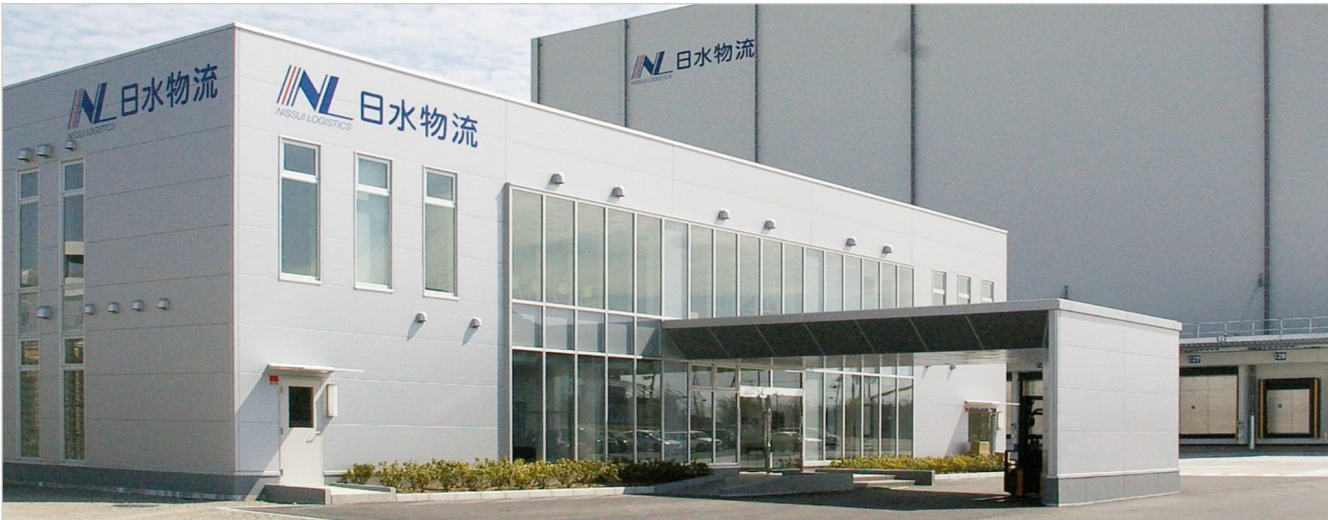


# Ransomware Shuts a SoftBank Group Cloud, Hitting 495 Customers, and a Cyberattack Halts All 17 Nissui Cold-Storage Warehouses

*IDC Frontier's outage began at about 3:40 a.m. on Wednesday and had no prospect of recovery by Thursday evening; Nissui Logistics, which serves about 1,200 clients, stops receiving and shipping goods, and Nichirei Foods moves stock to other warehouses*

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor, with Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform



A cold-storage centre of Nissui Logistics, the low-temperature logistics subsidiary of the Nissui group, in a file image. After a cyberattack the company stopped receiving and shipping goods at all 17 of its warehouses, which about 1,200 businesses use; Nichirei Foods and other clients have moved goods elsewhere. (Image supplied for this edition)

A ransomware attack has shut down a cloud service run by IDC Frontier, a data and cloud company in the SoftBank group, leaving 495 companies and local governments without it, Nikkei reports.

The outage began at about 3:40 a.m. on Wednesday. By Thursday evening there was still no prospect of recovery, according to the report.

In a second case reported the same day, Nissui Logistics, the cold-storage and low-temperature transport subsidiary of the seafood and frozen-food group Nissui, suspended the receipt and shipment of goods at all 17 of its warehouses after a cyberattack.

About 1,200 businesses use the company's warehouses. Nichirei Foods, one of the country's largest makers of frozen food, and other clients have switched to other warehouses, according to the reports.

## A shared service, a shared outage

Ransomware is malicious software that encrypts a victim's files and systems so that they cannot be used, after which the attackers demand payment for a key to unlock them. Many groups also steal data first and threaten to publish it.

An attack on a cloud provider multiplies the damage. A single company's systems serve hundreds of customers at once, and when they stop, every customer stops with them.

