin Holdings, carry the supporters to the ground, sell them food and merchandise, and own the department store.

Attendance at Koshien has been close to capacity all season.

The largest effects may be the least measurable. A winning team fills bars on weeknights, and puts a region in a good mood.

The 1985 title, the first in 21 years, is still the standard against which such moods are judged.

ECONOMY

Who Owns the Tigers: A Railway, a Takeover Battle and a Department Store

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The club that won the Central League on Saturday is owned by a railway company, as several Japanese baseball clubs have been.

Hanshin Electric Railway opened its line between Osaka and Kobe in 1905. The name joins a character from each city. Like other private railways it built attractions along its route to generate passengers.

The greatest of these was a stadium. Koshien was completed in 1924 for the national high school baseball tournament and was then the largest ballpark in Asia.

A professional team to play in it was founded in December 1935.

The arrangement has been profitable in a way that few sports franchises are. Supporters ride the company's trains to the company's ground, eat the company's food and, on the way home, shop in the company's department store at Umeda.

In 2005 an investment fund led by Yoshiaki Murakami bought nearly half the railway's shares and proposed, among other things, listing the baseball club separately. Supporters were appalled.

The railway was rescued the following year by its rival of a century, Hankyu, which bought the fund's stake. The merged group is Hankyu Hanshin Holdings.

The team's name did not change, and the group has been careful to leave the club's identity alone.

The department stores are operated by an affiliated retail company.

A pennant shows up in the group's results as higher fares, higher sales at the stadium and a week of crowds at Umeda.

ECONOMY

Seventeen Elements, One Supplier: A Short Guide to Rare Earths

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Rare earths are neither earths nor especially rare. The name is an inheritance from eighteenth-century chemistry.

They are the fifteen elements from lanthanum to lutetium in the periodic table, together with scandium and yttrium, which occur in the same ores and behave similarly.

Several are more abundant in the Earth's crust than copper or lead. What is rare is a deposit rich enough to mine and a plant able to separate one element from

ECONOMY

another, which is difficult because they are chemically so alike.

Their uses are specific. Neodymium and praseodymium make the strongest permanent magnets known. Dysprosium and terbium, added in small amounts, let those magnets withstand heat. Cerium and lanthanum go into catalysts and glass polishing. Europium and yttrium produce colours in screens and lighting.

A hybrid or electric car contains a kilogram or two of rare earth magnets in its drive motor, and smaller amounts in dozens of minor motors and sensors.

China produces about two-thirds of the world's mined output and performs the great majority of the refining. For the heavy elements its share is higher still.

The reasons are historical. Separation is polluting and was allowed to migrate to China in the 1980s and 1990s, when Western and Japanese plants closed.

Rebuilding capacity elsewhere takes years and money. Australia, the United States and a few other countries have done so in part.

Japan is the largest consumer outside China, because it makes magnets and motors.

It also has, in principle, a resource of its own, on the sea floor near its easternmost island.

ECONOMY

Three, Five, Eight, Ten: A Short History of the Tax Every Party Wants to Change

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The consumption tax that Komeito's new leader wants to reshape, and that the government wants to offset with payments, is 37 years old and has ended several political careers.

It was introduced in April 1989, at three per cent, by the government of Noboru Takeshita, after two earlier prime ministers had tried and failed. Takeshita resigned within weeks, over a scandal but with the tax as background.

It rose to five per cent in April 1997 under Ryutaro Hashimoto. The economy fell into recession later that year and his party lost the next upper house election.

The increase to eight per cent, in April 2014, and to ten, in October 2019, were both legislated in 2012 by a government of the then Democratic Party with the support of the opposition. That government lost power before either took effect.

The second of those increases was postponed twice.

With the rise to ten per cent came the reduced rate of eight for food and newspapers, the first time the tax had more than one rate. An invoice system to support it followed in 2023.

The tax now raises about a third of national tax revenue. Its appeal to the finance ministry is that the yield is stable in good years and bad and falls on the retired as well as the employed.

Its unpopularity is equally stable. It takes a larger share of income from the poor.

Since 2019 almost every opposition party has campaigned for a cut. No government has made one.

The proposals now before the Diet, a benefit, a tax credit, a zero rate on food, are three ways of answering the same complaint without giving up the money.

ECONOMY

Idaho, Washington and the Frozen Chip: The American Potato Trade Japan Already Belongs To

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

The request that Japan admit fresh American potatoes comes from an industry for which Japan is already one of the best customers in the world.

The United States grows about 20 million tonnes of potatoes a year. Idaho produces nearly a third and Washington State about a quarter, most of it on irrigated land in the Columbia and Snake river basins.

The greater part of the crop is processed. The north-western states are the centre of the frozen chip industry that supplies fast-food chains everywhere.

Japan is the largest or second-largest export market for American frozen potato products in most years, and almost all the chips sold in Japanese hamburger restaurants come from there.

That trade is not affected by the quarantine question.

Freezing and frying remove the risk of carrying pests.

The dependence was shown in 2021 and 2022, when congestion at ports on the American west coast delayed shipments and Japanese chains rationed chips to small portions for weeks.

What the growers want now is access for the fresh potato, sold whole. American producers have pressed for it since the 2000s, and obtained a limited opening for potatoes going to crisp factories in 2006.

The National Potato Council, the industry's lobby in Washington, has put the Japanese market near the top of its list for years, and has the support of the congressional delegations of the producing states.

Idaho, the largest producer, is represented in Congress entirely by the president's party.

Mexico opened fully to American fresh potatoes in 2022 after a dispute lasting a quarter of a century. The industry regards Japan as the next.

ECONOMY

Markets at a Glance

By the Economy Desk

Tokyo markets are closed today and reopen on Monday.

Nikkei 225, Friday's close: 68,309.46, down 647.

TOPIX: 4,091.00, down 40.98.

Prime market: more than 80 per cent of issues fell on Friday.

Yen: upper 157s to the dollar on Friday.

Tokyo consumer prices, September: up 2.7 per cent on a year earlier.

Bank of Japan policy rate: 1.25 per cent.

United States payrolls, September: up 29,000.

United States unemployment rate: 4.2 per cent.

Group of Seven: 100 million barrels of diesel and crude to be released over four months.

BUSINESS

Dai-ichi Life Says Records of 120,000 Current and Former Staff May Have Leaked After a Break-In to Its Personnel System

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

Dai-ichi Life Group and its main subsidiary, Dai-ichi Life Insurance, said on Friday that the personnel system the two companies share had been accessed without authorisation and that information on about 120,000 employees may have been taken.

About 70,000 of those affected no longer work for the company. They are retirees and former staff whose records had been kept.

The data include employee numbers, names, addresses, telephone numbers, sex, department, position, duties and the name of each person's superior, ITmedia reports.

The intrusion was confirmed on September 24. The companies have not said how it happened.

They say that, as of Friday, no effect on customer information has been confirmed, and that they will announce anything further that needs to be disclosed.

Dai-ichi is one of the country's largest life insurers and employs tens of thousands of sales staff, most of them women who visit customers at home and at work.

A list of their names, addresses and telephone numbers, together with their place in the organisation, is of obvious use to anyone who wishes to impersonate the company or its staff.

It is the third announcement of its kind from a large company in a week. Times Mobility said that data from up to 6.6 million records of its car-sharing members had been obtained by a third party, including about 1.6 million images of driving licences. The restaurant chain Yoshinoya said that personal details of 5,366 applicants for part-time work had leaked through a former contractor.

The insurer appears in the editorial cartoon on today's opinion page, as one of three filing cabinets.

Insurers are required to report leaks of personal information to the Financial Services Agency.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Typhoon No. 27: the map and the bulletin, Page 3.

The Diet opens tomorrow, Page 4.

Long-range missile shown to Kumamoto residents, Page 4.

BUSINESS

Dai-ichi Life: Japan's First Mutual Insurer, and Why It Has So Many Former Employees

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The insurer that disclosed a break-in to its personnel system on Friday is one of the oldest financial institutions in the country.

Dai-ichi Life was founded in 1902 as Japan's first mutual life insurance company, owned by its policyholders. Its name means first.

It gave up that structure in 2010, converting into a company with shareholders and listing on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in one of the largest share offerings the market had seen. More than a million policyholders received shares.

It has since expanded abroad, buying insurers in the United States and Australia, and reorganised itself under a holding company.

At home its business rests, as it has for a century, on a sales force that calls on customers in person. The company has tens of thousands of these representatives.

The occupation has a very high turnover. Recruits are taken on in large numbers, many leave within a few years, and the company has been trying to change the model.

That turnover explains a feature of Friday's announcement. Of about 120,000 people whose records may have been taken, some 70,000 were no longer employed. Over the decades several times the current workforce has passed through.

The company says no effect on customers' information has been confirmed.

The life insurance industry has had a difficult period with information. Regulators acted against several companies in recent years over the improper sharing of customer data by staff seconded to agencies.

Prudential Life, a smaller competitor, is at present facing a suspension order over the conduct of its own sales staff.

BUSINESS

Seven Days of Leaks: A Tally

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The past week has produced an unusual run of announcements about lost or stolen personal data. Set out in order, they are as follows.

Times Mobility, which operates the Times Car sharing service, said that up to about 6.6 million records had been acquired by a third party. They included about 1.6 million images of driving licences. No leak of card information has been confirmed.

The Japan Atomic Energy Agency said that a site connected with a research reactor had been accessed without authorisation and that documents, including licences, relating to 175 people had leaked.

Yoshinoya Holdings said that details of 5,366 people who had applied for part-time jobs had leaked after a break-in at a company that formerly handled recruitment for it. The contract had ended. The data had not been deleted.

Dai-ichi Life said that records of about 120,000 current and former employees may have been taken from its personnel system.

Separately, the American security company Proofpoint reported that a group it believes to be linked to China had sent messages imitating the website of the defense minister, Shinjiro Koizumi, and of the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association, in order to capture the passwords of researchers, law firms and defence contractors.

And Prudential Life, which faces a business suspension order over money taken from customers by its sales staff, disclosed last month that a former employee had taken away documents with the details of 1,570 customers.

The cases differ in cause. One is an outside attack on a consumer service, one on a research body, one a failure to delete, one an intrusion into an internal system, one espionage, one an employee.

They have a common feature. In each, the people whose information was lost had no part in the decisions that exposed it and can do little about it now.

That is the subject of today's editorial.

BUSINESS

When a Company Loses Your Details: What the Law Requires of It, and What You Can Do

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

A person told that their information has leaked is usually told two things: that the company apologises, and that they should be careful. It is worth knowing what else follows.

Since April 2022 the Act on the Protection of Personal Information has required a business to report certain leaks to the Personal Information Protection Commission and to notify the individuals affected. The duty applies, among other cases, where the leak may have been caused by an improper purpose such as unauthorised access, where sensitive information is involved, where financial harm is possible, or where more than 1,000 people are affected.

A preliminary report is due within a few days of the company learning of the event and a full one within 30 days, or 60 where an attack is suspected.

The notice to individuals should say what was lost. Read it for specifics: whether it includes an address, a date of birth, a licence or identity number, a password.

If a password was involved, change it, and change it anywhere else the same one was used.

If an image of a driving licence or other identity document was taken, the risk is of someone opening an account or signing a contract in your name. Watch for post or messages about services you did not apply for, and consider asking the credit information agencies for a copy of your record.

If your address and employer are known, expect messages and calls that use those facts to seem genuine. A caller who knows your department is not thereby from your company.

Compensation in Japan has generally been small. Courts have awarded a few thousand yen per person in leading cases, and companies often offer a voucher of 500 or 1,000 yen.

A former employee has the same rights as a current one. The law also requires a business to delete personal data it no longer needs, though this is framed as an obligation to make efforts.

Complaints can be made to the commission, and consumer centres will advise on suspicious contacts by telephone at 188.

BUSINESS

The Three Agencies That Know What Has Been Borrowed in Your Name, and How to Ask Them

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

A person whose licence image has been copied is advised to check whether anyone has used it to obtain credit. Few people know how.

Japan has three credit information agencies. One is used mainly by credit card and instalment credit companies. A second serves consumer lenders. A third is run by the bankers' association and covers bank loans.

Lenders report to them when a person applies for credit, takes it, repays or defaults, and consult them before lending.

Anyone may ask an agency to disclose what it holds under his name. Applications are made online or by post, with proof of identity, and a fee of about 500 to 1,500 yen is charged by each.

The report lists applications and contracts by date and lender. An entry you do not recognise is the thing to look for.

If there is one, contact the lender named, say that the application was not yours, and tell the agency. Report it to the police as well, since lenders will ask for the reference number.

The agencies also operate a scheme under which a person can record a statement on his own file, for example that his identity document has been lost or stolen. Lenders see the note when they check and are expected to take extra care.

The statement is not a block. It does not prevent credit being granted, and it lasts for a limited period.

Mobile telephone contracts, which are a common target for fraud using stolen identity documents, appear in the files because handsets are usually

BUSINESS

bought on instalments.

None of this is automatic. Each step is taken by the individual, separately with each agency, which is the complaint made in today's editorial.

BUSINESS

The Week in Business: Ten Things That Happened

By the Business Desk

NIDEC reported a net loss of 564.6 billion yen. Its auditors declined to express an opinion on the accounts for a second consecutive year.

PRUDENTIAL LIFE faces a partial business suspension order from the Financial Services Agency over money taken from customers by sales staff.

TIMES MOBILITY said up to 6.6 million records from its car-sharing service had been obtained by a third party.

DAI-ICHI LIFE said records of about 120,000 current and former staff may have leaked.

AOMORI MICHINOKU BANK, the Bank of Iwate and Akita Bank announced talks on a business integration.

THE GROUP OF SEVEN agreed to release 100 million barrels of diesel and crude oil from reserves over four months.

THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY approved outlines of bills for an annual benefit payment from fiscal 2030.

TOKYO CONSUMER PRICES rose 2.7 per cent in September, the most in eight months.

A MONTH OF RAIN left chestnuts unripe, vegetable prices high and theme park attendance down.

THE UNITED STATES pressed Japan to speed a decision on imports of fresh potatoes.

TECHNOLOGY

October 4, 1957: A 58-Centimetre Sphere, Twenty-Two Days of Beeping, and the Start of the Space Age

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Sixty-nine years ago today the Soviet Union placed the first artificial object in orbit around the Earth.

Sputnik 1 was launched from the test range in Kazakhstan now known as Baikonur, on a rocket developed as an intercontinental missile.

The satellite was a polished metal sphere about 58 centimetres across, with four trailing antennas. It weighed a little under 84 kilograms and carried two radio transmitters and their batteries.

It did almost nothing except announce itself. The transmitters sent a steady pulse on two frequencies that any radio amateur could receive, and for 22 days people around the world listened to it pass overhead.

The batteries then ran down. The sphere continued to circle silently, and burned up on re-entering the atmosphere on January 4, 1958.

The scientific return was modest but real. Tracking the orbit gave the first measurements of the density of the upper atmosphere, and the behaviour of the signal told physicists about the ionosphere.

The political return was enormous. A country able to put a satellite over the United States was able to put a warhead there, and the American public understood this at once.

Within a year the United States had created a civilian space agency, reorganised its military research and begun to pour money into the teaching of science.

The launch took place during the International Geophysical Year, a co-operative programme in which both powers had promised satellites. The Soviet Union had said publicly that it would launch one. Few in the West had believed it.

The word itself means fellow traveller.

TECHNOLOGY

The Rocket Under Sputnik Is Still Flying: Korolev's R-7 at Sixty-Nine

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The satellite launched on October 4, 1957, has been gone for nearly seven decades. The rocket that carried it has never been retired.

The R-7 was designed under Sergei Korolev as the Soviet Union's first intercontinental ballistic missile. It was intended to carry a heavy hydrogen bomb,

which is why it was so large.

Its shape is distinctive: a central core with four boosters strapped around it, all burning kerosene and liquid oxygen and all igniting on the ground.

It flew its full range for the first time in August 1957. Korolev, who had wanted to launch a satellite for years, obtained permission to use one of the test rockets for the purpose.

The satellite itself was a simplified design, built in a few weeks, because the more elaborate one planned was not ready.

As a weapon the R-7 was a failure. It took most of a day to prepare and could not be hidden, and only a handful were ever deployed.

As a launcher it had no equal. With upper stages added it sent the first probes to the Moon and carried Gagarin into orbit in 1961.

Its descendants, under the name Soyuz, have made more than 1,900 launches, more than any other family of rockets.

They still carry crews to the International Space Station from the same launch site.

Korolev's name was a state secret until his death in 1966. He was referred to in public only as the chief designer.

TECHNOLOGY

Baikonur: The Launch Site That Was Named After a Town Three Hundred Kilometres Away

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Sputnik was launched from a place that did not officially exist and whose name, when one was given, was chosen to mislead.

The site lies on the steppe of Kazakhstan, beside the Syr Darya river and a railway junction called Tyuratam. Construction began in 1955 for the testing of the Soviet Union's first intercontinental missile.

It was chosen for its emptiness, for its clear weather, and because rockets fired north-east would fall on Soviet territory for thousands of kilometres.

When the Soviet Union came to register Yuri Gagarin's flight for an international record in 1961, it had to state the place of launch. It gave the name of Baikonur, a mining town more than 300 kilometres to the north-east.

American reconnaissance aircraft had photographed the real site four years earlier, so the deception fooled no one who mattered. The name stuck.

Every Soviet and Russian crewed flight for six decades left from there, most of them from the pad that launched Sputnik and Gagarin.

When the Soviet Union dissolved the site found itself in a foreign country. Russia leases it from Kazakhstan under an agreement that runs to 2050.

Russia has since built a new spaceport on its own territory in the Far East, and activity at Baikonur has declined.

Japanese astronauts flew from there aboard Russian spacecraft in the years between the retirement of the American shuttle and the arrival of commercial capsules.

The town that grew up beside the launch pads, once closed and called Leninsk, now carries the name it was given by accident.

TECHNOLOGY

The Year of Sputnik Was Also the Year Japan Went to Antarctica

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Sputnik was launched as part of an international scientific programme, and the same programme took Japan to the far south.

The International Geophysical Year ran from July 1957 to December 1958. Sixty-seven countries took part in co-ordinated observations of the Earth, its oceans, its atmosphere and the space around it.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union had announced that they would launch satellites during it.

Antarctica was a principal theme. Twelve countries established stations on the continent, and their co-operation led to the Antarctic Treaty of 1959.

Japan was one of the twelve. It was the country's first major venture in international science since the war, and public donations helped to pay for it.

The expedition sailed in a converted icebreaker, the

Soya, and in January 1957 set up Syowa Station on an island off the coast of East Antarctica.

The following winter the relief ship could not reach the station through the ice, and the wintering party was taken off by aircraft. Fifteen sledge dogs were left chained at the base.

When the next expedition arrived a year later, two of the dogs, Taro and Jiro, were alive. Their survival became one of the best-known stories in post-war Japan.

Syowa Station has been occupied almost continuously since. Observations made there in the early 1980s were among the first to detect the thinning of the ozone layer.

The first American satellite, launched in January 1958 as that country's contribution to the Year, discovered the belts of radiation that surround the Earth.

TECHNOLOGY

What Sputnik Meant in Tokyo: Japan Was Already Firing Rockets, and Reached Orbit Thirteen Years Later

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

When Sputnik went up in October 1957, Japan was one of the few countries with a rocket programme of its own, though a very small one.

It had begun two years earlier at the University of Tokyo, where Hideo Itokawa and his students fired a rocket 23 centimetres long, the Pencil, horizontally across a disused firing range.

By 1957 the group was launching sounding rockets from a beach in Akita as Japan's contribution to the International Geophysical Year, the same scientific programme under which Sputnik flew.

In 1958 one of those rockets, the Kappa 6, reached an altitude of 60 kilometres and returned measurements of the upper atmosphere.

The news from the Soviet Union was received in Japan, as elsewhere, with astonishment. It also strengthened the case for the university's work, which had been run on very little money.

The programme moved to a new site at Uchinoura, in Kagoshima, where the rockets could be fired over the Pacific.

On February 11, 1970, after four failures, a Lambda rocket placed a 24-kilogram satellite in orbit. It was named Ohsumi, after the peninsula from which it was launched.

Japan thereby became the fourth country to launch a satellite on its own rocket, after the Soviet Union, the United States and France, and two months ahead of China.

Unlike the others, it had done so with a rocket that had no military origin and no guidance system of the kind a missile needs. The limitation was deliberate.

The distinction between rockets for science and rockets for defence, drawn then, has shaped Japanese space policy ever since. It has been loosened only in the past two decades.

TECHNOLOGY

October 4, 2004: SpaceShipOne Flies to 112 Kilometres and a Private Team Wins Ten Million Dollars

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

On the forty-seventh anniversary of Sputnik, a small rocket plane built by a private company flew to the edge of space over the Mojave Desert for the second time in a week.

The pilot was Brian Binnie. He reached an altitude of about 112 kilometres, higher than the experimental X-15 aircraft had flown four decades earlier.

The flight won the Ansari X Prize, a purse of ten million dollars offered to the first privately financed team to carry a pilot and the equivalent of two passengers above 100 kilometres twice within two weeks, in the same vehicle.

The first of the two flights had been made five days earlier by Mike Melvill.

SpaceShipOne was designed by Burt Rutan and paid for by Paul Allen, a founder of Microsoft. It was carried to altitude under a jet aircraft, released, and fired a rocket motor that burned rubber and nitrous oxide.

Its most original feature was the way it came down. The tail booms folded upward so that the craft fell belly-first like a shuttlecock, slowing itself without the need for precise control.

The vehicle did not go into orbit and could not have. Reaching 100 kilometres straight up requires a small fraction of the energy needed to stay there.

The date was chosen deliberately. The prize's organisers wanted the comparison with 1957: then a state, now a workshop.

The expectations it raised were slow to be met. The tourist service that was to follow took the best part of two decades to carry paying passengers, after a fatal accident in testing.

The larger change it stood for, the entry of private companies into spaceflight, came by a different route, through rockets that reach orbit and return.

TECHNOLOGY

The Prize That Bought a Spaceship: From Lindbergh to the X Prize

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

The ten million dollars won by SpaceShipOne on October 4, 2004, was a deliberate imitation of a prize offered eighty-five years earlier.

In 1919 a New York hotel owner, Raymond Orteig, offered 25,000 dollars for the first non-stop flight between New York and Paris. Several crews died trying. Charles Lindbergh won it in 1927.

The teams that competed spent, between them, many times the value of the prize, and within a few years of Lindbergh's flight the number of air passengers in the United States had multiplied.

Peter Diamandis, an American entrepreneur, read about the Orteig Prize and in 1996 announced one on the same model for private spaceflight. He did not at the time have the money.

It was eventually underwritten by an insurance policy, in effect a bet placed against anyone succeeding, and was named for the Ansari family, Iranian-born technology investors who paid the premium.

Twenty-six teams from seven countries registered. Most never built anything that flew.

The winner spent more than twice the prize money on its vehicle, with the difference covered by its backer.

The idea has since been applied to cars that use little fuel, to cleaning up oil spills, to landing on the Moon. The lunar prize expired unclaimed in 2018, though several of the teams it prompted went on to attempt landings.

A Japanese company that began as one of those teams reached lunar orbit and attempted two landings, both unsuccessful.

The argument for prizes is that they pay only for success. The argument against is that the money that matters comes from elsewhere.

TECHNOLOGY

A Crowded Week: What Else the First Days of October Hold in the History of Machines

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

October 4 sits in a week unusually full of anniversaries in technology, and several of them connect.

On October 3, 1942, a German A4 rocket launched from Peenemünde reached the edge of space, the first man-made object to do so. Sputnik's launcher, fifteen years later, was its descendant.

On October 1, 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration began work. It had been created in direct response to Sputnik, a year earlier almost to the day.

On October 3, 1962, Walter Schirra flew six orbits in the Mercury capsule Sigma 7, the flight that showed an astronaut could manage a spacecraft's systems efficiently over many hours.

On October 3, 1985, the space shuttle Atlantis made its first flight. It would also make the last flight of the shuttle programme, in 2011.

Away from space, October 1, 1982, was the day Sony put the CDP-101 on sale in Japan. It was the first compact disc player sold to the public, and the beginning of digital audio in the home.

And in the autumn of 1991 a Finnish student, Linus Torvalds, released the first versions of an operating

TECHNOLOGY

system kernel. The first public source code appeared in September and a second version followed in the first week of October.

Linux, as it came to be called, now runs most of the world's servers and every Android telephone.

Each of these began as something small or experimental. A sphere that beeped. A music player that cost as much as a month's salary. A student's hobby.

The pattern is common enough to be a rule. The significance of a first is rarely visible on the day.

TECHNOLOGY

The Week Digital Sound Came Home: Sony's CDP-101 and the First Compact Discs

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

Among the anniversaries that crowd the first days of October is one that changed what people did in their living rooms.

On October 1, 1982, Sony began selling the CDP-101 in Japan. It was the first compact disc player offered to the public.

It cost 168,000 yen, about a month's pay for a young office worker.

The disc it played had been developed jointly by Sony and the Dutch company Philips, which agreed a common standard in 1980 after working separately. The disc is 12 centimetres across and holds about 74 minutes of sound.

The story that the length was chosen so that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony would fit on one disc has been told by people on both sides and is at least partly true.

The first albums on sale that day came from the record company Sony co-owned. Billy Joel's 52nd Street carries the first catalogue number.

The sound was stored as numbers and read by a laser, with nothing touching the surface. There was no hiss and no wear, and a track could be selected instantly.

Within five years compact discs were outselling vinyl records in Japan. Within ten the long-playing record had nearly vanished from shops.

The format also became the first cheap means of distributing computer data in quantity, as the CD-ROM.

Its own decline began when music could be sent over the internet. The technology underneath, digital audio sampled 44,100 times a second, is still what most recorded music uses.

TECHNOLOGY

Autumn 1991: A Student in Helsinki Releases a Kernel and Says It Will Not Be Big

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

Thirty-five years ago this week a student at the University of Helsinki posted the second version of a piece of software he had been writing for his own computer.

Linus Torvalds had announced the project in August 1991, in a message to an online discussion group. He described it as a hobby and said it would not be big and professional.

The software was a kernel, the core of an operating system, which manages memory, files and the sharing of the processor among programs. He wrote it because the system he wanted to use at home was too expensive.

The first source code was made available in September. A version that others could actually run followed in early October.

What made the difference was the decision, the following year, to release it under a licence that let anyone use, change and redistribute it provided they shared their changes on the same terms.

Programmers around the world began to contribute. Combined with tools from an existing free software project, the kernel became a complete system.

Companies were slow to trust software that nobody owned. By the end of the 1990s it ran a growing share of the servers behind the new commercial internet.

Today it runs nearly all of them, together with the world's fastest supercomputers and, as the base of Android, most of its telephones.

Torvalds still oversees the kernel. Thousands of

people, most of them paid by companies, contribute to each release.

The weather satellites, the forecast models and the systems that produce a typhoon bulletin at 3:45 in the morning depend on it.

TECHNOLOGY

On This Day in Technology: October 4

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1957: Sputnik 1 is launched, the first artificial satellite.

About 58 centimetres across.

It transmits for 22 days.

It re-enters on January 4, 1958.

2004: SpaceShipOne's second prize flight.

Pilot: Brian Binnie. Altitude: about 112 kilometres.

The Ansari X Prize is won.

Three days after NASA's anniversary, October 1.

One day after the A4, Sigma 7 and Atlantis anniversaries, October 3.

Three days after the first CD player, October 1, 1982.

TECHNOLOGY

Not Just a Launcher: The Fire-Control and Command Vehicles Shown at Kengun, and What They Do

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

The equipment shown to residents at Camp Kengun on Saturday included parts of the Type 25 missile system that are less photogenic than the launcher and more important.

Asahi Shimbun reports that the fire-control equipment and the command and control equipment were on display.

A surface-to-ship missile battery is a convoy. The launcher vehicles carry the missiles in sealed canisters. Other vehicles carry radar, communications, the computers that plan a firing, and reloads.

The fire-control unit takes information about a target, its position, course and speed, and works out when and in what direction each missile should be launched, and what route it should fly.

The command and control unit connects the battery to higher headquarters and to the sensors that find the target in the first place.

For the older Type 12, with a range of about 200 kilometres, a battery's own radar on a hilltop could find ships out to the horizon and helicopters could extend that.

At 1,000 kilometres nothing in the battery can see the target. The information has to come from elsewhere: from aircraft, from ships, from satellites, or from an ally. The command vehicle is where it arrives.

That dependence is why the command equipment matters as much as the missile. A long-range weapon without a targeting network can hit only fixed positions whose co-ordinates are already known.

The missile itself flies low and at less than the speed of sound, and relies on its shape and its route to avoid being seen. It carries a seeker for the final approach.

The Defense Ministry has not published details of the system's performance beyond its approximate range.

TECHNOLOGY

Finding a Ship a Thousand Kilometres Away: The Part of Long-Range Strike That Is Hardest

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

A missile that can fly 1,000 kilometres takes more than an hour to arrive if it travels below the speed of sound. A ship moving at 20 knots covers about 40 kilometres in that time.

That simple sum describes the central problem of long-range anti-ship weapons. The target must be found, identified, tracked continuously, and its position passed to the missile before and during flight.

Military planners call the sequence a kill chain, and it is only as strong as its weakest link.

Finding is done by sensors that look over the horizon. Satellites with radar can image the sea surface through cloud and at night. Satellites that listen for radio emissions can locate ships that are transmitting,

Long-endurance aircraft, crewed and uncrewed, fill the gaps.

Japan is building a constellation of small satellites for this purpose, to be operated through a contract with private companies, with the first launches in the next few years.

Until it is in place the country leans on American systems and on its own patrol aircraft and ships.

Identification is the next difficulty. A radar image shows that a ship is there. Deciding whether it is a warship, and whose, requires other evidence.

The last link is communication. A missile in flight can be sent updated co-ordinates if a data link reaches it. Whether the Type 25 can be updated in this way has not been disclosed.

The same chain is needed against fixed targets on land only in part. A runway does not move.

That asymmetry is one reason the government's description of the weapon as an anti-ship missile and its critics' description of it as a means of striking bases are both accurate.

TECHNOLOGY

Seventy Thousand of the 120,000 Had Already Left: Why Companies Keep Records of People Who No Longer Work for Them

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

The detail in Dai-ichi Life's announcement that drew most comment from security specialists was the proportion: of roughly 120,000 people whose records may have been taken, about 70,000 were former employees.

A personnel system that holds more records of people who have left than of people who remain is not unusual. It is the normal result of never deleting anything.

There are reasons to keep some records. Labour law requires employers to retain registers of workers and wage ledgers for a period after employment ends. Pension and retirement benefit schemes need to identify former staff for decades.

There are fewer reasons to keep them in the live system, with the same access as current records, and fewer still to keep fields such as a home telephone number or the name of a superior from twenty years ago.

The principle that addresses this is called data minimisation: hold only what is needed, for only as long as it is needed, and separate what must be archived from what is in daily use.

Japanese law expresses it weakly. A business must endeavour to delete personal data without delay once it is no longer required. There is no penalty for failing.

The practical obstacle is cost. Deleting safely from an old system is harder than adding storage, and no manager is rewarded for it.

The week's other cases show the same habit. Yoshinoya's applicants' details were still held by a contractor whose contract had ended. The licence images taken from Times Car's operator were kept after the checks for which they were collected had been done.

An attacker can steal only what is there.

The Personal Information Protection Commission has been reviewing the law.

TECHNOLOGY

The Passkey: A Log-In That Cannot Be Typed Into a Forged Page

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

Today's editorial advises readers to use passkeys where they are offered. The term is recent and needs explaining.

A password is a secret that the user knows and the service also holds, in some form. Anyone who learns it can use it, and a convincing fake page can persuade the user to hand it over.

A one-time code sent to a telephone was meant to solve this. The spoofing campaign reported last week showed its limit: a fake page can ask for the code as well and pass both to the real site within seconds.

A passkey works differently. When it is created, the user's device generates a pair of mathematically linked keys. One is given to the service. The other never leaves the device.

To log in, the service sends a challenge and the device answers it using the private key, after the user unlocks the device with a fingerprint, a face or a number.

Nothing is typed, so nothing can be typed into the wrong place. And the device checks the address of the site it is answering. A page at a forged address does not receive an answer, however good the forgery looks.

If the service is broken into, the thief finds only the public halves of the keys, which are useless alone.

The weakness is the device. A lost telephone means recovering access by another route, and that route can itself be attacked. Most systems now copy passkeys between a user's devices through an encrypted account.

Japanese securities companies began requiring stronger log-in methods, passkeys among them, after a wave of account takeovers in 2025.

Adoption elsewhere has been slow, mostly because passwords, for all their faults, are familiar.

TECHNOLOGY

Motors With Less, and With None: How Engineers Are Designing Rare Earths Out

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The motor that drives most electric and hybrid cars depends on magnets made from neodymium, iron and boron, the strongest permanent magnets available.

Their weakness is heat. Above about 100 degrees they begin to lose their magnetism, and a car's motor runs hotter than that. The remedy has been to add dysprosium or terbium, heavy rare earths that are scarce and come almost entirely from China and Myanmar.

The first line of work has been to use less of them. Magnet makers learned to place the heavy elements only at the boundaries of the grains inside the magnet, where they do most good, instead of mixing them throughout. That alone cut the requirement by more than half.

Japanese carmakers and magnet producers have since developed grades that use none of the heavy elements and replace part of the neodymium with cheaper lanthanum and cerium.

The second line is to change the motor. One design uses ferrite magnets, which are made from iron oxide and contain no rare earths, and compensates for their weakness with clever shaping of the rotor.

Another does without permanent magnets altogether. An induction motor creates its magnetic field with electric current, as does a wound-rotor synchronous motor. Both are in production in some cars.

Each alternative costs something: a larger motor, lower efficiency at some speeds, or a more complicated construction.

The third line is recovery. Magnets in scrapped motors can be removed, demagnetised and either reused or dissolved to extract the elements.

Collection is the difficulty. The magnets are small, glued in place, and scattered through millions of products.

The reports this weekend that these methods are spreading suggest that the price of dependence is now judged higher than the price of the alternatives.

TECHNOLOGY

A Pipe Six Kilometres Long: How Mud Is Raised From the Bottom of the Pacific

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

The engineering problem at Minamitorishima can be stated in a sentence: bring soft clay from a depth of 6,000 metres to a ship, continuously, without the pipe breaking or blocking.

The ship is Chikyu, a deep-sea drilling vessel built for scientific research. It can hold its position over a point on the sea floor using thrusters, in open ocean, for weeks.

From it a string of steel pipe is lowered in sections, as in oil drilling. At 6,000 metres the string weighs hundreds of tonnes and takes days to assemble.

At the bottom is a device that loosens the mud and mixes it with seawater to make a slurry.

The slurry is then lifted. One method circulates water down the pipe and back up, carrying the mud with it.

TECHNOLOGY

Another injects compressed air part-way down, so that the column inside the pipe is lighter than the sea outside and rises of its own accord.

The mud is a fine clay in which the rare earths are held in tiny grains of a phosphate mineral. On board it can be partly concentrated by separating the coarser grains, which hold most of the metal.

Every part of this has been done at shallower depths. The test now planned is of doing it all together at full depth and at a steady rate.

The sea at the site is open Pacific, with typhoons in summer and autumn. One is passing a few hundred kilometres to the west of the island this week.

The quantity matters. A demonstration that raises a few tonnes proves the method. A supply that matters to industry needs thousands of tonnes a day.

That is the distance between the experiment and the mine, and it is where the doubts about cost come in.

SOCIETY

What the Injections Are: A Diabetes Medicine That Suppresses Appetite, and How It Reached the Diet Market

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The medicines at the centre of the obesity society's warning belong to a class developed for type 2 diabetes over the past twenty years.

They imitate hormones that the gut releases after a meal. One of these, known as GLP-1, prompts the pancreas to produce insulin, slows the emptying of the stomach and acts on the brain to reduce appetite. Mounjaro, whose active ingredient is tirzepatide, imitates that hormone and a second one.

It is given as an injection under the skin once a week, by the patient.

In people with diabetes the drugs lower blood sugar. It was noticed early that patients also lost weight, sometimes a great deal, and trials in people without diabetes confirmed the effect.

Versions have since been approved in many countries, including Japan, for the treatment of obesity as a disease. In Japan the conditions are strict: a high body mass index together with related illness, and treatment at a qualified institution after diet and exercise have failed.

The use the society is concerned about falls outside both approvals. Clinics, many of them operating online, prescribe the diabetes product to people who want to lose a few kilograms. That is legal, as off-label prescribing by a doctor, but it is not covered by insurance and not supported by evidence of safety in such people.

Harm from a drug used outside its approved purpose is also outside the state scheme that compensates patients for serious side effects.

The common side effects are nausea, vomiting and constipation. Rarer ones include inflammation of the pancreas.

The problem described on Saturday arises from combining the drug with very little food. The drug removes hunger, which is the body's protection against starving itself.

Demand from dieters has at times left diabetic patients short of supply.

SOCIETY

Today's Map: Rain From Fukuoka to Kyoto, Cloud Over the Centre, and a Bright Start in the North

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

The weather map printed today shows 19 cities, and the sunshine that covered most of them on Saturday has moved away.

Rain is spreading across western Japan. The map's summary says it is wet from early morning in Fukuoka and Kochi, from mid-morning in Hiroshima and Matsue, and from around noon in Takamatsu and Kyoto.

Fukuoka has rain turning to cloud, with a high of 25 degrees and a low this morning of 21. Kochi, at 24 and 19, Hiroshima, at 22 and 19, and Matsue, at 22 and 18, are marked with rain.

Takamatsu, at 22 and 20, and Kyoto, at 24 and 18, are cloudy and then wet.

Central Japan is cloudy. Osaka is 25 and 20, Nagoya 25 and 19, Kanazawa 23 and 17. Kagoshima, also

cloudy, is 28 and 23.

Tokyo starts mostly sunny and turns cloudy, with a high of 24 and a low of 16. Nagano, at 23 and 14, Aomori, at 21 and 9, and Kushiro, at 18 and 6, are sunny first and cloudy later.

Akita is the brightest city on the map, mostly sunny at 23 and 10. Niigata is cloudy with sunny spells at 24 and 12. Sendai, at 20 and 12, and Sapporo, at 19 and 8, are cloudy.

Naha runs the other way from everywhere else, cloudy and then sunny, and is the warmest at 31 and 25.

The highs span 13 degrees, from Kushiro's 18 to Naha's 31. The lows span 19, from Kushiro's 6 to Naha's 25. The north had a cold, clear night: Sapporo fell to 8 and Aomori to 9.

An inset shows Typhoon No. 27 at 3 a.m., south-east of the Ogasawara Islands at 945 hectopascals, with forecast positions to Wednesday.

The map cites the Japan Meteorological Agency: the forecast issued at 5 a.m. for the sky and the highs, observations up to 6 a.m. for the lows, and the typhoon bulletin of 3:45 a.m.

SOCIETY

Obesity Society Warns Against Using Diabetes Drug Mounjaro to Lose Weight Fast: 'Absolutely Avoid' Combining It With Severe Dieting

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Japan Society for the Study of Obesity issued a statement on Saturday saying that the diabetes drug Mounjaro and medicines like it should not be used for rapid weight loss or to support extreme dieting.

The statement was announced at the society's annual meeting in Utsunomiya. It will be published on the society's website on Monday.

It responds to a spread in the use of such drugs by people who have neither diabetes nor the medical condition of obesity and who want to be thinner, Yomiuri Shimbun reports.

The danger the society describes is specific. When a person loses weight very fast, the body breaks down fat and produces substances called ketone bodies. If these build up they cause vomiting, abdominal pain and exhaustion. In severe cases they cause impaired consciousness and difficulty in breathing, and can threaten life.

Cases of this kind have recently been reported among users who were not patients, the society says.

The statement says the drugs should not be used to enable excessive restriction of food. Kyodo News quotes it as saying that using them while severely restricting one's diet should absolutely be avoided. It asks people to consider first whether they need to lose weight at all.

Anyone taking the drugs who develops the symptoms described should stop both the drug and the diet and consider seeing a doctor.

Wataru Ogawa, a specially appointed professor at Kobe University who led the drafting, told a news conference he wanted people to understand that restricting food carries risks to health.

Mounjaro is approved in Japan for type 2 diabetes. The health ministry issued its own reminder in June that it is a diabetes drug.

SOCIETY

Thirty-Seven Days, and Then Shibuya in Sunshine: The Capital's Record Run of Rain Comes to an End

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The longest unbroken run of rainy days in Tokyo's recorded history appears to have ended on Saturday at 37.