IDC Frontier is a wholly owned subsidiary of SoftBank Corp., the mobile carrier. Under a reorganisation that took effect in April, its data-centre business passed to SoftBank, which wants to build up data centres for artificial intelligence, and it took over the development and operation of cloud services previously run by its parent.

The reports did not list which of IDC Frontier's customers were affected or which of their services had been disrupted. Among them are local governments, whose systems handle services for residents.

In at least one case, a precautionary shutdown of a management system spread the disruption to sites that had not themselves been attacked, the reports said. Cutting systems off quickly can stop an intruder from spreading, but it can also stop work that the attack never touched.

## Frozen goods cannot wait

For Nissui Logistics the problem is physical. Frozen food is kept at minus 18 degrees or below from the factory to the shop, and the warehouses where it is stored are the hinges of the system that moves it, known as the cold chain.

When a warehouse cannot record what comes in and what goes out, trucks cannot be loaded, deliveries to supermarkets, restaurants and food processors are delayed, and goods arriving from factories and ports must be diverted.

Nissui, known until 2022 as Nippon Suisan Kaisha, is one of the country's largest seafood and frozen-food companies, and its logistics arm stores goods for food

makers, importers, wholesalers and retailers as well as for its parent.

Switching to another warehouse is possible, as Nichirei Foods has done, but space in cold storage is limited and expensive, and moving stock takes time and trucks. Nichirei Foods belongs to a group whose own logistics arm is among the largest operators of cold storage in Japan.

## Not the first in the cold chain

The cold chain has been hit before this year. In July, a cyberattack disrupted the cold-storage operations of the Nichirei Logi Group, the logistics arm of the Nichirei group, which began resuming deliveries on July 17, according to the company.

Last autumn a ransomware attack halted ordering and shipping at Asahi Group, the brewer, for weeks. In 2023 an attack stopped the container terminals at the port of Nagoya, the country's busiest by cargo volume, for more than two days.

The group that claimed the Asahi attack, Qilin, was in the news this week for another reason: a 28-year-old Russian believed to be one of its key members, detained in Osaka in May, has been handed over to Germany, where he is suspected of an attack on a logistics company.

The attacks also come in a record year for data leaks. The Yomiuri Shimbun reported on Wednesday that 506 leak incidents had been counted so far this year, and on Monday the operator of the Yakiniku King restaurant chain said the data of about 10.79 million members of its app had been taken.

## The questions

Several important questions were unanswered on Thursday: who carried out the attacks, how they got in, whether data was taken, whether a ransom was demanded, and whether the two cases are connected.

The government's new laws on active cyber defence took effect on October 1. They allow the authorities, under conditions, to enter and disable servers used in serious attacks, and they oblige operators of designated core infrastructure to report incidents.

Neither cloud computing nor cold storage is among the sectors designated as core infrastructure under the economic security law on which those obligations rest. Companies outside those sectors may still report attacks voluntarily, and the police can investigate any crime.

## Also today

Tokyo shares fell for a second day. The Nikkei average lost 993 yen to 69,042.11, back below 70,000, as American long-term interest rates and the price of crude oil rose. The report is alongside.

The Nobel Prize in Literature has been awarded to the Canadian poet Anne Carson, 76, whose work is a dialogue with the literature of ancient Greece and Rome. Sanshiro Murao won the men's 90 kg world judo title for the second year running. Both reports are inside.

## ECONOMY

### Nikkei Falls 993 Yen and Slips Back Below 70,000 as American Rates and Crude Oil Climb

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Tokyo shares fell for a second day on Thursday, and the Nikkei average gave up the 70,000 line it had crossed on Tuesday.

The average closed 993.60 yen lower at 69,042.11, Nikkei reports, a fall of about 1.4 per cent. The broader TOPIX index lost 62.65 points, about 1.5 per cent, to 4,091.46.

Rising long-term interest rates in the United States and a higher price for crude oil weighed on the market, according to Nikkei.

The two days of losses have taken about 1,642 yen, or a little more than two per cent, off the close of 70,683.98 on Tuesday, the first close above 70,000 since July 1.

On Wednesday the average had fallen 648 yen to 70,035.71, holding just above the line, as AI and semiconductor shares, among them Advantest, Tokyo Electron and Disco, were sold along with banks. The TOPIX had risen briefly that morning above its August 14 high before turning down.