The day was clear across Kanto. Tokyo Shimbun, reporting on Saturday evening from a crowded Shibuya crossing, said the run was expected to stop.

The sequence began on August 27 and continued to Friday, October 2. On each of those days some rain was recorded at the Japan Meteorological Agency's station in Kitanomaru Park.

The previous record was 33 days, from June 27 to July 29, 2019, in a prolonged rainy season. This year's run passed it on Tuesday.

September was the first month of that name since records began in 1886 in which rain fell in Tokyo on every day, Jiji Press reports. The month's total was 696.5 millimetres, about three times the normal amount.

Not all the days were wet in any ordinary sense. Eleven of them, by the agency's count to Thursday, had less than half a millimetre.

The causes were a stationary autumn front and a succession of typhoons, of which No. 25 was the most destructive.

For the Kanto region as a whole, Saturday was the first weekend day with widespread blue sky since August 9, Weathernews reports, a gap of nearly two months.

Today begins bright in the capital and clouds over. The weather map gives Tokyo a high of 24 degrees and a low this morning of 16.

A front brings rain from Kyushu to Tokai today, and the typhoon's outer cloud may reach Chiba on Tuesday. A new run, if one starts, will begin from one.

SOCIETY

A Poor Year for Acorns Means a Dangerous Autumn for Bears, and for People

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The warning carried in this morning's reports, that a poor crop of nuts in the mountains will bring bears closer to houses, describes a pattern that is now well understood.

Japan has two species. The Asian black bear lives in the forests of Honshu and Shikoku. The larger brown bear lives in Hokkaido.

In autumn both eat heavily to build fat for the winter, and the black bear depends on the nuts of beech and oak. Those trees do not fruit evenly. They produce heavily in some years and hardly at all in others, over wide areas at once.

In a bad year the bears travel in search of food and come down to the edges of villages, where they find persimmons, chestnuts and crops.

The years in which injuries have been highest have been years of crop failure. In the twelve months to March 2024 more than 200 people were hurt, a record at the time, and last year was worse for deaths.

Other things have changed as well. Rural populations have shrunk and aged, and the fields and woodlots that used to separate forest from houses have grown over. Bears can now approach a town under cover.

The number of hunters has fallen.

The law was changed last year to allow hunters to shoot in built-up areas on the authority of a mayor, where previously police permission was needed case by case.

The advice to residents is to remove what attracts bears, including fruit left on trees, to make noise when walking, and not to go into the hills alone at dawn or dusk.

Prefectures publish forecasts of the nut crop each autumn. This year's point to a poor one, the reports say.

SOCIETY

Rain Today From Kyushu to Tokai; Clear Autumn Weather Nationwide From Wednesday

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Moist air is bringing rain today to a band of the country from Kyushu to the Tokai region, tenki.jp reports.

The rain arrives earliest in the west and moves east through the day, in the order the weather map shows.

Kanto is expected to stay dry today, with cloud increasing. Tokyo's forecast high is 24 degrees.

Northern Japan has the best of the weather this morning. The clear night that produced lows of 6 degrees at Kushiro and 8 at Sapporo gives way to a fine start before cloud builds.

Monday and Tuesday are dominated by the typhoon. It passes well out to sea, and the main effect for most of the country is on the Pacific coast, where waves will be high from Kanto northward.

Rain is possible in Chiba on Tuesday.

From Wednesday the outlook changes. With the typhoon gone to the north-east, high pressure is

expected to cover the country and bring settled autumn weather to most regions.

That would be the first extended fine spell on the Pacific side of eastern Japan since August.

Farmers who have been unable to harvest, and schools that have postponed sports days, have a week to work with.

The public holiday on Monday the 12th falls within it.

SOCIETY

Four Tonnes, Two Ropes and a Right Angle: Why Danjiri Turn Over

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The danjiri of southern Osaka is a carved wooden shrine on four solid wheels. It weighs about four tonnes and has no steering and no brakes in the usual sense.

It is pulled by two long ropes, with hundreds of people on them, and steered from behind by men who lever the rear of the float sideways with long poles.

The festivals date from the eighteenth century. The best known is at Kishiwada, in September. Sakai, Izumi and the other towns of the old Senshu province hold theirs mostly in October.

The spectacle is the corner. A danjiri is not slowed for a turn. It is run at the junction, and at the last moment the men at the rear swing it through ninety degrees while those on the ropes keep pulling.

Musicians sit inside playing drums and bells. On the roof stands a man with fans who dances, jumps from side to side and signals the direction.

The centre of gravity is high, and a float taken through a corner too fast or too tightly will tip outward. If a wheel strikes a kerb it can go over entirely.

Those on the roof and those inside are then thrown or trapped. Those on the ropes can be run down.

Serious accidents happen in most years and deaths in some. Organisers hold inspections and rehearsals and the police mark out the corners, but the risk is part of what the festival is.

Participation is by neighbourhood. Each district owns its float, maintains it at great expense and trains its young men for the roles.

The men injured at Sakai on Saturday ranged in age from their teens to their sixties, which is the usual span of a danjiri crew.

SOCIETY

Society Digest

By the Society Desk

NAHA: A woman's body was found in a hotel room in Naha in circumstances the police regard as suspicious. They are trying to trace a man who left the room.

OKAZAKI: Four people were attacked by a monkey or monkeys in the centre of Okazaki, Aichi Prefecture, and suffered minor injuries. The animals were captured and put down.

TYPHOON NO. 25: Another body has been found and the number of dead from the storm of mid-September has reached 15, the morning's reports say.

TSU: Four children died in a house fire in Tsu, Mie Prefecture, on Friday. A neighbour described the sound of burning wood cracking.

TOKYO: The run of consecutive rainy days in the capital is expected to have ended at 37.

UTSUNOMIYA: The Japan Society for the Study of Obesity warned against the use of diabetes drugs for rapid weight loss.

SAKAI: Eleven men were hurt when a festival float overturned.

KUMAMOTO: About 220 residents were shown the Type 25 missile's ground equipment at Camp Kengun.

BEARS: A poor crop of acorns and beech nuts is expected to bring bears closer to settlements this autumn, and residents of mountain districts are asked to take care.

SHIZUOKA: Masayoshi Otaki, the former football coach of Shimizu Commercial High School, died aged 75.

WEATHER & SOCIETY



24°C

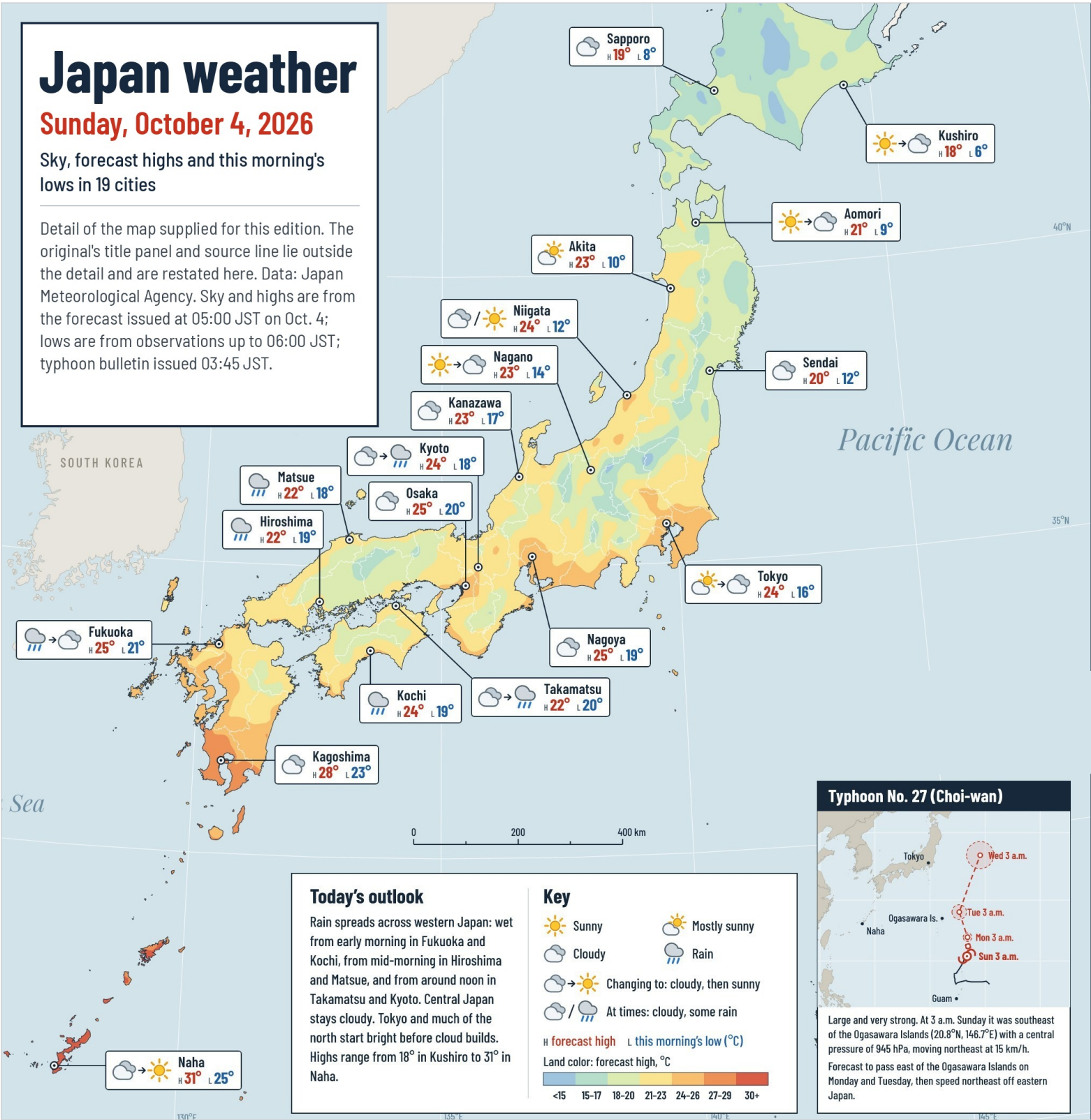
Low 16°C this morning · Mostly sunny, then cloudy · Rain in western Japan · Typhoon No. 27 very strong, 945 hPa at 3 a.m.

Japan weather

Sunday, October 4, 2026

Sky, forecast highs and this morning's lows in 19 cities

Detail of the map supplied for this edition. The original's title panel and source line lie outside the detail and are restated here. Data: Japan Meteorological Agency. Sky and highs are from the forecast issued at 05:00 JST on Oct. 4; lows are from observations up to 06:00 JST; typhoon bulletin issued 03:45 JST.



Typhoon No. 27 (Choi-wan)

Large and very strong. At 3 a.m. Sunday it was southeast of the Ogasawara Islands (20.8°N, 146.7°E) with a central pressure of 945 hPa, moving northeast at 15 km/h. Forecast to pass east of the Ogasawara Islands on Monday and Tuesday, then speed northeast off eastern Japan.

TODAY'S HIGHS AND LOWS — 19 CITIES

Forecast highs and this morning's lows from today's weather map, °C, north to south. Two symbols with an arrow: the sky changes during the day.

	Sapporo	8°	19°
	Kushiro	6°	18°
	Aomori	9°	21°
	Akita	10°	23°
	Sendai	12°	20°
	Niigata	12°	24°
	Nagano	14°	23°
	Kanazawa	17°	23°
	Tokyo	16°	24°
	Nagoya	19°	25°
	Kyoto	18°	24°
	Osaka	20°	25°
	Matsue	18°	22°
	Hiroshima	19°	22°
	Takamatsu	20°	22°
	Kochi	19°	24°
	Fukuoka	21°	25°
	Kagoshima	23°	28°
	Naha	25°	31°

TODAY'S WEATHER

Rain spreads across western Japan today, and the sunshine that covered most of the country on Saturday has gone. Today's map, for 19 cities, gives Tokyo a mostly sunny start turning cloudy, with a high of 24 and a low this morning of 16. Its outlook reads: wet from early morning in Fukuoka and Kochi, from mid-morning in Hiroshima and Matsue, and from around noon in Takamatsu and Kyoto; central Japan stays cloudy; Tokyo and much of the north start bright before cloud builds. Highs range from 18 in Kushiro to 31 in Naha.

In central Tokyo the record run of 37 consecutive days with rain, from August 27 to October 2, appears to have ended on Saturday, which was clear.

REGIONAL FORECASTS

Hokkaido: Sapporo cloudy, 19/8; Kushiro sunny, then cloudy, 18/6, the coldest morning and the lowest high on the map. Tohoku: Aomori sunny, then cloudy, 21/9; Akita mostly sunny, 23/10, the brightest city on the map; Sendai cloudy, 20/12. Niigata and the Sea of Japan coast: Niigata cloudy with sunny spells, 24/12; Kanazawa cloudy, 23/17. Inland: Nagano sunny, then cloudy, 23/14. Kanto: Tokyo mostly sunny, then cloudy, 24/16. Tokai: Nagoya cloudy, 25/19, for the closing day of the Asian Games. Kansai: Kyoto cloudy, then rain, 24/18; Osaka cloudy, 25/20. Chugoku: Matsue rain, 22/18; Hiroshima rain, 22/19. Shikoku: Takamatsu cloudy, then rain, 22/20; Kochi rain, 24/19. Kyushu: Fukuoka rain, then cloudy, 25/21; Kagoshima cloudy, 28/23. Okinawa: Naha cloudy, then sunny, 31/25, the warmest city. The widest gap between low and high is at Akita, 13 degrees; the narrowest at Takamatsu, 2.

TYPHOON NO. 27 (CHOI-WAN)

Large and very strong. At 3 a.m. today the centre was at 20.8 degrees north, 146.7 degrees east, 840 km south-east of Chichijima, moving north-east at 15 km/h, with a central pressure of 945 hPa, maximum winds of 45 m/s and gusts of 60. Storm-force winds extend 150 km from the centre; gales reach 850 km to the south and 500 km to the north. Forecast: 935 hPa at 3 p.m. today; 925 hPa and 50 m/s at 3 a.m. Monday; 935 hPa at 3 a.m. Tuesday, about 330 km east-north-east of Chichijima on the centre line; about 770 km east-south-east of Tokyo on Tuesday evening; 950 hPa east of Japan on Wednesday; an extratropical low by Thursday. The map on Page 3

OGASAWARA ISLANDS

Waves of six metres are forecast today and eight metres on Monday, with gusts of up to 35 m/s on Monday, Sankei reports. The typhoon is expected to be nearest the islands from Monday into Tuesday. Be vigilant against high waves with swell and against strong winds, and follow the village's announcements. Chichijima and Hahajima have about 2,500 residents; the only regular transport is the ship from Tokyo, a voyage of 24 hours, and its schedule may change.

THE DAYS AHEAD

Monday and Tuesday: the typhoon passes east of the Ogasawara Islands and travels north over the sea east of Honshu; the chance of a direct hit on Honshu is described as low. High waves on the Pacific side from Kanto northward. Rain clouds may reach Chiba on Tuesday. Chiba and Kanagawa: the ground is loose after Typhoon No. 25 and caution is advised even in light rain. From Wednesday: mostly clear autumn weather nationwide, tenki.jp reports; the public holiday on Monday the 12th falls within the fine spell. Typhoon No. 26, which stopped ferries to the Izu Islands on Thursday, has become an extratropical cyclone east of Japan.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET

Tokyo: sunrise 5:37 a.m., sunset 5:22 p.m.; Osaka: sunrise 5:54 a.m., sunset 5:39 p.m.; Sapporo: sunrise 5:34 a.m., sunset 5:13 p.m.; Naha: sunrise 6:22 a.m., sunset 6:14 p.m.; Chichijima: sunrise 5:24 a.m., sunset 5:15 p.m.. Calculated for Sunday, October 4.

ABOUT THE MAP

The map cites the Japan Meteorological Agency: the sky and the highs are from the forecast issued at 5 a.m. today, the lows from observations up to 6 a.m., and the typhoon inset from the bulletin of 3:45 a.m. Two symbols joined by an arrow mean the sky changes during the day; two separated by a stroke mean one sky with spells of the other. The colour of the land shows the forecast high in seven bands. What is printed is a detail of the map supplied for this edition, covering all 19 cities, the outlook, the key and the typhoon inset; the panel at its top left restates the title and the source line of the original. The chart beside it sets out each city's low and high, north to south. A United States map for today appears on the

Weather Abroad page.

SOCIETY

Six Degrees at Kushiro: The Clear Night That Chilled the North

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The lowest temperature on today's weather map is 6 degrees, recorded this morning at Kushiro on the Pacific coast of Hokkaido.

Sapporo fell to 8, Aomori to 9 and Akita to 10.

On Saturday's map only Kushiro was below 10 degrees. The cold has spread, and it came on a clear night.

The cause is radiation. The ground loses heat to space all night as infra-red. Cloud acts as a blanket, absorbing that heat and sending part of it back. Under a clear sky the heat escapes and the air near the ground cools.

The effect is strongest when the air is dry and the wind is light, both of which were true under Saturday's high pressure.

The same cities are forecast to be 11 to 13 degrees warmer by afternoon. Kushiro's high is 18, Aomori's 21 and Akita's 23.

Such a range between dawn and afternoon is the signature of autumn in northern Japan, and it is what turns the leaves. The colours begin on the high ground of Hokkaido in September and move south and downhill through October.

On the plains of Hokkaido the first frosts usually come later in the month.

The south had no such night. Naha's low was 25, and Kagoshima's 23, under cloud.

In Tokyo the low was 16.

SOCIETY

The Weather Week at a Glance

By the Weather Desk

SUNDAY: rain from Kyushu to Tokai. Tokyo bright, then cloudy, 24 degrees.

MONDAY: the typhoon at its forecast peak, 925 hPa.

MONDAY: eight-metre seas around the Ogasawara Islands.

TUESDAY, before dawn: the centre passes east of Chichijima.

TUESDAY: rain clouds may reach Chiba.

TUESDAY: high waves from Kanto northward.

WEDNESDAY: the typhoon east of Japan, weakening.

WEDNESDAY ON: mostly clear autumn weather.

THURSDAY: the storm an extratropical low.

MONDAY, OCT. 12: Sports Day.

SOCIETY

A Monkey in the City Centre: Why They Come, and What the Authorities Ask of the Public

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The attacks in the centre of Okazaki, in which four people were slightly hurt, belong to a kind of incident that has become familiar in Japanese towns.

The Japanese macaque lives in forests across Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu, in troops of several dozen. Its range has expanded over recent decades as hill farms have been abandoned and hunting has declined.

The animals that appear in city centres are usually males. Young males leave the troop in which they were born and travel alone, sometimes for long distances, before joining another.

A solitary male that wanders into a built-up area finds food easily and people who do not chase it. Some lose their fear.

Most do no harm and move on within days. A few begin to approach people, particularly women, children and the elderly, and to bite or scratch.

In 2022 monkeys in the city of Yamaguchi injured more than 60 people over several weeks.

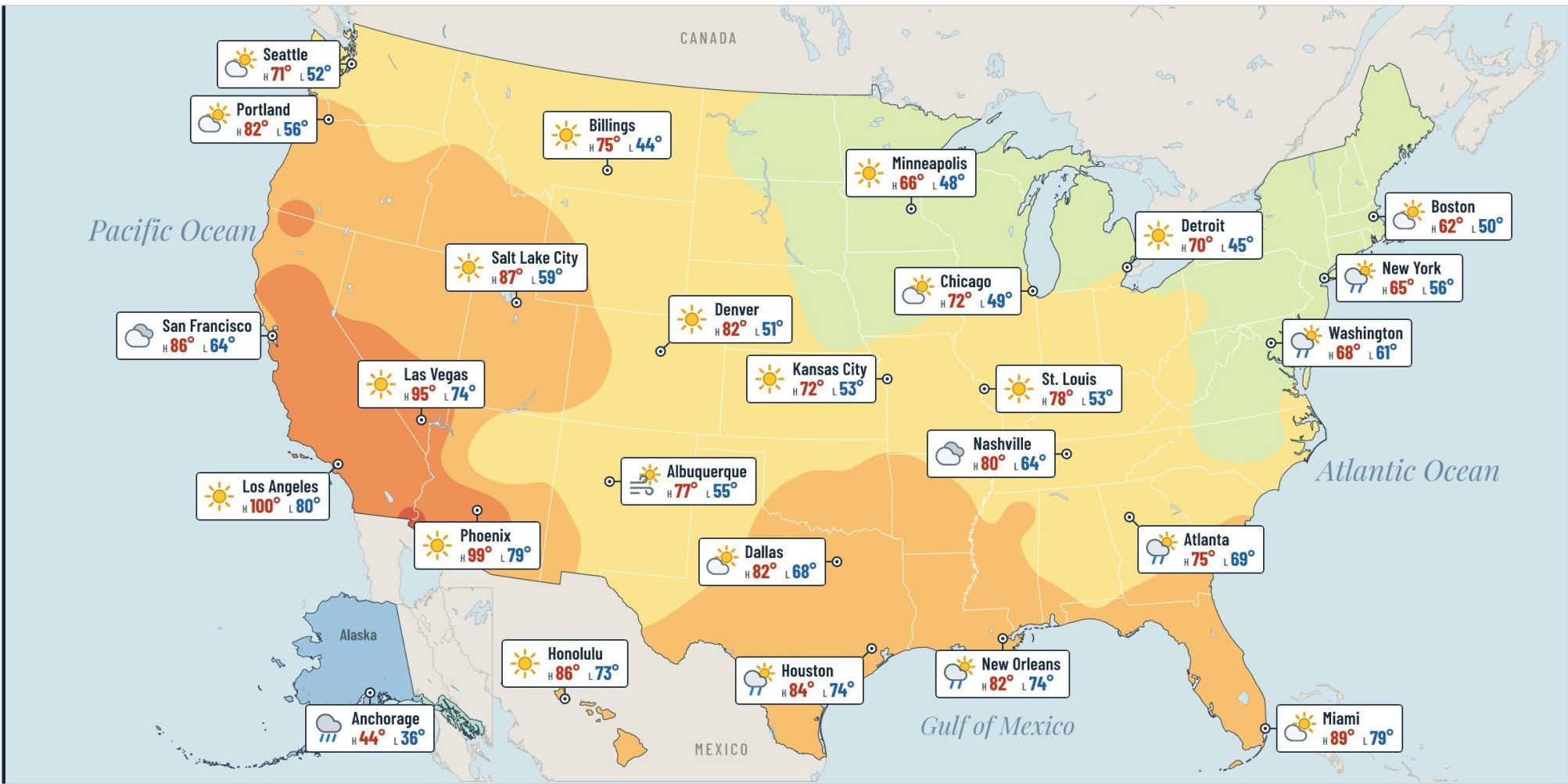
The advice from local governments is consistent. Do not go near. Do not look the animal in the eye, which it reads as a threat. Do not show or offer food. Do not shout or run. Keep windows and doors closed, since monkeys enter houses.

If one approaches, back away slowly.

Capture is difficult. The animals are fast and climb, and tranquilliser darts take time to act. An animal that has attacked people is normally destroyed, as happened in Okazaki.

Bites should be washed and seen by a doctor.

WEATHER ABROAD



United States weather for Sunday, October 4, 2026: the sky, forecast highs and morning lows in degrees Fahrenheit for 26 cities, in a detail of the map supplied for this edition. The colour of the land shows the forecast high. (Data: U.S. National Weather Service selected-cities forecast issued at 8:50 a.m. Eastern time on Saturday; the title and key of the original lie outside the detail)

SOCIETY

Weather Abroad: Showers From New York to New Orleans, a Hundred Degrees in Los Angeles, and Sun Across the Middle

The United States map for Sunday, October 4, gives highs and morning lows for 26 cities in degrees Fahrenheit

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

The United States map supplied for this edition is for today, Sunday, and divides the country in three.

The East and the Gulf coast have showers. The map's summary says they stretch from New York and Washington through Atlanta to Houston and New Orleans. New York has a high of 65 degrees Fahrenheit and a low of 56, Washington 68 and 61, Atlanta 75 and 69, New Orleans 82 and 74 and Houston 84 and 74.

The Midwest, the Plains and the Rockies are sunny. Minneapolis is 66 and 48, Detroit 70 and 45, Kansas City 72 and 53, St. Louis 78 and 53, Denver 82 and 51, Billings 75 and 44 and Salt Lake City 87 and 59. Chicago, partly cloudy, is 72 and 49.

The Southwest remains hot. Los Angeles has a high of 100 and a low of 80, Phoenix 99 and 79 and Las

Vegas 95 and 74, all under clear skies.

In Celsius, 100 degrees is a little under 38. Phoenix is about 37 and Las Vegas 35.

San Francisco is cloudy at 86 and 64, which is warm for the city. Portland is partly cloudy at 82 and 56 and Seattle at 71 and 52.

Albuquerque is marked windy, at 77 and 55. Dallas is partly cloudy at 82 and 68 and Nashville cloudy at 80 and 64.

Miami is partly cloudy at 89 and 79. Boston, partly cloudy, is the coolest city in the contiguous states at 62 and 50.

Anchorage has rain, a high of 44 and a low of 36, which is about 7 and 2 degrees Celsius. Honolulu is sunny at 86 and 73.

The colour of the land on the map shows the forecast high, in bands from below 50 degrees to 100 and above. The map notes that the shading is interpolated from about 160 city forecasts.

The data are the National Weather Service's selected-cities forecast issued at 8:50 a.m. Eastern time on Saturday. The lows are for Saturday night into this morning.

For travellers: the highs, in Celsius, are about 18 in New York, 20 in Washington, 22 in Chicago, 28 in Denver and Dallas, 30 in San Francisco and 32 in Miami.

SOCIETY

Festival Float Overturns at a Sakai Crossroads; Eleven Men Taken to Hospital

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

A danjiri, the heavy wooden float hauled through the streets at autumn festivals in southern Osaka, overturned at a crossroads in Sakai on Saturday evening. Eleven men were taken to hospital.

The accident happened at about 7:35 p.m. in Fukaisawa-cho, in the city's Naka ward, Sankei reports, citing the police and the fire department.

The injured were aged from their teens to their sixties. They had been riding on the float or taking part around it, Kyodo News reports, and suffered injuries to the head and elsewhere.

All were conscious when they were taken away.

The float is believed to have gone over as it was turning left at the junction, from north to east, the Naka-Sakai police station said. The cause is being investigated.

No injuries to spectators have been confirmed.

The site is in a residential district about 150 metres east of Fukai Station on the Nankai railway.

A danjiri festival was being held in the area at the time.

Early reports on Saturday night gave the number of injured as seven. It was revised to eleven.

The festivals of the Senshu district continue through the first half of October.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Xi criticised Japan; Trump urged dialogue, Page 6.

Hokkaido first for the 18th year; Saga last, Page 7.

Dai-ichi Life: 120,000 staff records, Page 9.

Tokyo's rain run ends at 37 days, Page 12.

Editorial: Easy to take, hard to fight, Page 20.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 13.

Crossword, Page 15.

SPORTS

One Goal, One Post and a Third Silver: Japan Lose the Asian Games Final to South Korea Again

Eom Ji-sung scores in the 61st minute; South Korea become the first country to win four straight titles

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

Japan lost the men's football final of the Asian Games 1-0 to South Korea at Toyota Stadium on Saturday night and took the silver medal for the third Games in succession.

Each of those three finals has been lost to the same opponent. South Korea have now won the tournament four times running, a record.

The goal came in the 61st minute and was scored by Eom Ji-sung, a winger who played at the World Cup and was in the Korean squad as one of its over-age players.

The first half had been goalless and even. Eom had the first chance, in the sixth minute, winning the ball high up the pitch and shooting wide from inside the area. Japan's best moment came from a corner three minutes later, when a header went past the post.

After the goal Japan had most of the ball and most of the territory. Hisatsugu Ishii, of Shonan, struck a post. That was as close as they came.

Japan's squad was made up of players aged 21 and under, the generation that will contest the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028. South Korea's was an under-23 team with senior reinforcements.

The head coach, Go Oiwa, said his team had shown its own style and that he was bitterly disappointed, because it had played to win the final. He said he wanted to make it an occasion that led to the next one, and that his young players had grown with each match.

The captain, Rion Ichihara, said the team had felt the advantage of playing at home and the support of the crowd, and that its job was to repay that with a result. He was sorry it had not. At the Olympics, Chunichi Sports quotes him as saying, the aim is gold.

All 37,866 tickets for the match had been sold.

Japan had won all three group matches and beaten North Korea in the quarter-finals and Uzbekistan, on penalties, in the semi-final.

The gold would have been Japan's first since 2010. The women won theirs on Friday.

SPORTS

A Three-Run Lead, a Defeat and a Long Evening: How Hanshin's Afternoon at Mazda Stadium Went Wrong

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Hanshin went to Mazda Stadium on Saturday needing only to avoid defeat, and for most of the afternoon it looked as though they would.

Hiroshima scored first. With two out in the second inning Hiroto Saiki gave up three consecutive hits, the last of them a run-scoring double by Shosei Nakamura.

The reply was immediate. Seishiro Sakamoto, the catcher, led off the third with his tenth home run of the season to tie the score. With one out Chikamoto walked and Nakano reached on an infield single to short.

That brought up Teruaki Sato with two out. Masato Morishita's second pitch was a 140-kilometre fastball on the outside part of the plate, and Sato hit it on a high arc into the seats in right-centre. The visitors' section, Nikkan Sports reported, went wild.

At 4-1 a draw would have been enough for the pennant and a win seemed likely. Saiki could not hold it. Hiroshima drew level, and Daily Sports describes his outing as the miscalculation of the day.

In the eighth Rafael Dolis, the veteran reliever, gave up the go-ahead runs. Hiroshima's Daichi Osera took the win and Moriura the save. The final score was 6-4.

Fujikawa, the manager, had little to say afterwards. A team that had won 77 games had been unable to win the 78th when it mattered, and the players went back to their hotel with the title out of their hands.

For Hiroshima the result had its own meaning. Sports Hochi notes that the Carp had been the opponents when the pennant was clinched in each of the past two seasons, by the Giants in 2024 and by Hanshin last year, and were determined to avoid a third.

They succeeded, in the sense that nobody was tossed in the air at Mazda Stadium. The celebration was merely postponed by about four hours and moved to a banquet room.

Sato's home run gave him 105 runs batted in, a career high. He needs one more home run to reach 40 for a second consecutive season, and Daily Sports adds that he is one step from becoming the first player in Japanese professional baseball to hit 40 home runs and 40 doubles in a season.

Hanshin have four games left in which he can do it.

SPORTS

The Arithmetic of a Pennant Won by Losing: Why 77 Wins Was Already Enough

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Hanshin clinched the pennant on a day when they lost, and the sums that made that possible are simple once laid out.

Japanese baseball ranks teams by winning percentage, with drawn games left out of the calculation.

The Giants completed their season on Saturday with 76 wins, 64 defeats and 3 draws. Their final percentage is 76 divided by 140, or .543.

Hanshin, after losing at Hiroshima, stand at 77 wins, 60 defeats and 2 draws, with four games left.

Suppose Hanshin lose all four. They would finish with 77 wins and 64 defeats, a percentage of 77 divided by 141, or .546.

That is still higher than the Giants' figure. Nothing Hanshin can now do would put them second.

The magic number expresses the same thing in advance. It counts the combined total of the leader's wins and the pursuer's defeats needed to make the leader uncatchable. On Saturday morning it was one. A Hanshin win or a Giants defeat would each have counted.

A draw for Hanshin would also have settled it, because a draw removes a game without adding a defeat.

The two draws in Hanshin's record mattered. Had those games been lost, the percentages would have been close enough for the race to continue.

Pennants are settled this way from time to time. It is rarer for the champions to learn of it in a hotel.

SPORTS

The Play-Offs That Follow: How the Climax Series Works, and Why Champions Fear It

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

For most of its history Japanese baseball sent its two pennant winners straight to the Japan Series. Since 2007 both leagues have held play-offs first.

The Climax Series has two stages. In the first, the second-placed team plays the third-placed team at home in a series of up to three games.

In the final stage the winner plays the league champions, at the champions' ground, in a series of up to six games. The champions are given one win before a ball is thrown.

That advantage, and the home ground, are the reward for finishing first. They are not a guarantee.

The system was introduced to keep the season alive for more teams and to fill stadiums in October. It has done both.

Its critics point out that it can send a team with a modest record to the Japan Series in place of one that led for six months.

The clearest example is recent. In 2024 DeNA finished third in the Central League, eight games behind the champions, won both stages of the Climax Series and then won the Japan Series.

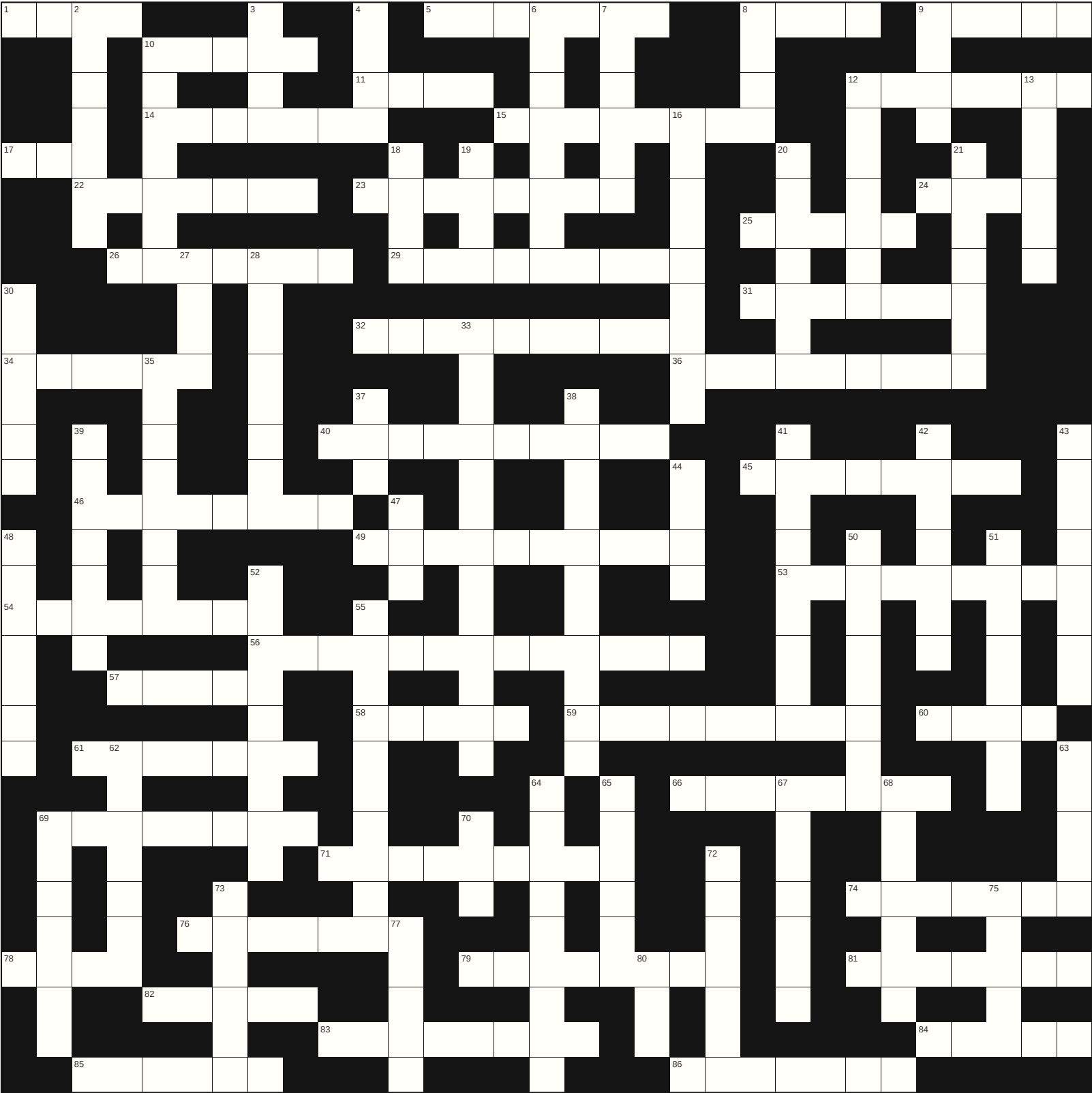
DeNA are third again this year.

Hanshin's own experience runs both ways. They won the final stage as champions in 2023 and 2025, and in 2014 reached the Japan Series from second place.

The pennant remains the official title, and it is the pennant that is counted when a club's championships are listed.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 91 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional.

ACROSS

1. Japan won 83 of them (4)
5. Limit of a radar's view (7)
8. They beat the Giants 5-2 (4)
9. Island outside the red line (3,2) (5)
10. District near the crossroads (5)
11. 37 days of it, now ended (4)
12. Former banker elected leader (7)
14. Ito's partner in the song (7)
15. Beef-and-potato stew (8)
17. In the upper 157's (3)
22. Name of Typhoon No. 27 (4-3) (7)
23. Manager who wept (8)
24. Wind of 15 m/s or more (4)
25. Extra edition (5)
26. Log-in that cannot be typed (7)
29. Islands expecting eight-metre seas (9)
31. Insurer with 120,000 records exposed (3-4) (7)
32. Island 840 km from the centre (10)
34. Stadium of the final (6)
36. Goalkeeper of Miami, 1996 (9)
40. City of the doctors' meeting (10)
45. First for the 18th year (8)
46. Umbrella-waving team (8)
49. Plant ___, three stages of it (10)
53. Farewell on Tuesday at Ariake (9)
54. 945 hectopascals of it (8)
56. What the storm becomes by Thursday (13)
57. Designer of SpaceShipOne (5)
58. Shimizu coach who died at 75 (5)
59. City where the Tigers waited (9)
60. Roped climbing discipline (4)
61. Third most attractive (7)
66. The baron's potato (8)
69. What the citizen is told to change (8)
71. She called it a drill (3,2,4) (9)
74. Unroped climbing discipline (7)
76. Cloudy with sunny spells (7)
78. Pinch-hitter who tied the game (4)
79. Soil pest growers fear (8)
81. Ito's trio (7)
82. High of 24 today (5)
83. Launch site with a borrowed name (8)
84. It arrives before the storm (5)
85. Retailer with a victory sale (6)
86. Hokkaido's potato plain (7)

DOWN

2. 1.6 million images of it leaked (7)
3. Farm minister under fire (4)
4. Giants' home-run hitter (4)
6. Japan's under-21 captain (8)
7. His spike made it 24-24 (6)
8. Asian Games host in 2030 (4)
9. Volleyball champions again (4)
10. Wet from early morning (7)
12. Venue of the volleyball final (7)
13. They won from a hotel room (6)
16. City with the countdown board (9)
18. Mixed team gold, third time (4)
19. Under-21 coach, Otaki's pupil (4)
20. Training area in Nagasaki and Saga (7)
21. Float that overturned (7)
27. Last in the ranking (4)
28. City of the castle and the camp (8)
30. Rain from mid-morning (6)
33. Capability adopted in 2022 (13)
35. Student who wrote it (8)
37. Comedian retiring at 90 (3)
38. Years since their last repeat (6-5) (11)
39. Hanshin's home ground (7)
41. Canal supporters jump into (9)
42. Fired from Wonsan on Saturday (7)
43. 'A strong leader' (8)
44. It convenes tomorrow (4)
47. Rare earth source at 6,000 metres (3)
48. No. 27 is one (7)
50. Yakult pitcher who retired (8)
51. Diabetes drug misused for dieting (8)
52. Exercise from October 19 (4,5) (9)
55. Firm that exposed the spoofing (10)
62. Six degrees this morning (7)
63. It cannot see over the horizon (5)
64. Magnet metal (9)
65. Heart of an electric motor (6)
67. Launched October 4, 1957 (7)
68. The chief designer (7)
69. What Hanshin won on Saturday (7)
70. Scorer of Korea's goal (3)
72. Party with a new leader (7)
73. 68,309.46 on Friday (6)
75. 24-24 in the fourth set (5)
77. System on eight destroyers (5)
80. Feyenoord's Japanese winner (3)

SPORTS

Two Out, Bases Loaded, Two Runs Ahead: The Seventh Inning at Tokyo Dome That Handed Hanshin the Pennant

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

The Yomiuri Giants knew before their game began that Hanshin had lost. To keep the race alive for another day they had to beat DeNA at Tokyo Dome, and after six innings they were doing so.

Haruto Inoue, the Giants' left-handed starter, had not allowed a run. The Giants had scored once in the fourth, and in the sixth Yoshihiro Maru hit a pitch from the newly arrived reliever Ogata into the upper deck to make it 2-0.