Higher American interest rates tend to draw money away from shares, especially from the technology companies whose valuations rest on profits far in the future, and those companies carry great weight in the Nikkei average.

Oil matters to Japan more than to most economies. The country imports almost all the crude it uses, and a higher price raises costs for manufacturers, airlines and households and widens the trade deficit.

Overnight in New York, crude oil rebounded to the 91-dollar range on buying prompted by news from the Middle East, Kyodo News reports.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 51 points, after falling 341 points the previous day.

The yen traded at 157.83 to 157.93 to the dollar in New York, and at 157.78 to 157.89 in Tokyo on Thursday morning, according to Kyodo and Jiji Press. Against the euro it stood in the upper 176-yen range.

A weak yen supports the profits of the large exporters that dominate the indexes, one reason the market has been able to climb this year despite higher interest rates at home.

Japan's own long-term interest rate stood at 3.105 per cent on Tuesday, and the coupon on newly issued ten-year government bonds has been set at 3.1 per cent. The Bank of Japan's policy rate is 1.25 per cent.

Investors are also weighing the government's fiscal plans. In the Diet this week the prime minister called a cut in the consumption tax the best method, with its funding to be decided after deliberation.

The domestic economy offers some support. Real wages rose 1.5 per cent in August from a year earlier, the eighth monthly rise in a row and the first such run in ten years.

After this year's long climb, a fall of two per cent in two days is not unusual. Investors will watch whether the market finds support around these levels or tests lower ground.

Companies' results for the first half of the business year, due from late October, will give investors a fresh reading of profits, and of how much the weak yen and higher costs have affected them.

Friday's session is the last before a three-day weekend. Monday is Sports Day, a national holiday, and the Tokyo Stock Exchange will be closed.

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WEATHER — TOKYO

 **26°C**  
Low 17°C · Sunny

 Sapporo  
23°

 Osaka  
29°

 Fukuoka  
28°

 Naha  
29°

Sunny and warmer; 29°C in Kyoto, Osaka, Hiroshima and Kochi. Koguma very strong from early Sunday, passing near the Ogasawara Islands Monday and Tuesday. Nolo extratropical by Monday. Full weather, Page 13.

## TODAY IN BRIEF

- Cyber: ransomware knocks out IDC Frontier's cloud service from 3:40 a.m. Wednesday, affecting 495 companies and councils; no recovery in sight Thursday evening.
- Cold chain: Nissui Logistics stops receiving and shipping at all 17 warehouses after a cyberattack; Nichirei Foods and others switch warehouses.
- Markets: the Nikkei falls 993.60 yen to 69,042.11, back below 70,000, as American rates and crude oil rise. TOPIX down 62.65.
- Nobel: the Canadian poet and classicist Anne Carson, 76, wins the literature prize. Peace is announced this evening.
- Politics: Takaichi tells Yana to stay and 'repay with your work', and rules out an inquiry into budgets. Okinawa curfew begins today.
- Judo: Sanshiro Murao retains the 90 kg world title without conceding a point; Shihō Tanaka out at 70 kg.

## TWO TYPHOONS

- No. 29 (Koguma): very strong by Sunday.
- Near Ogasawara Monday and Tuesday.
- No. 28 (Nolo): extratropical by Monday.
- No landfall on the main islands.

## TODAY

- 6 p.m.: Nobel Peace Prize.
- Okinawa curfew begins.
- Tokyo sunny, 26 degrees.

## MARKETS

|                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Nikkei 225      | 69,042.11 ▼ 993.60 |
| TOPIX           | 4,091.46 ▼ 62.65   |
| Yen (NY)        | 157.83-93 per \$   |
| Euro            | upper ¥176         |
| NY crude        | \$91 range         |
| Dow             | ▲ 51               |
| BOJ policy rate | 1.25%              |

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- Anne Carson wins the literature prize, Page 16.
- Editorial: One cloud lock, Page 19.

## THE WEEK

- Sat. Oct. 10: Climax Series begins.
- Sun. 11: judo mixed team; new moon.
- Mon. 12: Sports Day; Izumo Ekiden.
- Tue.-Wed.: rain from a front.