The seventh inning undid all of it. Inoue left, and the bullpen that followed could not get the third out.

With the bases loaded and two out, DeNA sent up Keita Sano to pinch-hit. He lined a single to right and two runs scored. Furuichi followed with another single to right, and DeNA led 3-2. The Giants changed pitchers again, and Naruse singled to right for a fourth run.

Daily Sports described the Giants' dugout as the inning unravelled: one reliever, Nakagawa, slammed his cap to the ground, and another, Hotta, covered his face. Hotta took the loss.

Tsutsugo added a run-scoring double in the eighth. The Giants did not threaten again. Hamachi, DeNA's fifth pitcher, earned the first save of his career, and the win went to Ogata.

The final score was 5-2, and at the last out Hanshin were champions.

The Giants had been 2.5 games behind at the start of the day and have spent the final fortnight in pursuit, including a 12-inning draw with Hanshin on Thursday that their acting manager described as good as a defeat.

Their season of 143 games is complete. They finish second and will host the first stage of the Climax Series. DeNA's win took them a game above an even record and keeps them third.

It was the second night running that the Giants' relievers lost a game late. On Friday at Jingu they gave up four runs in the eighth.

The two clubs may yet meet again this month. The winner of the first stage plays Hanshin at Koshien for a place in the Japan Series.

SPORTS

'It Was Hard': Fujikawa Weeps as His Second Season Ends Where the First Did, by a Longer Road

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

Kyuji Fujikawa won the pennant in his first year as a manager and has now won it in his second. No Hanshin manager had won consecutive Central League pennants.

He was in tears when it was confirmed, Daily Sports and Sports Hochi report, and said that it had been hard.

The contrast with last year explains the tears. In 2025 his team clinched in the first week of September, earlier than any in the league's history, and coasted home. This year it lost seven consecutive games at one point and did not shake off the Giants until the final Saturday.

The injuries came early. Chikamoto, the centre fielder and leadoff man, broke a bone in April, and the manager turned to two young players, Takadera and Fukushima, to cover for him. Daichi Ishii, one of the league's best setup men, tore an Achilles tendon.

Sports Nippon records how the gaps were filled. Kudo was moved into the closer's role and became one of the most reliable in the league. Haruto Takahashi, healthy for a full season, won 16 games. Shoki Murakami has the lowest earned-run average in the league.

The batting order needed no repair. Morishita, Sato and Oyama hit third, fourth and fifth all year, with Chikamoto and Nakano ahead of them once Chikamoto returned.

Fujikawa's slogan for the season, read neppa, joined the characters for heat and for supremacy, and echoed renpa, the word for a repeat title. He told his players during the losing streak, by Sports Nippon's account, that carrying the striped uniform was a responsibility particular to this club.

As a player he was the best closer Hanshin ever had, and he pitched in the United States before returning. As a manager he has been more cautious than his playing style suggested, building games around pitching and defence.

He has spoken of wanting games that are over before the opponent notices. Saturday's was not one of them.

The record now reads two seasons, two pennants. The Japan Series, which Hanshin lost last year, remains.

SPORTS

Sato's 39th, and a Triple Crown Within Reach: The Home-Town Slugger Who Changed the Tigers' History

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The swing that briefly looked like the pennant-winner on Saturday belonged to the player who has carried Hanshin's attack all year.

Teruaki Sato is 27 and in his sixth professional season. He was the club's first-round draft pick in 2020 and comes from Nishinomiy, the city in which Koshien stands.

His three-run home run off Morishita in the third inning was his 39th. Nikkan Sports gives the launch angle as 31 degrees and reports that he knew it was gone at contact.

He leads the Central League in batting average, home runs and runs batted in, which no Hanshin player has done in the same season since Randy Bass in 1985 and 1986.

Nikkan Sports lists the numbers within reach: a batting average of .300, 30 home runs and 100 runs batted in, already secured, and the triple crown itself if he holds his lead in average over the final games.

The 105 runs batted in are the most of his career. One more home run gives him 40 in consecutive seasons.

Daily Sports adds a rarer target. No player in the history of Japanese professional baseball has hit 40 home runs and 40 doubles in the same season, and Sato is one step from it.

For his first four years he was a hitter of long home runs and long slumps, and he struck out a great deal. The change dates from last season, when he won the home run and runs-batted-in titles.

He has now been part of three pennant-winning teams in six years, in 2023, 2025 and 2026.

It is the kind of career that Hanshin's supporters, raised on the idea that their best hitters are imported, had stopped expecting from a local boy.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Football: silver against South Korea, Page 14.

Editorial: Easy to take, hard to fight, Page 20.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 13.

Typhoon No. 27: the map and the bulletin, Page 3.

The Diet opens tomorrow, Page 4.

SPORTS

The Pitcher on the Other Side: Morishita Gave Up the Home Run and Hiroshima Still Won

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The home run that put Hanshin three runs ahead on Saturday was hit off one of the best pitchers in the league.

Masato Morishita is 29 and has been at the front of Hiroshima's rotation since he joined the club from Meiji University.

He was the Central League's rookie of the year in 2020, with ten wins and an earned-run average under two.

The following summer he was a member of the Japanese team that won the gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics, and started the final against the United States.

On Saturday he had retired Hanshin in order through two innings. In the third he gave up a solo home run to the catcher Sakamoto, then a walk and an infield hit, and with two out left a fastball over the outer half to Sato.

He was not the winning pitcher. Hiroshima's hitters brought the team level against Saiki, and the decision went to Osera.

For the Carp it was a good day in a disappointing year. The club fell out of the pennant race in September.

The win at least meant that Hanshin's title was not celebrated on their field.

Hiroshima have not won the pennant since 2018, the last of three in a row.

That run of three is the standard Hanshin, with two, will be measured against next season.

SPORTS

Sixteen Wins After Three Lost Years: Haruto Takahashi's Season

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Among the reasons Hanshin won a second pennant, Daily Sports lists first the 16 wins of a pitcher who could not lift his arm three years ago.

Haruto Takahashi is a left-hander from Shizuoka who joined the club from university in 2018. From his first appearances it was clear he had the best stuff on the staff.

SPORTS

He also had an arm that would not stay whole. An operation on his elbow in 2022 was followed by others on his shoulder and wrist, and he did not pitch in a first-team game for more than two years.

He returned in the summer of 2024 with a metal plate in his forearm.

The club handled him carefully last season, limiting his starts. This year the limits were removed.

He has been the pitcher Fujikawa used to stop losing streaks.

His method has not changed. A fastball in the upper 140s with late movement, a slider, and a two-seam pitch that left-handed hitters beat into the ground.

He did not pitch on Saturday.

With Murakami, who leads the league in earned-run average, and Saiki, he gives Hanshin three starters that no opponent in a short series wants to face.

Saiki's afternoon in Hiroshima was the exception to a season in which the rotation rarely failed.

SPORTS

Before He Managed: Kyuji Fujikawa, the Closer With the Fastball Nobody Could Hit

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The manager who wept in a Hiroshima hotel on Saturday was, for most of the supporters celebrating, a pitcher first.

Kyuji Fujikawa was born in Kochi in 1980 and was Hanshin's first choice in the draft of 1998. For several years he was a starter of no great distinction.

He was moved to the bullpen in 2004 and became something else. His fastball was not the fastest in the league, but it appeared to rise as it reached the plate, and hitters who knew it was coming swung under it.

In 2005 he was one of three relievers, with Jeff Williams and Tomoyuki Kubota, who finished Hanshin's games and carried the club to a pennant. The combination was known by its initials.

In 2007 he saved 46 games, equalling the league record.

He went to the United States in 2013, to the Chicago Cubs, and injured his elbow within weeks. After surgery and a brief spell with a second American club he came home, pitched for an independent team in his native Kochi, and rejoined Hanshin in 2016.

He retired in 2020 with more than 240 saves in Japan.

He was appointed manager in the autumn of 2024, without having coached, in succession to Akinobu Okada.

His teams have borne a resemblance to the one he pitched for in 2005: a lead of a few runs, and a bullpen trusted to keep it.

On Saturday the bullpen failed him and another team's failed more.

SPORTS

The Last Time the Tigers Won Twice Running, There Was One League and It Was 1938

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The reports of Hanshin's title describe it in two ways that seem to contradict each other: as the first repeat in the club's history, and as the first in 88 years.

Both are true, and the difference is the structure of the game.

Professional baseball in Japan began in 1936 with a single league of seven clubs. One of them, founded the previous December by the Hanshin Electric Railway, was called the Osaka Tigers.

In those first years the league played two seasons a year, spring and autumn, and crowned a champion of each.

The Tigers won the autumn season of 1937 and the spring season of 1938. Those are the consecutive titles of 88 years ago.

The team of that period was built around the pitchers Tadashi Wakabayashi and Yukio Nishimura and the slugger Masaru Kageura, and its rivalry with the Tokyo Giants dates from then.

The single league lasted until 1949. In 1950 the clubs divided into the Central and Pacific leagues, each with its own pennant, and the winners met in a Japan Series.

In the 76 seasons of the Central League before this one Hanshin won seven pennants and never two

together.

The club counts all of its titles, old and new, and Saturday's is the twelfth: four in the single league and eight in the Central.

The name changed along the way. The Osaka Tigers became the Hanshin Tigers in 1961.

SPORTS

Champions, but Not Yet in the Japan Series: What Comes Next

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

The pennant Hanshin won on Saturday is a title in its own right. It is not a ticket to the Japan Series.

That is decided by the Climax Series. The second-placed Giants host the third-placed team in a first stage of three games, and the winner goes to Koshien to play Hanshin.

The final stage is played over a maximum of six games, all at the champions' ground. Hanshin begin it with one win already credited to them and need three more.

On the present standings the third-placed club is DeNA, who beat the Giants on Saturday and stand at 70 wins and 69 defeats.

Hanshin finish the regular season first. They have four games left, which are now chiefly of interest for Sato's pursuit of 40 home runs.

The gap between the end of the season and the final stage is more than a week, and managers differ on whether it helps. Pitchers rest. Hitters lose their timing.

Fujikawa's team went through this last year, won the final stage and lost the Japan Series.

In the Pacific League the season also has a few days to run. Rakuten beat Orix 6-0 on Saturday.

The Japan Series begins late in the month.

For one more night, at least, none of that needs thinking about in Osaka.

SPORTS

The Precedent the Champions Remember: DeNA, Third Place and a Japan Series Title

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The team that beat the Giants on Saturday and so delivered the pennant to Hanshin may yet be Hanshin's opponent this month, and it has a history of making trouble for teams above it.

DeNA finished third in the Central League in 2024 with a record barely above even.

In the first stage of that year's Climax Series they beat Hanshin, who had finished second, in two straight games at Koshien.

In the final stage they beat the champion Giants at Tokyo Dome, winning the deciding sixth game.

In the Japan Series they lost the first two games at home to SoftBank, the Pacific League champions, and then won four in a row. It was the club's first title in 26 years.

No team with a lower regular-season winning percentage has won the Japan Series.

The episode sharpened the argument about the play-off system and did nothing to change it.

DeNA are third again this season, a game above even after Saturday. Their bullpen held the Giants scoreless over the last three innings at Tokyo Dome.

Their route this year would run through the Giants in Tokyo and then Hanshin at Koshien.

Hanshin's players, watching on television in Hiroshima on Saturday night, were cheering for them. That will not last.

SPORTS

A Pinch-Hit Appearance, One Batter, One Strikeout and Tears: Masanori Ishikawa Leaves the Mound at Jingu After 25 Years

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Masanori Ishikawa, the Yakult left-hander who won 188 games over 25 seasons with a single club, played his last game on Saturday night at Jingu Stadium.

He is 46. He announced his retirement on September 2, after hurting his left shoulder in his only start of the year.

The evening was arranged around two farewells, Sankei reports. Ishikawa had recorded a hit in each of

his 24 previous seasons, and one more on Saturday would have set a record of 25. So in the seventh inning, with Yakult trailing Chunichi 3-1, he was sent up as a pinch-hitter, which pitchers almost never are.

He had said he wanted to scrape out one more. Against Hiroto Takahashi he popped up to third base, and walked back looking cross.

In the eighth he went to the mound. The batter was Mori, who is 19 and was not born when Ishikawa made his debut. Ishikawa struck him out swinging on a 129-kilometre fastball, low and away.

He was already in tears. The manager, Takahiro Ikeyama, came out to take the ball, and Ishikawa left to the crowd chanting his name.

At the ceremony after the game he said the dream of 200 wins had been one of his great motivations. It had ended at 188, he said, but he thought 188 wins and 194 defeats was a record he could be proud of.

He spoke of having started as a boy who wanted to be better at baseball and did not want to lose to bigger people, and of the many times he had wanted to run away or stop.

He ended with the sentence that gave the morning papers their headline: he was truly happy to be retiring in the Swallows uniform, and really glad it had been Yakult.

His team-mates tossed him in the air on the infield.

SPORTS

One Hundred and Sixty-Seven Centimetres, 188 Wins: The Career of the 'Small Great Pitcher'

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Masanori Ishikawa stands 167 centimetres tall, which in a profession of tall men made him an exception before he had thrown a pitch.

He comes from Akita, pitched for Aoyama Gakuin University and for Japan's team at the Sydney Olympics in 2000 while still a student, and joined Yakult in 2002.

He won 12 games that year and was the Central League's rookie of the year.

He never threw hard. His fastball in his prime was a little over 130 kilometres an hour, slower than many high-school pitchers. He won with control, a sinker and the ability to change speeds, and by fielding his position better than anyone.

He won at least one game in each of his first 24 seasons, a record for Japanese professional baseball from a player's debut.

He was part of the Yakult teams that won the Central League in 2015, 2021 and 2022 and the Japan Series in 2021. In that series, at 41, he became one of the oldest pitchers to win a Japan Series game.

His career totals before Saturday, by the club's count, were 551 games and 3,165 and two-thirds innings.

He could bat, too, and had a hit in every one of his first 24 seasons.

The target that kept him going was 200 wins, the threshold of the informal club that honours the game's great pitchers. He fell 12 short.

Pitchers of his kind are rarer each year. The average fastball in the league is now well over 145 kilometres an hour, and no club is drafting 167-centimetre left-handers who throw 130.

SPORTS

South Korea's Fourth Straight Gold, and What It Was Worth to the Men Who Won It

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

No country had won the men's football tournament at the Asian Games four times in a row until Saturday night.

South Korea's sequence began at Incheon in 2014 and has continued through Jakarta in 2018, Hangzhou in 2023 and now Aichi. In the last three finals the beaten side has been Japan.

The explanation is partly the one given in these pages on Saturday. A gold medal at the Asian Games exempts a South Korean player from military service, and the country's football association selects its squad accordingly.

The scorer on Saturday illustrates it. Eom Ji-sung has played in a World Cup. He was included as an over-age player, in a tournament otherwise restricted to those under 23.

Japan chose differently, as it has at every recent Games. Its squad was under 21, picked with the 2028 Olympics in mind, and included no over-age players of comparable standing.

The Japanese view is that the Asian Games are a step and not a destination. The record of three finals and three defeats is the price of that view.

It is also evidence that the approach works on its own terms. An under-21 team reached the final of a tournament for under-23s and lost by a goal to a side strengthened with senior internationals.

The match itself turned on a single moment. South Korea were cautioned twice and Japan once, and the referee had little else to do.

Lee Min-sung, the Korean head coach, has now won the tournament at his first attempt.

The two countries are likely to meet again in the qualifying competition for Los Angeles, where the age limits will be the same for both.

SPORTS

Masayoshi Otaki, Who Built Shimizu Commercial Into a Football Power and Taught the Coach of Saturday's Final, Dies at 75

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

Masayoshi Otaki, the former head coach of Shimizu Commercial High School's football team and one of the most influential figures in the Japanese schools game, died of illness on Saturday morning in a hospital in Shizuoka. He was 75.

He died on the day one of his former pupils, Go Oiwa, took Japan's under-21 team into the final of the Asian Games.

Otaki was born in Shimizu, the port town long regarded as the heartland of Japanese football, and captained Shimizu Commercial as a player. His team was runner-up at the national inter-high championship in 1969.

He returned to the school in 1974 as a teacher of commercial subjects and took over the football team. He stayed for the rest of his working life.

Under him the school won the national high school championship three times, the inter-high tournament four times and the national youth championship six times, Sports Nippon records.

The list of players he taught is long. It includes Shinji Ono, Hiroshi Nanami and the goalkeeper Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi, all of whom played for Japan at World Cups, as well as Oiwa.

In later years he said he was less interested in winning the high school championship than in producing players who would be valued when they reached their peak at 26 or 27.

He remained close to his former players. Before the Paris Olympics in 2024, when Oiwa was in charge of the under-23 team, Otaki attended a ceremony at the school to hang a banner in support of him, and watched Japan's match against Spain on television with other old boys.

He had been in hospital recently, and former pupils had visited him.

The wake is on Friday at 5 p.m. and the funeral on Saturday, October 10, at 11 a.m., at a hall in the Shimizu ward of Shizuoka. The chief mourner is his eldest daughter, Ayano.

SPORTS

Four of His Pupils: Ono, Nanami, Kawaguchi and Oiwa

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

A schools coach is remembered by his players, and Masayoshi Otaki's include four whose careers trace the modern history of the national team.

Hiroshi Nanami, born in 1972, was the left-footed playmaker of the side that took Japan to its first World Cup, in France in 1998, wearing the number 10. He played a season in Italy and won three league titles with Jubilo Iwata. He is now on the national team's coaching staff.

Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi, born in 1975, was the goalkeeper when Japan's Olympic team beat Brazil in Miami in 1996, a result still known by the name of the city. He went to four World Cups and saved the penalties that won a famous Asian Cup quarter-final in 2004.

Shinji Ono, born in 1979, was the most naturally gifted player the country had produced. He played at

SPORTS

the 1998 World Cup at 18 and won a European trophy with the Dutch club Feyenoord in 2002. He retired in 2023.

Go Oiwa, born in 1972, was a central defender, a contemporary of Nanami's at school. He played for three of the league's leading clubs and for Japan.

As a coach Oiwa won the Asian club championship with Kashima in 2018 and has led Japan's Olympic-age teams since the end of 2021.

He is due to take charge of the senior national team next March.

Sports Nippon describes his coaching as passionate and humane. He taught commercial subjects as well as football.

He was at the school in 2024 to hang a banner for Oiwa before the Paris Olympics.

On the day he died, Oiwa's team played a final.

SPORTS

Shimizu: How One Port Town Came to Supply Japanese Football

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Masayoshi Otaki, who died on Saturday, spent his life in a town whose name is a synonym for football in Japan.

Shimizu is a port on Suruga Bay, with Mount Fuji behind it. It was a separate city until 2003, when it merged with its neighbour and became a ward of Shizuoka.

The game took root there in the 1950s and 1960s through its primary schools. A teacher named Tetsuji Horita organised coaching for young children and a league between schools at a time when football was a minor sport nationally.

By the 1970s the town had a representative boys' team that won national tournaments year after year, and three high schools competing with one another for the best of them.

Shimizu Commercial, where Otaki coached, was one. Shimizu Higashi and Tokai University's affiliated school were the others. Between them they won the national high school championship repeatedly in the 1980s and 1990s.

When the professional league was founded in 1993 the town was given a club although it had no company team to build on. Shimizu S-Pulse was created for the purpose, with local citizens as shareholders.

The list of internationals from the town runs to dozens.

Its dominance has faded. Professional clubs' academies now recruit the best children nationwide, and the high school game matters less than it did.

Shimizu Commercial itself merged with another school in 2013 and plays under a new name.

The idea that a town's schools can make it a centre of a sport, which other places have since copied, began there.

SPORTS

A Deuce in the Fourth Set, Then Silver: Japan's Men Lose the Volleyball Final to Iran

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Japan's men lost the Asian Games volleyball final to Iran by three sets to one at Okazaki on Saturday night. The scores were 26-28, 25-19, 21-25 and 24-26.

Iran have now won four consecutive titles. Japan's last was at Guangzhou in 2010.

Japan are ranked fifth in the world and Iran 19th, but the rankings flattered the hosts. Japan had already qualified for the Olympics by winning the Asian championship, and sent a squad without its leading players.

The first set was level to the end and was lost when a spike by Tatsunori Otsuka was blocked. Japan took the second comfortably, finishing it with a quick attack through the middle by Nishikawa.

Iran's opposite, Amin, took control of the third. Otsuka and Keihan Takahashi kept Japan in touch without ever drawing level.

The fourth was the best of the match. Japan opened with service aces from Otsuka and Nishikawa and led early. Iran drew level at 5-5 and then, with their block beginning to read the Japanese attack, won six points in a row.

Japan came back. Otsuka's spike made it 24-24. Iran won the next two points.

TBS, which broadcast the match, described the silver as a proud one, won on home ground against a taller and more experienced side.

It is Japan's first silver in three Games and an improvement on the bronze of 2023. Japan had beaten China in five sets in the semi-final. Pakistan beat China in straight sets for the bronze.

Japan had not dropped a set in the group stage, and had beaten Qatar in three in the quarter-final.

SPORTS

Iran: How the Team That Beat Japan Became Asia's Best

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

The side that took the volleyball gold from Japan on Saturday has now won the Asian Games four times in succession, and twenty years ago was not a force in the sport at all.

Iran's men first won the Asian championship in 2011. The turning point is usually dated to the appointment that year of Julio Velasco, an Argentine coach who had led Italy to two world titles.

He stayed three years and left behind a system: tall, physical players, a strong block, and a domestic league able to pay them to stay.

Iran qualified for the Olympic Games for the first time in 2016 and has been a regular presence in the annual international league.

Its first Asian Games title came at Incheon in 2014, and it has not lost the tournament since.

Japan is ranked far higher in the world, fifth to Iran's nineteenth. The ranking reflects Japan's strongest team, which finished on the podium of the international league and has beaten every leading nation.

That team was not at Okazaki. Having already qualified for the Olympics, Japan rested its senior players and sent a younger squad.

Iran sent what it had, and what it had was taller.

The match turned, as matches against Iran usually do, on the block. Japan's attackers found it in front of them in the first set and again at the decisive points of the fourth.

A meeting between the two at full strength would be a different match.

SPORTS

Eighty-Three Golds, 269 Medals: Japan's Largest Haul at an Asian Games, With a Day to Go

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

Japan's team at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games finished Saturday with 83 gold medals, 95 silver and 91 bronze, a total of 269. Both the golds and the total are the most the country has won at any Asian Games.

The previous record for gold medals was 78, at Bangkok in 1966. The previous record for all medals was 218, at Hiroshima in 1994, when Japan was last the host.

Saturday alone brought 11 golds. The count stood at 72 in the morning.

Among them were the mixed team event in judo, which Japan has now won at three consecutive Games, and the men's lead event in sport climbing, won by Neo Suzuki.

There were silvers in the two team finals of the evening, men's football and men's volleyball.

At Hangzhou three years ago Japan won 52 golds and 188 medals. The improvement owes something to home advantage and something to the programme, which included sports in which Japan is strong.

China leads the table by a wide margin, as it has at every Games since 1982. Japan is second.

The total number of medals Japan had won at the 19 previous Games, by one count, was 3,242, of which 1,084 were gold.

The record for gold was set in an era when Japan topped the table as a matter of course. From the first Games in 1951 to the eighth in 1978 it finished first every time.

The Games end today with the closing ceremony in Nagoya.

SPORTS

Tokyo 1958, Hiroshima 1994, Aichi-Nagoya 2026: Japan's Three Asian Games

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The Games that close tonight are the third that Japan has hosted, and each has belonged to a different country.

The first, in Tokyo in 1958, were a rehearsal. Japan had been readmitted to international sport only a few years earlier and was bidding for the Olympic Games. The National Stadium was built for the occasion.

Japan won 67 gold medals, more than all other countries combined, and the International Olympic Committee, meeting in Tokyo that month, was impressed. The Olympics were awarded to the city the following year.

The second, in Hiroshima in 1994, were the first Asian Games held outside a capital. The city presented them as a festival of peace.

By then the balance of Asian sport had changed. China led the table by a distance, as it had since 1982, and Japan finished second with 64 golds. Its total of 218 medals stood as its record until this week.

The newly independent republics of Central Asia took part for the first time.

The third Games were awarded to Aichi and Nagoya in 2016. They were planned from the start on a reduced scale, using existing venues and spreading events across several prefectures.

They were also the first to be held after the Olympic movement began to question the cost of such events, and the organisers were candid that the model was partly forced on them by budgets.

The result on the field has been Japan's best: 83 golds and 269 medals with a day remaining.

The next Games are in Doha in 2030 and Riyadh in 2034.

SPORTS

Judo's Mixed Team Wins for a Third Games Running

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Japan won the mixed team event in judo on Saturday, the final day of the competition, for the third Asian Games in succession.

The event was introduced to the Games in 2018 and Japan has won it every time.

A mixed team consists of three men and three women in set weight categories. The six bouts are fought in turn, and the first team to four wins takes the tie. If the teams are level at three each, one category is drawn at random and fought again to a deciding score.

The format rewards depth. A country with one great champion and little behind him cannot win it, and Japan's strength in judo has always been the number of its second and third choices.

Japan's judoka had won eight golds in the individual events earlier in the week, by the organisers' table, along with a silver for Hyoga Ota in the men's heaviest class.

The team event also carries a memory. At the Paris Olympics in 2024 Japan led France in the final and lost on the deciding bout to Teddy Riner, as it had lost to the same opponent in Tokyo three years earlier.

No Asian team has yet troubled Japan in the same way.

The reports available do not give the scores of Saturday's ties.

Kyodo News noted that the win took Japan's gold medals at these Games past its previous record.

The mixed team event will be contested at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028.

SPORTS

Neo Suzuki, World No. 1 in Lead Climbing, Takes the Gold He Came For

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Neo Suzuki won the men's lead event in sport climbing at the Asian Games on Saturday evening at Port Messe Nagoya.

He is 22, comes from Yaizu in Shizuoka Prefecture

and is in his fourth year at the University of Shizuoka. He is the world's top-ranked lead climber.

He said he was very happy to have got the result he had set out for, Chunichi Shimbun reports.

Suzuki had led the semi-final with a height of 43 holds. His team-mate Satone Yoshida, also 22 and ranked fourth in the world, went through in second place.

Lead is the oldest of the three disciplines of competition climbing and the simplest to understand. The climbers attempt a single long route, roped, and the one who gets highest wins. Each sees the route for the first time a few minutes before climbing.

Suzuki began climbing at nine. He was placing in national youth competitions by junior high school, and reached the podium of the national youth lead championship in his final year of high school.

His rise at senior level has come since the Paris Olympics. This year he has won the national title, the Asian championship and several rounds of the world series.

Japan had already won gold in the men's boulder event through Sorato Anraku, the Olympic silver medallist, with Tomoa Narasaki third. Ai Mori took silver in the women's boulder.

Climbing is one of the sports in which Japan has become a leading nation within a generation, and one of those that helped carry the team to its record.

The next Olympic competition, at Los Angeles, will award separate medals for boulder and for lead for the first time.

SPORTS

Lead, Boulder, Speed: The Three Kinds of Competition Climbing

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Japan won gold medals at these Asian Games in two of the three disciplines of sport climbing, and the differences between them are worth a paragraph each.

Lead is climbing as most people imagine it. The wall is more than 15 metres high. The climber is roped and clips the rope into fixed points on the way up. Each competitor has one attempt and a time limit, and the score is the highest hold reached.

A plus sign after the number means the climber was moving towards the next hold when he fell. Neo Suzuki's 43 in the semi-final meant the forty-third hold.

Boulder is short and unroped. The walls are about four metres high, above thick mats. Each of several problems is a sequence of a few difficult moves, and climbers may try as often as they like within the time.

Scoring in boulder rewards reaching the top and a marked hold part-way, with fewer attempts counting for more.

The two reward different bodies. Lead favours endurance and a light frame. Boulder favours power and the ability to solve a puzzle quickly.

Speed is a different sport. Two climbers race side by side up an identical 15-metre route that never changes. The best men take under five seconds.

At the Tokyo Olympics all three were combined into one medal, to general dissatisfaction. In Paris speed was separated and lead and boulder were combined.

At Los Angeles in 2028 each will have its own medals.

Japan's strength is in boulder and lead. It has yet to produce a speed climber of the first rank.

SPORTS

The Games End Tonight: Sixteen Days, a Record for the Hosts, and a Flag for Doha

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

The 20th Asian Games close this evening in Nagoya, sixteen days after they opened.

The closing ceremony follows the last events of the morning and afternoon. As at every Games, the flag of the Olympic Council of Asia will be lowered and handed to the next host, which is Doha, for 2030.

For Japan the Games have been the most successful it has ever had: 83 golds and 269 medals by Saturday night, both records.

The final two days supplied most of the drama. The women's footballers won their final on penalties on Friday. The men's footballers and the men's volleyball team both lost theirs on Saturday.

SPORTS

Individual performances will be remembered longer. Yui Susaki won her wrestling title without conceding a point. Yuri Nakazato won Japan's first heavyweight Greco-Roman gold in forty years. Neo Suzuki and Sorato Anraku won in climbing.

The organisers set out to hold a Games without building one. They used existing venues across Aichi and beyond, housed athletes in hotels and on a ship, and spread the events from Shizuoka to Gifu.

Whether that model saved what was hoped will be known when the accounts are published. It did produce full venues in places that rarely see international sport.

The weather was unkind for much of the fortnight, as it was across the Pacific side of the country, and cleared for the final weekend.

The Asian Para Games open in the same region on October 18.

Today's forecast for Nagoya, on the weather page, is cloudy with a high of 25 degrees.

SPORTS

Two Weeks From Today: The Asian Para Games Come to the Same Venues

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

When the Asian Games flag is lowered tonight, the region's sporting calendar pauses for only a fortnight.

The Asian Para Games open on October 18 and run for a week. It is the first time Japan has hosted them.

They use many of the same venues in Aichi and Nagoya.

The Para Games have been held since 2010, following the main Games in the same host country, and have grown at each edition.

Japan finished third in the medal table at Hangzhou in 2023, behind China and Iran.

The country's strengths are in swimming, athletics, wheelchair tennis and boccia. Several of the athletes who won medals at the Paralympic Games in Paris in 2024 are expected to compete.

Wheelchair tennis has a particular following in Japan through the career of Shingo Kunieda, who retired in 2023 as the most successful player in the sport's history, and through that of his successor, Tokito Oda, who won the Paralympic title in Paris at 18.

Hosting the two events in succession was part of the case made for the Games. Venues adapted for the first are meant to be accessible for the second and afterwards.

The Games run until October 24.

The typhoon season will not be over by then.

SPORTS

Tuesday at Ariake: The Japan Open Final, and Then a Farewell to Nishikori

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Japan Open ends on Tuesday, and the final will be followed by a ceremony for the player who did more than any other to fill the stadium in which it is held.

Kei Nishikori played his last professional match there on Thursday, losing 6-4, 6-4 to the American Frances Tiafoe.

He is 36. He had announced that the tournament would be his last.

His career has a claim to be the most significant in Japanese men's tennis. He reached the final of the United States Open in 2014, beating the world's top-ranked player on the way, and was ranked fourth in the world the following year.

He won 12 titles on the tour, two of them at this tournament, and a bronze medal at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

He was never the biggest hitter. His strengths were his timing on the return of serve and his record in deciding sets, which for several years was the best of any active player.

Injuries, to wrist, elbow and hip, took most of his thirties.

The ceremony falls on the evening the typhoon is forecast to be passing offshore. Ariake's centre court has a roof.

No Japanese man has come close to his ranking since. The country's best prospects are still young.

The reports available do not yet give the finalists.

SPORTS

Scoreboard

By the Sports Desk

CENTRAL LEAGUE, Saturday: Hiroshima 6, Hanshin 4 (W: Osera; S: Moriura). DeNA 5, Yomiuri 2 (W: Ogata; L: Hotta; S: Hamachi). Yakult v Chunichi at Jingu: Ishikawa's retirement game.

Hanshin are champions for a second consecutive year, their eighth Central League title.

Standings after Saturday: Hanshin 77 wins, 60 losses, 2 draws; Yomiuri 76-64-3; DeNA 70-69-3.

PACIFIC LEAGUE, Saturday: Rakuten 6, Orix 0.

ASIAN GAMES FOOTBALL, men's final: South Korea 1, Japan 0 (Eom Ji-sung 61).

ASIAN GAMES VOLLEYBALL, men's final: Iran 3, Japan 1 (28-26, 19-25, 25-21, 26-24). Bronze: Pakistan 3, China 0.

ASIAN GAMES JUDO, mixed team: gold, Japan.

ASIAN GAMES CLIMBING, men's lead: gold, Neo Suzuki.

MEDALS, Japan, to Saturday night: 83 gold, 95 silver, 91 bronze; total 269.

TOMORROW: Kirin Cup final, Japan v New Zealand.

CULTURE

Shiro Ito Will Stop at Ninety: 'From Now On I Shall Watch and Listen. Thank You, Everyone!'

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Shiro Ito, who has been making Japanese audiences laugh since the 1950s, is to retire from performing next June, on his ninetieth birthday.

The announcement was made by his agency on Thursday. He is 89.

His own comment was brief and in character. From now on, he said, he would do the watching and the listening. He ended it with a shout of thanks to everyone.

The radio programme he presents on Saturday afternoons on Nippon Cultural Broadcasting will end at the same time.

Ito was born in Tokyo on June 15, 1937, and began in the small theatres of the capital. He became known in the 1960s as one of the Tempuku Trio, with Shinsuke Minami and Mutsuo Totsuka, on stage and on the new medium of television.

In the 1970s he found a second partner in Masao Komatsu, and a song the two performed on a variety programme, the Densen Ondo, was sung by children in every school playground in the country.

He then did what few comedians of his generation managed, and became an actor of weight. Viewers of the morning serial Oshin knew him as the heroine's hard father. He was a fixture of detective dramas and period pieces for forty years, and played the lead in a television drama at 82.

He was also, for a decade from the late 1990s, the genial host of a programme of household tips that drew some of the largest audiences on television.

TV Asahi's report recalled an interview of three years ago in which he spoke of what the stage meant to him.

He will have done so for nearly seventy years.

CULTURE

The Trio, the Tiger Suit and the Electric Wire: Where Shiro Ito Came From

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The two acts that made Shiro Ito famous belong to different eras of Japanese comedy, and he is the last survivor of both.

The Tempuku Trio was formed at the start of the 1960s. Its leader was Shinsuke Minami, a big man with a booming voice. Mutsuo Totsuka was the third member. Ito, thin and sharp-featured, played the one to whom things happened.

Their sketches were written, among others, by a young Hisashi Inoue, who went on to become one of the country's leading playwrights and novelists.

Television was new and hungry, and the trio were on it constantly. Totsuka died in 1973. Minami went on to host a popular programme on the public

broadcaster and died in 1982.

Ito's second partnership was with Masao Komatsu, a comedian a few years younger with a gift for catchphrases.

In 1976, on a commercial variety programme, the two introduced a song about a sparrow on an electric wire. Ito appeared as a ringmaster in a top hat. The audience clapped along and the dance was copied everywhere.

It was nonsense, and it was meant to be. The pleasure lay in watching two skilled performers commit completely to something absurd.

Komatsu died in 2020.

Ito always described himself as a comedian who acted and not an actor who had once been funny. He continued to appear in stage comedies into his eighties, including an annual production with younger comics who regarded him as their teacher.

The style he represents, built on timing, on reaction and on the stage, has few practitioners left on television.

CULTURE

Eight Hundred Police, a Hotel Room in Hiroshima and a Splash: Osaka's Saturday Night

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Osaka prefectural police assigned about 800 officers to the Dotonbori area on Saturday in case Hanshin won the pennant, NHK reported at midday.

For most of the afternoon it seemed they would be needed by five o'clock. Then Hanshin lost, and the crowd around the Ebisu Bridge found itself waiting for a result from Tokyo.

That changed the character of the evening. A pennant won on the field arrives at a known moment, with a final out. One that depends on another game arrives gradually, as a score on a telephone screen.

When the Giants fell behind in the seventh the noise began. When the last out was made, shortly after nine, it became the familiar roar.

Some supporters went into the canal. Daily Sports published a photograph of one in mid-air.

The police lined the parapets of the bridge, as they have at every title since 2003, when thousands jumped and a man died, and directed the crowd in one direction across it.

In Namba, Sankei's staff handed out 2,000 copies of a special edition. Such editions are collected as souvenirs, and the stack went quickly.

Supporters also gathered in Amagasaki, where the shopping arcade near the station keeps a countdown board for the magic number.

The players, meanwhile, were some 300 kilometres away in Hiroshima, where they held the traditional beer fight.

The team has four games left before the Climax Series. Its next appearance at Koshien will be the first chance for most supporters to celebrate in the players' presence.

CULTURE

The Beer Fight: A Ritual Borrowed From America in 1959 and Never Given Back

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Hanshin's players marked their pennant on Saturday night in the manner now expected of every champion: by spraying one another with beer.

The custom is not old. It is usually traced to 1959, when the Nankai Hawks won the Japan Series and a Hawaiian-born infielder on the team, Carlton Hanta, who knew how American clubs celebrated with champagne, began pouring beer over his team-mates.

Within a few years every club was doing it, and the brewers were glad to supply the bottles.

It has since acquired rules. The room is lined with plastic sheeting. The players wear goggles and special shirts. The manager makes a short speech, a barrel of sake is broken open, and at a signal the spraying begins.

Several thousand bottles are used in a few minutes.

Players under twenty, who may not drink, are given carbonated water.

Television carries it live, and interviewers in raincoats wade in to ask questions that nobody can hear the answers to.

A team that clinches away from home holds it at the hotel, as Hanshin did in Hiroshima.

The ritual is repeated at each stage. A club that wins the pennant, the Climax Series and the Japan Series will have three.

Hanshin had two last year. They are hoping for a third occasion this month.

CULTURE

The Toss: What the Front-Page Photograph Shows, and Why There Was None on Saturday

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The photograph on today's front page shows the gesture by which Japanese teams honour the person who led them: the players gather beneath their manager and throw him into the air.

It is called doage. The manager goes up flat on his back, arms spread, usually several times, and is caught.

The custom is much older than baseball. Tossing a person as a mark of celebration or blessing is recorded in the Edo period, and one tradition links it to a year-end rite at a temple in Nagano.

It is not confined to sport. Successful candidates are tossed outside university gates on the day examination results are posted. Bridegrooms are tossed at wedding parties, and politicians on election night.

In baseball it belongs to two moments, a championship and a farewell. A retiring player is tossed by his team-mates after his last game, as Masanori Ishikawa was at Jingu on Saturday night.

The picture on the front page is of the first kind. It was taken at Koshien in 2023, when Hanshin clinched at home, and the man in the air wears the No. 80 of the manager of that year.

There was no such scene on Saturday. Hanshin lost in Hiroshima in the afternoon and became champions in the evening, in a hotel, when another game ended in Tokyo.

A manager cannot be tossed in a banquet room with a low ceiling.

The players will have the opportunity when they next stand on a field as champions.

There are risks. Managers have been dropped, and one or two have asked to be excused.

CULTURE

Gogai: The Extra Edition, Handed Out Free in the Street, That Refuses to Die

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The single sheet that Sankei distributed in Namba on Saturday night belongs to a tradition as old as the Japanese newspaper.

It is called a gogai, literally outside the numbers, because it is not counted in the sequence of regular issues.

The first are usually dated to 1868, when the newspapers of Edo printed special sheets about the fighting that accompanied the fall of the shogunate.

In the era before broadcasting the gogai was how a city learned of great events. Boys ran through the streets with bells at their belts, and the sheets were sold or given away within minutes of coming off the press.

Radio and then television removed the reason for it. The form survived as ritual. An extra is printed for the death of an emperor, a change of era, a national disaster, a Nobel Prize, an Olympic gold medal.

It is distributed free outside major stations, and the scenes of people reaching for copies are themselves photographed for the next morning's paper.

Sport supplies the happiest occasions. A pennant for Hanshin has brought extras from several newspapers at each title since 1985.

The economics are simple. A gogai earns nothing directly. It advertises the newspaper's name on a day when people feel well disposed, and it is kept.

Copies are folded into albums and sold online years later.

In an age when the news reached every telephone in the crowd at the same instant, 2,000 people in Namba still wanted it on paper.

CULTURE

CULTURE

Yellow Front Pages: The Sports Dailies That Live and Die With the Tigers

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Most of what is known this morning about how Hanshin's players spent Saturday evening comes from a kind of newspaper that has no close equivalent abroad.

The sports dailies are tabloid in content and broadsheet in size, printed in colour, and sold mainly at station kiosks and convenience stores. There are half a dozen national titles.

Each has loyalties. Sports Hochi belongs to the same group as the Giants. Daily Sports, founded in Kobe in 1948, is devoted to Hanshin to a degree that its rivals find comic and its readers find essential.

In the Kansai editions a Hanshin story leads the front page on most days of the year, whatever else has happened. A pennant produces a front page in yellow and black and a print run several times the usual.

The reporters assigned to the club follow it every day from the first day of spring camp. They know who is injured before the club announces it and are expected not to print it too soon.

The relationship is close enough that the papers are sometimes accused of being part of the team. It also yields detail that no other medium has: who sat where in a hotel room, what a manager said in a corridor.

The dailies have lost circulation, as all newspapers have. Several have merged editions or stopped printing in some regions.

On a morning like this one they sell out.

Their websites carried Saturday's story minute by minute, and those reports are the sources cited through today's sports pages.

The special editions handed out in the street on Saturday night came from the same presses.

CULTURE

Jingu at Night: Umbrellas, the Tokyo Ondo and a Pitcher Saying Goodbye

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The stadium at which Masanori Ishikawa said his farewell on Saturday is the oldest in use in Japanese professional baseball after Koshien, and has customs of its own.

Meiji Jingu Stadium opened in 1926 in the outer gardens of the shrine dedicated to the Meiji emperor. It was built for the university game, and the six universities of the Tokyo league still have first call on it.

Babe Ruth played there on a tour in 1934.

The Swallows have been tenants since the 1960s. Because students use the ground by day, the professionals have traditionally practised elsewhere and played at night.

Their supporters are known for one thing above all. When the team scores, and in the seventh inning, the stands fill with small plastic umbrellas, opened and bobbed up and down in time to the Tokyo Ondo, a dance tune of the 1930s.

The custom is said to have begun in the 1970s as a way of making a thin crowd look larger.

Ishikawa pitched there for 25 years, through three pennants and several last-place finishes, and the umbrellas were raised for him many times.

The stadium's days are numbered. A redevelopment of the district provides for a new ballpark on an adjacent site and the demolition of the present one, a plan that has been contested for the trees it would remove.

The schedule has slipped more than once.

For now the old ground, open to the sky, remains one of the few places in central Tokyo where a summer evening can be spent outdoors watching baseball.

CULTURE

Why It Is Always Hokkaido

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

Eighteen years at the top of a ranking suggests something more durable than fashion.

Hokkaido's advantage begins with space. It has more than a fifth of the country's land and about a twenty-fifth of its people, and to a visitor from Tokyo

or Osaka the sight of a straight road running to the horizon between fields is as foreign as anything abroad.

It continues with food. The island produces most of the nation's milk, butter, potatoes, wheat and sugar beet, and much of its seafood. The names of its towns, Yubari for melons, Furano for lavender and wine, Rausu for kelp, are brands in themselves.

Winter, which might count against it, counts for it. The snow festival in Sapporo has been held since 1950. The powder snow of Niseko has made the area an international ski resort.

It has the appeal of a frontier. Most of the island was settled by Japanese only from the 1870s, and its cities are laid out on grids, with wide streets and brick buildings that owe something to American advisers.

The Ainu, whose land it was, are more visible than they were, with a national museum opened in 2020.

It is also far enough to be a journey and near enough to be easy. The flight from Tokyo to Sapporo is among the busiest air routes in the world.

The bullet train reached Hakodate in 2016. The extension to Sapporo has been delayed and is not now expected until the late 2030s.

None of this is news to the people who answer the survey, most of whom have been there or intend to go.

The prefecture's difficulties, a falling population, railway lines closing, towns emptying, do not show from a tour bus.

CULTURE

In Praise of Forty-Seventh: What Saga Has That the Survey Did Not Ask About

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Saga came last this year in the ranking of the prefectures' attractiveness. The people who live there have heard it before.

The prefecture lies between Fukuoka and Nagasaki, and travellers have a habit of passing through it on the way from one to the other. It has about 800,000 people.

What it has is porcelain. The kilns of Arita produced the first porcelain made in Japan, in the early seventeenth century, and the ware shipped from the nearby port of Imari was collected by the courts of Europe.

It has the Yoshinogari site, one of the largest moated settlements of the Yayoi period yet excavated, where one can walk among reconstructed watchtowers two thousand years old in design.

It has Karatsu, with a castle above a pine-fringed bay and a festival each November in which enormous lacquered floats shaped like fish and helmets are hauled through the town.

It has hot springs at Ureshino and Takeo, tea, beef that carries the prefecture's name, and one of the country's largest harvests of nori seaweed from the Ariake Sea.

Each autumn the sky over the Saga plain fills with hot-air balloons for an international competition.

A comedian had a hit two decades ago with a song listing the prefecture's deficiencies, and residents sang along. Self-deprecation has been a local resource ever since.

The new leader of Komeito, elected on the day the ranking came out, was born in Tosu, the prefecture's railway junction.

The survey measures whether strangers have a picture of a place. Saga's misfortune is that its pictures are filed under other names: Arita, Imari, Karatsu.

CULTURE

From Jakarta to Nikujaga: How the Potato Became Japanese

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

The vegetable at the centre of a trade dispute with the United States arrived in Japan from the other direction.

Dutch ships brought it to Nagasaki around the beginning of the seventeenth century from their base at Jakarta, and the Japanese name preserves the route. Jagaimo is short for Jagatara-imo, the tuber from Jakarta.

For two centuries it was a curiosity and a famine food. It became a crop in the Meiji period, when

Hokkaido was opened to settlement and its climate proved ideal.

The variety that made it popular was introduced in 1908 by a shipbuilder with the title of baron, Ryokichi Kawata, who imported an American potato to his farm near Hakodate. It is still sold as danshaku, the baron.

A second standard variety, the May Queen, is longer and waxier and holds together in stews.

The dishes followed. Nikujaga, beef and potatoes simmered in soy and sugar, is claimed by two naval ports as the invention of their cooks. The croquette arrived from France by way of the Western-style restaurants of the Taisho era and became the cheapest hot food at any butcher's counter.

Potato salad, bound with mayonnaise and eaten cold, is on the menu of every izakaya.

The potato crisp is post-war. The first domestically produced crisps went on sale in the early 1960s, and the market grew large enough that a shortage of Hokkaido potatoes in 2017 was national news.

In Hokkaido the boiled potato with butter is a dish in its own right, sold at festival stalls and roadside stations, and the island's breeders have produced varieties for the table, among them the yellow-fleshed Kita-akari and the small, sweet Inca no Mezame.

New potatoes from Nagasaki and Kagoshima arrive in spring. The main Hokkaido crop is lifted from August and stored through the winter.

It is that stored crop, sold as a fresh vegetable, that American exporters would like to compete with.

CULTURE

Kumamoto: A Castle, an Earthquake, a Chip Plant and Now a Missile

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

The city in which Japan's first long-range missiles are based has been a military town for four centuries.

Kumamoto Castle was built at the start of the seventeenth century by Kiyomasa Kato, a general who had fought in Korea and designed its walls to be unclimbable. It withstood a siege of fifty days in 1877, in the last civil war fought in Japan.

The army kept a division there until 1945. The Ground Self-Defense Force's Western Army, responsible for Kyushu and Okinawa, has its headquarters at Camp Kengun in the east of the city.

In April 2016 two earthquakes within 28 hours struck the area. More than 270 people died, including those whose deaths were attributed to the aftermath, and the castle's walls and turrets collapsed.

The main keep, black-walled above its curved stone ramparts, was repaired by 2021. The restoration of the whole is expected to take until the middle of the century.

The camp at Kengun was a base for relief operations then, and residents of the district remember it as such.

The city's economy has since been changed by something else. A Taiwanese semiconductor manufacturer opened a plant in the neighbouring town of Kikuyo in 2024, and land prices in the surrounding area have risen faster than almost anywhere else in the country.

It is against that background, of a city that is prospering and that has known both the army's protection and its presence, that the Type 25 was shown to residents on Saturday.

Kumamoto is about 900 kilometres from Shanghai and a little less from Pyongyang.

The governor and the mayor were shown the launcher in March. Saturday's event was the first time the explanation was offered to ordinary residents.

CULTURE

Okazaki: Ieyasu's Birthplace, Dark Miso, a Volleyball Final and a Monkey

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The city of Okazaki appeared twice in Saturday's news, for unrelated reasons.

In the evening its gymnasium was the venue for the men's volleyball final of the Asian Games, in which Japan lost to Iran. Earlier, four people in the city centre were attacked and slightly hurt by monkeys.

Okazaki is in the middle of Aichi Prefecture, on the old Tokaido highway, and has about 380,000 people.

It is known to every Japanese schoolchild as the birthplace of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who was born in its castle in 1542 and went on to found the shogunate that ruled for two and a half centuries.

The old Tokaido highway ran through the town in twenty-seven sharp turns, laid out to slow an approaching army, and parts of the route can still be walked. The post station was among the largest between Edo and Kyoto.

The castle, reconstructed, stands in a park by the river. The city's festival of fireworks each August draws on a tradition of gunpowder-making that the Tokugawa permitted in their home province.

Its other famous product is miso. A dark, strong paste made only from soybeans is produced by two old firms in a district eight cho, a little under a kilometre, from the castle, and takes its name from that distance. It is the miso of Nagoya's cooking.

The city is also an industrial one, part of the belt of car-component factories that surrounds Toyota.

Hills begin at its eastern edge, which is where the monkeys come from.

The volleyball tournament was one of several Asian Games events held outside Nagoya, in keeping with the organisers' decision to use existing halls across the region.

The home team took a set on Saturday, and no more.

CULTURE

Sakai: Keyhole Tombs, Kitchen Knives and the Festivals of October

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Sakai, where a festival float overturned on Saturday night, is the second city of Osaka Prefecture and one of the oldest urban places in Japan.

It has more than 800,000 people and lies immediately south of Osaka city, on the bay.

Its oldest monuments are tombs. The great keyhole-shaped mounds built for rulers of the fifth century, the largest of them nearly half a kilometre long and surrounded by moats, were inscribed as a World Heritage site in 2019.

In the sixteenth century it was a self-governing port, rich from trade with China and from the manufacture of firearms, and the home of Sen no Rikyu, who gave the tea ceremony its form. A museum devoted to him and to the poet Akiko Yosano, who was born in the city, opened in 2015 beside the site of his house.

The gunsmiths' skills passed to the makers of blades. Sakai's kitchen knives are used by a large share of the country's professional cooks. Incense and hand-dyed cotton are among its other old trades.

A later industry grew from the same metalworking tradition. The city became the centre of Japanese bicycle manufacture, and the world's largest maker of bicycle components has its headquarters there.

The district of Fukai, where the accident happened, is in the inland part of the city, an area of older villages absorbed by suburban housing.

Those villages keep their floats. The danjiri festivals of Sakai's wards are held on weekends in early October, after the more famous one at Kishiwada to the south.

Each neighbourhood's float is housed in its own shed and brought out for two days of hauling through streets not designed for it.

The corner at which Saturday's accident occurred is 150 metres from the railway station.

SPORTS

Hanshin's Twelve Titles

By the Sports Desk

1937, autumn: single league.

1938, spring: single league.

1944: single league.

1947: single league.

1962: Central League.

1964: Central League.

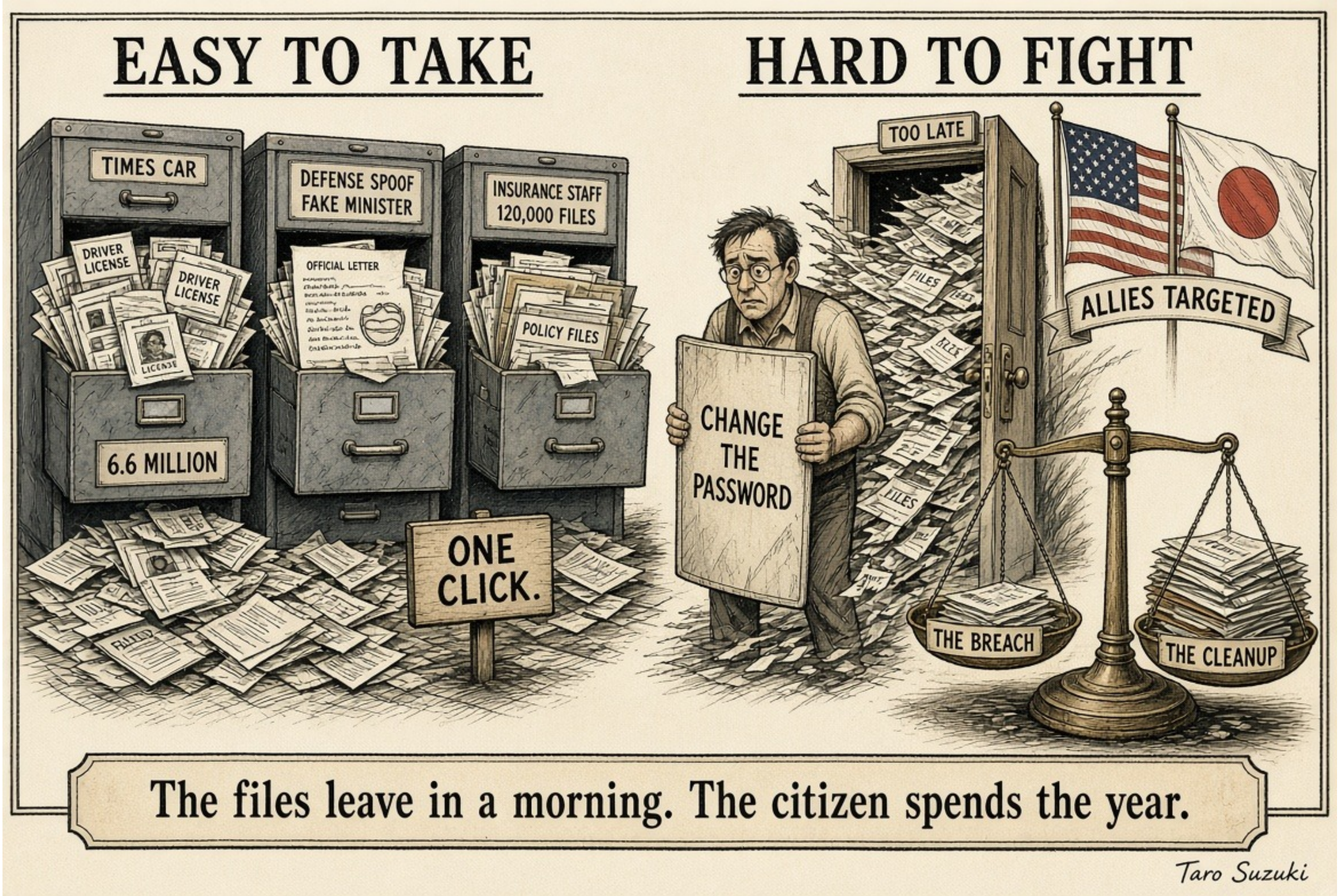
1985: Central League, and Japan Series.

2003 and 2005: Central League.

2023: Central League, and Japan Series.

2025 and 2026: Central League, the first in consecutive years.

EDITORIAL & OPINION



Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki, Staff Cartoonist.

EDITORIAL
Easy to Take, Hard to Fight

Six and a half million records, a forged minister and the files of 120,000 insurance staff left their owners in a single week. The people they describe will be dealing with it for a year. The burden is on the wrong side.
By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki's cartoon today is in two halves, and the titles say what each is about. On the left, under the words Easy to Take, stand three filing cabinets with their drawers hanging open. On the right, under Hard to Fight, a man in shirtsleeves stands in front of a door through which paper is pouring, holding a sign that reads Change the Password.

The cabinets are labelled. The first says Times Car and, on the lowest drawer, 6.6 Million; driving licences spill out of it. The second says Defense Spoof, Fake Minister, and holds an official-looking letter. The third says Insurance Staff, 120,000 Files. A small signpost stuck in the drift of paper at their feet says One Click.

Above the door on the right is a board reading Too Late. Beside it hang the flags of the United States and Japan over a ribbon that says Allies Targeted. In the corner a pair of scales holds a small stack of paper marked The Breach in one pan and a tall one marked The Cleanup in the other, and the scales tip towards the cleanup.

The caption runs along the bottom. The files leave in a morning. The citizen spends the year.

Each label refers to something announced in the past seven days, and it is worth being exact about them, because the argument of the drawing depends on their being ordinary.

Three drawers

The operator of the Times Car sharing service said that up to about 6.6 million records relating to its members had been obtained by an outside party. They included about 1.6 million images of driving licences, the photographs members had uploaded to prove who they were. No leak of payment card data has been confirmed.

The American security company Proofpoint reported that a group it tracks as TA419, which it believes to be linked to China, had sent messages to researchers and companies in Japan and the United States that imitated the official website of the defense minister and that of the association through which Japan

conducts its relations with Taiwan. Those who replied were led to a counterfeit log-in page. The targets in Japan included defence contractors and law firms. In the United States they included specialists in the policy of artificial intelligence.

And on Friday Dai-ichi Life said that the personnel system it shares with its parent had been entered without authorisation, and that the records of about 120,000 employees might have been taken. Some 70,000 of them had already left the company.

There were others that the cartoonist did not have room for. The Japan Atomic Energy Agency lost documents on 175 people from a site connected with a research reactor. A restaurant chain found that the details of more than 5,000 people who had once applied to it for part-time work had been taken from a contractor it no longer used.

None of these was a catastrophe of the kind that makes a government fall. That is the point. They were a week.

We have read this notice before

The country has been here many times, and each occasion was said to be a turning point.

In 2014 a contractor's employee copied the records of tens of millions of customers of an education company, most of them children and their parents, and sold them to list brokers. The company sent each household a voucher for 500 yen. The courts later valued the injury at a few thousand.

In 2015 the Japan Pension Service lost the records of about one and a quarter million people after staff opened an infected email. Ministers apologised and a review was held.

In 2023 it emerged that a temporary worker at a subsidiary of a telephone company had been removing customer data, some nine million records, over about ten years without anyone noticing.

After each of these the law was tightened a little and the apologies were refined. The duty to report a serious leak and to notify the people affected dates from 2022, and is the reason so many announcements

now appear.

What did not change was the allocation of the cost. In every one of those cases the organisation survived, the executives mostly kept their posts, and the people in the files were advised to be careful.

One click

The signpost in the drawing is not an exaggeration. The spoofing campaign worked, where it worked, because a person who received a plausible message clicked on a link and typed a password into a page that looked right. Proofpoint says the pages were built to pass along the one-time codes that are supposed to make passwords safe, so that even a careful user with two-step verification could be caught.

The other cases have not been explained in detail, and may never be. But the pattern of such intrusions is known. Someone finds a credential, or a flaw that has not been patched, or a system that was never meant to face the internet and does. The work of copying a database, once inside, takes minutes.

Against that, consider what was required to assemble the data in the first place. Millions of people photographed their licences, one at a time, because a company asked them to. Tens of thousands of employees gave their addresses and telephone numbers to a personnel department over forty years. The accumulation took decades. The loss took a morning.

This is the asymmetry the drawing's titles describe, and it is not peculiar to Japan or to this week. It is the basic condition of holding information on a network. What differs from country to country is who bears the consequences.

Change the password

The man in the cartoon is doing what he has been told. Every notice of a leak ends the same way: we apologise for the concern caused, we have found no evidence of misuse, and we ask you to be vigilant, to change your password, to beware of suspicious messages.

It is advice of a peculiar kind. The person receiving it did nothing wrong. He did not choose the system, could not inspect it, and was not asked whether his licence should be kept after it had been checked. He is now told that the remedy lies with him.

And the remedy does not fit the injury. A password can be changed. A date of birth cannot. Nor can a licence number without a visit to a police licensing centre, nor an address without moving house. The employee whose name, department, rank and superior have been copied cannot change any of them, and each is exactly what a fraudster needs to write a convincing message to his colleagues.

So the sign in the cartoon is held up in front of a door marked Too Late, and the paper keeps coming.

The cleanup

What does the year consist of? It is worth setting down, because the companies' notices never do.

It begins with reading the notice, usually an email that itself looks like a fraud, and deciding whether to believe it. Then comes the changing of passwords, on the affected service and on every other where the same one was used, which for most people is many.

Then comes watching. Post arrives about a loan that was not applied for, or does not arrive because someone has redirected it. A telephone company writes about a contract. The citizen learns the names of the credit information agencies and how to ask them what is held in his name, which costs a fee each time.

Calls come. The caller knows his name, his address, where he works. Some are fraudsters. Some are the company's own contractors, ringing to apologise, and cannot be told from the fraudsters.

If something does go wrong, the burden of proof is his. He must show that he did not sign the contract or open the account, to institutions whose procedures assume that he did.

At the end of it there may be compensation. The going rate in Japan, established over twenty years of such cases, is a voucher for 500 or 1,000 yen. The courts, where people have troubled to sue, have awarded a few thousand.

That is the tall stack on the scales. No company's accounts record it, because it is not the company's time.

Why the drawers were full

The most telling figure of the week was not 6.6 million. It was 70,000, the number of Dai-ichi's former employees whose details were still in a live system.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Nobody decided to keep them. That is how it happens. Storage is cheap, deletion is laborious, and the person who would have to do it gains nothing by it. A record that might conceivably be needed is kept, and so is one that certainly will not be.

The licence photographs are the same case in a different form. For some years the standard way to open an account or join a service online has been to upload a picture of an identity document. The check takes seconds. The picture, in many systems, stays for ever, and a collection of a million and a half of them is a resource for anyone who wants to open accounts in other people's names.

The government has recognised this. The rules on verifying identity at a distance are being changed so that, from next year, the uploading of images gives way to reading the chip embedded in a licence or an identity card, which proves the document is genuine without leaving a copy behind. That is the right reform. It does nothing about the images already held.

The restaurant chain's case adds the last element. The data was not even in the company's hands. It sat with a contractor after the contract had ended, forgotten by both.

An attacker can take only what is there. The first defence is to have less.

Allies targeted

The flags in the cartoon point to a different kind of adversary, and it would be a mistake to treat the week as a single phenomenon.

The break-ins at companies are, as far as is known, crimes for gain. The spoofing of a defence minister's website is espionage. Its authors were not after card numbers. They wanted to read the correspondence of people who advise governments, in Tokyo and in Washington, on defence and on technology.

It is notable that the campaign was exposed by a private American firm and not by either government, and notable too that the American targets were people who work on the policy of artificial intelligence. Whoever chose them has a clear idea of where the next decade's advantage will lie.

The targets also explain the method. An engineer at a defence contractor, a partner at a law firm, a researcher at a university: none of them works behind the defences of a ministry. Each corresponds with ministries, and each has an inbox that can be read from anywhere once a password and a code have been captured. The adversary has not attacked the wall. He has gone round it.

Japan's response to this kind of threat acquired a new instrument on Thursday, when the law on what is called active cyber defence came into force. The police and the Self-Defense Forces may now, with the approval of an independent panel, enter and disable servers being used to attack the country. From next autumn the government will be able to monitor certain communications passing through Japan in order to detect attacks in preparation.

These are large powers, and the country was right to hesitate over them and right in the end to grant them with safeguards. They are aimed at the adversary behind the second filing cabinet.

They will do nothing for the first and third. No government agency is going to disable a server on behalf of a car-sharing company that kept its members' licences in a place where they could be copied. Nor should it. That is the company's job.

What should change

The cartoon's scales suggest the principle. The cost of a breach should fall on the party that could have prevented it, in proportion to the harm, and at present it does not.

Start with the law. The Act on the Protection of Personal Information requires a business to report a serious leak and to tell the people affected. It asks businesses to delete what they no longer need, but only to make efforts. It provides penalties for defying an order of the regulator, but none for the leak itself. A company that loses a million records through negligence faces embarrassment, the cost of the letters, and a fall in its share price that is usually recovered within the quarter.

Other jurisdictions have concluded that this is not enough. In the European Union a regulator can fine a company up to four per cent of its worldwide turnover. The possibility of an administrative surcharge has been under discussion in Japan for

some time and has been resisted by business. The week's events are an argument for ending the discussion.

Second, retention. The obligation to delete should be a rule with a date attached, not an aspiration. Identity documents collected for a check should be destroyed when the check is done. The records of former staff should be reduced to what the law on pensions and wages actually requires and moved out of the systems in daily use. Regulators should ask, after every breach, not only how the intruder got in but why the data was there.

Third, the notice. People are entitled to be told promptly and specifically what was taken: not that some information may have been affected, but that your licence number and photograph were copied on this date. They are entitled to be told what the company will do for them, and a voucher is not an answer.

Fourth, help. There should be one place to which a person whose identity documents have been exposed can turn, with authority to flag his record at the credit agencies, to tell the telephone companies and the banks, and to issue a replacement licence number without argument. At present he makes those calls himself, one by one, and is believed or not as it happens.

Fifth, example. The Japan Atomic Energy Agency is a public body. Local governments and ministries appear in these lists as often as companies do. A state that proposes to regulate others must be seen to keep its own drawers shut.

The objection, and the answer to it

Business has a reply to all this, and it deserves a hearing. A company that is broken into is the victim of a crime. To fine it is to punish the injured party, and to make it think twice before reporting at all.

The reply mistakes what is being asked. Nobody proposes to penalise a company for being attacked. The proposal is to penalise it for being careless with other people's property: for keeping what it had no need to keep, for leaving unpatched what it had been warned to patch, for giving a contractor data and never asking for it back.

A bank is the victim when it is robbed. It is still expected to have a vault. A penalty that takes account of what the company did beforehand, and that is lighter for one which followed recognised standards and reported at once, creates the right incentive and not the wrong one.

Smaller firms need a different approach, since few have the staff to manage any of this. The answer for them is to hold less and to use services that are built to be secure, and for the government to say plainly which those are.

What a citizen can do, and what he should not have to

It would be wrong to leave the reader with nothing practical, so here is what the specialists say, briefly.

Use a different password for every service, which in practice means letting software remember them. Where a service offers a passkey, a credential tied to your own device that cannot be typed into a forged page, use it. Treat any message that quotes your personal details as unverified, however accurate the details are, and contact the sender by a route you already know.

When you leave a service, ask it to delete your account and the documents you gave it. The law gives you grounds to ask, in a number of circumstances, that your data no longer be used.

That is sensible advice. It is also, like the sign in the cartoon, a list of tasks for the one party who had no hand in the failure.

The alliance in the drawing

There is a reason this page, which usually has other preoccupations, gives its space today to filing cabinets.

Japan's security has come to depend on the confidence of its allies that what they share will be kept. That confidence is built or lost in unglamorous places: in whether a defence contractor's engineer recognises a forged message, in whether a law firm that handles sensitive mergers has two-step verification that cannot be relayed, in whether a research agency patches its servers.

The same week that brought these leaks brought a missile from North Korea and the first public showing of the weapon with which Japan would

answer one. Those are the visible instruments of security. The invisible ones are the habits of a hundred thousand organisations, and the adversary has noticed that they are the easier target.

The United States has its own long list of failures, and nothing in this week gives Tokyo grounds for embarrassment before Washington. It does give both capitals a reason to treat the security of ordinary data as part of the alliance's business, and to share what they learn about campaigns such as this one faster than a private company can publish it.

The year ahead

The man in the cartoon will change his password. He will probably do it properly, which is more than can be said for the institutions that put him there.

He is owed more than advice. He is owed a system in which the organisations that collect information about him hold as little as they can, guard what they hold, tell him the truth when they fail, and pay when their failure costs him.

None of that requires new technology. It requires a decision about where the weight on the scales should rest.

The files left in a morning. The least the country can do is to see that the citizen does not spend the year alone.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: Okamoto Offers Komeito's Votes to Either Side. The Question Is Who Needs Them.

By William | Senior Political Analyst

The new leader of Komeito told his party on Saturday that it would work with anyone, in government or opposition, who shared its aims. As a statement of principle it is unexceptionable. As a strategy it depends on arithmetic that is not in the party's favour.

For a quarter of a century Komeito's value lay in two things. Its seats gave the Liberal Democrats a majority, and its organisation delivered votes to Liberal Democratic candidates in constituencies where the margin was thin.

The first was lost when the party left the coalition last October and the Liberal Democrats found another partner. The second has been diluted by a year in which the party's leader departed for a new alliance, the party itself was expected to follow, and then did not.

Mr Okamoto inherits what is left: a disciplined vote that is smaller than it was, and a membership uncertain what the party is for.

His answer is policy. A party that cannot offer a majority can offer an idea, and the idea he has chosen, no consumption tax on food and a higher rate on everything else, is one that neither the government nor the main opposition has been willing to state so plainly.

The government's plan is to keep the tax and compensate lower earners. The opposition parties mostly promise cuts without saying how they would be paid for. Mr Okamoto's proposal is the only one on the table that reduces the burden on the poor and balances.

That gives him something to trade. If the government finds its own bills in difficulty in the session that opens on Monday, it may discover an interest in his.

The deeper question is whether the electorate that sustained Komeito still exists in the form the party assumes. Its supporters are ageing. The religious organisation behind it has lost the leader who gave it direction for six decades.

A former investment banker from Saga is an unexpected person to lead such a party, and possibly the right one. He can count.

The local elections next spring will show whether those he leads can still be counted on.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: A Potato Is a Small Thing for Allies to Argue About, Which Is Why It Matters

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

Nobody in Washington believes that the future of American agriculture turns on selling fresh potatoes to Japan. The market, if it opens, will be worth a modest sum to growers in Idaho and Washington State.

The issue has nonetheless been raised at senior level,

more than once, and the Japanese government is now reported to be considering a decision in about one year where it had expected to take two or three.

The explanation lies in how this administration measures success. It wants items it can name: a product, a country, a date. A potato is easy to name.

It also lies in the calendar. The midterm elections are a month away, the farm states are restive over tariffs and prices, and a concession from Japan is something to announce.

For Tokyo the calculation is equally unsentimental. The alliance is under no strain on the things that matter most. Mr Trump, by the account given to the prime minister, declined to side with China's president against Japan last month. A government that wishes to keep things that way will not want to be the party that says no over a vegetable.

And yet the manner of the decision matters. Japan's quarantine procedure exists to answer a scientific question, and the answer is supposed not to depend on who is asking.

If the ministry reaches a conclusion in a year because the American side has supplied good data quickly, nothing has been compromised. If it reaches one in a year because it was told to, every future decision of the same kind will be assumed to have a price.

The growers of Hokkaido understand this distinction perfectly, and it is the second possibility they fear.

They are also, it must be said, the beneficiaries of a protected market, and the Japanese consumer has paid for that protection for decades.

The honest course is to do the science properly, publish it, and decide. That is slower than Washington would like and faster than Tokachi would. It is also the only course that leaves the procedure worth having.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: Three Finals, Three Silvers. Japan's Football Is Losing the Asian Games by Choice.

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

There is a way of reading Saturday's result that treats it as a failure, and the players, to their credit, read it that way. They wanted to win and did not.

There is another reading, which is that the Japan Football Association got exactly what its selection policy was designed to produce.

The men's tournament at the Asian Games is for players under 23, with a small number of older players permitted. Japan sends an under-21 team with none of note. It has done so for a decade, on the reasoning that the Games fall two years before an Olympics and should be used to give that Olympic generation its first experience of a tournament.

South Korea sends the strongest side the rules allow, because its players are competing for exemption from military service. On Saturday the difference was a World Cup player aged over 23 who scored the only goal.

The results of the Japanese policy are visible elsewhere. The under-23 side reached the quarter-finals at the Paris Olympics after winning its group without conceding. Players who lost Asian Games finals in 2018 and 2023 are now established in European leagues and in the senior team.

The cost is also visible. Japan has not won this tournament since 2010, and a generation of players has learned to lose finals to South Korea.

Whether that matters depends on what one thinks tournaments are for. A football association can reasonably decide that medals at under-23 level are worth less than the development of players. It cannot then be surprised when supporters, who are asked to fill a stadium, take a different view.

The head coach on Saturday, Go Oiwa, takes charge of the senior team next spring. He is the embodiment of the policy: a coach who has spent five years with age-group sides and is being promoted on the strength of the players he has produced, not the medals he has won.

His mentor, who died on the morning of the final, held the same belief. He said he would rather produce players who were valued at 26 than win a schools championship.

He won three of those anyway. The test of the policy is whether Oiwa's players, at 26, win something that counts.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Japan Morning Post corrects errors of fact as soon as they are identified. Correction requests may be sent to corrections@japanmorningpost.com, giving the date, page and headline of the article concerned.

Saturday's edition said that Hanshin could win the pennant with a win or a draw at Hiroshima or with a defeat for the Giants. Hanshin lost 6-4 and the Giants lost 5-2 to DeNA; the title was decided by the second result.

The notes supplied for today's edition name the retiring Yakult pitcher as Masaki Ishikawa and the winner of the climbing gold medal as Oto Suzuki. They are Masanori Ishikawa and Neo Suzuki, who won the men's lead. The notes describe Masayoshi Otaki, who died on Saturday, as a high school player; he was the head coach of Shimizu Commercial High School's football team from 1974. The scorer of South Korea's goal is given here as Eom Ji-sung.

The notes give the time of North Korea's missile launch as about 6:30 a.m.; the Defense Ministry's figure is about 6:36. They give the storm-wind radius of Typhoon No. 27 as about 130 kilometres and its movement as north-north-east; the bulletin of 3:45 a.m., on which today's map is based, gives 150 kilometres and north-east, and those figures are used. Japan's 83 gold medals are a record for a Japanese team at an Asian Games, not a record for the Games.

The diabetes drug named in the notes as Manjaro is sold as Mounjaro. Shiro Ito's retirement, announced on Thursday, takes effect on his ninetieth birthday next June. The Type 25 is a surface-to-ship missile whose range also gives Japan what the government calls counterstrike capability. The reference in today's cartoon to the files of 120,000 insurance staff is to an announcement by Dai-ichi Life on Friday, which is reported on the business pages.

The photograph on the front page shows Hanshin players tossing their manager, who wears No. 80, at Koshien. It was supplied for this edition and is from the club's pennant celebration of 2023. Saturday's title was decided while the team was at its hotel in Hiroshima, and there was no celebration on a field. The Japan and United States weather maps are printed as details of the maps supplied; every city on each is shown, and the titles and source lines that fall outside the details are restated beside them.

THE WEEK AHEAD

SUNDAY, OCT. 4: The Asian Games close in Nagoya. Rain from Kyushu to Tokai. Typhoon No. 27 forecast at 935 hPa by 3 p.m. Victory sales in Kansai. MONDAY, OCT. 5: The extraordinary Diet session convenes. Megumi Yokota's 62nd birthday. Kirin Cup final, Japan v New Zealand. Typhoon forecast at 925 hPa at 3 a.m. The obesity society publishes its statement.

TUESDAY, OCT. 6: Typhoon No. 27 forecast to pass east-north-east of Chichijima before dawn and east-south-east of Tokyo in the evening. Japan Open final and the farewell ceremony for Kei Nishikori. WEDNESDAY, OCT. 7: The typhoon east of Japan; settled weather returns. FRIDAY, OCT. 9: Wake for Masayoshi Otaki. SATURDAY, OCT. 10: His funeral, 11 a.m., Shizuoka. Anniversary of North Korea's ruling party. MONDAY, OCT. 12: Sports Day. OCT. 18: Asian Para Games open. OCT. 19 to 29: Exercise Keen Sword.

TYPHOON AND MARINE ADVISORIES

Typhoon No. 27 (Choi-wan), 3 a.m. Sunday: large and very strong, at 20.8 degrees north, 146.7 degrees east, 840 km south-east of Chichijima, moving north-east at 15 km/h; 945 hPa; maximum winds 45 m/s, gusts 60; storm-force winds within 150 km; gales within 850 km to the south and 500 km to the north. Forecast: 935 hPa at 3 p.m. Sunday; 925 hPa, 50 m/s at 3 a.m. Monday; 935 hPa at 3 a.m. Tuesday; 950 hPa at 3 a.m. Wednesday; extratropical by Thursday.

Ogasawara Islands: waves of six metres on Sunday and eight on Monday; gusts to 35 m/s on Monday (Sankei). Pacific coasts from Kanto northward: high waves as the storm passes. Chiba: rain clouds possible on Tuesday. Chiba and Kanagawa: ground loose after Typhoon No. 25. Western Japan: rain on Sunday from Kyushu to Tokai. From Wednesday: mostly clear nationwide (tenki.jp).

MARKET REFERENCE

Tokyo markets are closed on Sunday. Friday: Nikkei 225 closed at 68,309.46, down 647; more than 80 per

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cent of Prime market issues lower. TOPIX 4,091.00, down 40.98. Yen in the upper 157s to the dollar. Tokyo consumer prices, September: up 2.7 per cent on the year. Bank of Japan policy rate: 1.25 per cent. United States, September: payrolls up 29,000; unemployment rate 4.2 per cent. Nidec: net loss of 564.6 billion yen; auditors' opinion not expressed for a second year.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS IN THIS EDITION

Front page: Hanshin players toss their manager at Koshien, a photograph of the 2023 pennant celebration supplied for this edition. Page 3: map of Typhoon No. 27 supplied for this edition, from the Japan Meteorological Agency's bulletin of 3:45 a.m. on October 4. Politics: Prime Minister Takaichi at the rostrum of the House of Representatives, file (WPM Productions). International: military aircraft over the White House during September's state visit, file (White House Official). Economy: the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TG2, CC). Weather: details of the Japan and United States maps supplied for this edition. Editorial cartoon: Taro Suzuki.

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THE RECORD BOOK

Central League, after Saturday: Hanshin 77 wins, 60 defeats, 2 draws, champions with four games to play; Yomiuri 76-64-3, season complete; DeNA 70-69-3. Hanshin's titles: four in the single league before 1950 and eight in the Central League, the last two in consecutive years for the first time. Asian Games, Japan to Saturday night: 83 gold, 95 silver, 91 bronze, 269 in all; previous bests 78 golds (Bangkok, 1966) and 218 medals (Hiroshima, 1994). Tokyo: 37 consecutive days with rain, August 27 to October 2; previous record 33 days in 2019.

ABBREVIATIONS

hPa: hectopascal, the unit of atmospheric pressure. m/s: metres a second. EEZ: exclusive economic zone, the sea within 200 nautical miles of a coast. JMA: Japan Meteorological Agency. GSDF: Ground Self-Defense Force. CL and PL: the Central and Pacific leagues of Japanese professional baseball. W, L, S in baseball scores: winning pitcher, losing pitcher, save.

TYPHOON TERMS USED TODAY

Strong: maximum sustained winds of 33 to 43 metres a second. Very strong: 44 to 53. Violent: 54 or more. Large: gales extending, on average, 500 to 800 kilometres from the centre. Storm-force wind: 25 metres a second or more. Gale: 15 or more. Forecast circle: the area in which the centre is expected to lie

with a probability of 70 per cent. Extratropical low: a former typhoon that has lost its warm core. These are the Japan Meteorological Agency's definitions, based on winds averaged over ten minutes.

UNITS AND CONVENTIONS

Wind speeds are given in metres a second; one metre a second is 3.6 kilometres an hour, or about 1.9 knots. Pressure is in hectopascals. Temperatures are in degrees Celsius except on the United States map, which uses Fahrenheit. Times are Japan Standard Time unless another place is named; Japan is at present nine hours ahead of Greenwich, 13 ahead of New York and 16 ahead of Los Angeles. Japanese names are given with the family name last. Baseball records are written as wins, defeats and draws.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Police: 110. Fire and ambulance: 119. Coast guard, for emergencies at sea: 118. Disaster message dial: 171. Police consultation, not an emergency: #9110. Consumer hotline, including advice on suspicious calls and messages after a data leak: 188. Child consultation centres: 189. The Personal Information Protection Commission accepts complaints about the handling of personal data through its website.

SOURCES FOR THIS EDITION

Reports in this edition draw on the Sunday morning papers and Saturday night's wires: Asahi Shimbun, Yomiuri Shimbun, Sankei News, Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Chunichi Shimbun, Tokyo Shimbun, Kyodo News, Jiji Press, NHK, NTV, TBS and TV Asahi; on the sports dailies Daily Sports, Nikkan Sports, Sports Nippon, Sports Hochi and Sankei Sports; on ITmedia, Diamond Online and Toyo Keizai Online; on tenki.jp, Weathernews and the Japan Meteorological Agency for weather; and on the report of the security company Proofpoint. Where accounts differ the difference is stated.

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TOMORROW'S EDITION

Monday's edition carries the closing of the Asian Games; the opening of the extraordinary Diet session and the opposition's questions on the agriculture minister; the latest position and strength of Typhoon No. 27 as it nears the Ogasawara Islands; reaction to North Korea's missile launch; and the reopening of

the Tokyo markets.

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