## NOBEL WEEK

- Thu.: literature, Anne Carson.
- Today: peace, about 6 p.m.

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FROM PAGE 1

# Ransomware Shuts a SoftBank Group Cloud, Hitting 495 Customers, and a Cyberattack Halts All 17 Nissui Cold-Storage Warehouses

Continued from Page 1

Typhoon No. 29, Koguma, now a strong typhoon, is forecast to become very strong by early Sunday and to pass near the Ogasawara Islands on Monday and Tuesday. The map is inside.

The prime minister has told the agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, to stay in his post and repay the public

## TYPHOONS

### The Three-Day Weekend: Fine Weather on the Main Islands, a Typhoon in the South-East, and a Front by Midweek

By the Weather Desk

The three-day weekend that ends with Sports Day on Monday looks fine for most of the country.

The agency's weekly forecast calls for mostly sunny or cloudy weather from northern to western Japan from Friday through Monday.

A weather front is expected to bring rain on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 13 and 14, ending the run of fine days.

In Okinawa, the forecast is for mostly cloudy skies throughout the period, with rain in some areas on Sunday.

In Kyushu on Friday, Fukuoka starts cloudy before the sun comes out in the afternoon, while Kagoshima stays mostly cloudy. Visitors to the autumn festival in Takayama on Friday and Saturday can expect fine weather in central Japan.

New moon falls early on Sunday, so the nights of the holiday weekend will be dark, good for looking at the stars away from city lights.

Friday itself is sunny across most of Japan and warmer than Thursday. Highs reach 29 degrees in Kyoto, Osaka, Hiroshima, Kochi, Kagoshima and Naha, and 26 in Tokyo.

The exception to the fine picture is the ocean south-east of the main islands, where Typhoon No. 29 is forecast to be very strong from early Sunday and to pass near the Ogasawara Islands on Monday and Tuesday.

Typhoon No. 28 passes far to the east on Saturday and becomes an extratropical low by Monday.

Swell from both storms is likely on Pacific coasts through the weekend. Anyone planning to spend the holiday by the sea should check the wave forecasts and keep away from rocks and breakwaters.

For outdoor events, among them the Izumo university relay on Monday, the outlook on the main islands is favourable.

Mornings remain cool in the north and in the mountains: 9 degrees in Kushiro and 10 in Nagano on Friday morning.

## TYPHOONS

### One Day, Two Forecasts: What Changed Between Thursday's Bulletins and Friday's, and Why

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Readers who compare today's typhoon map with yesterday's will notice that the forecasts have changed, for both storms.

On Thursday morning the agency expected Koguma to be very strong by early Saturday, at 950 hPa and 45 m/s. On Friday morning it expected the storm to reach that class a day later, by early Sunday, at 955 hPa, with 950 hPa on Monday.

Thursday's forecast placed Koguma about 510 km east-north-east of Chichijima at 3 a.m. on Tuesday. Friday's places it about 450 km east-north-east, somewhat closer to the islands.

For Nolo, Thursday's forecast had a strong typhoon by Friday morning and an extratropical low about 890 km east of Tokyo by early Sunday. Friday's has a severe tropical storm that becomes extratropical a day later, by early Monday, and passes about 800 km east-south-east of Tokyo early on Sunday.

Changes of this size are normal. A forecast three or four days ahead rests on computer models of the

with his work. The American forces' curfew in Okinawa takes effect today, and the Nobel Peace Prize is announced this evening.

Today's editorial takes its subject from the cartoon: one lock on a cloud, and the cold chain stops.

whole atmosphere, which are run again and again as new observations arrive from satellites, aircraft, ships and weather stations.

Small differences in the starting picture grow into large differences over several days, which is why the agency draws circles that widen with time rather than a single line.

The forecast circle shows where the centre is expected to be with a probability of 70 per cent. In about three cases in ten, the centre falls outside it.

Strength is harder to forecast than track. A typhoon intensifies when it has warm water beneath it and little change of wind with height above it, and small changes in either can speed or slow its growth.

The lesson for anyone in the path is to watch the latest bulletin rather than remember the last one. The agency updates its forecasts every few hours, and more often as a storm approaches land.

For the Ogasawara Islands, Friday's changes point the same way: a storm that peaks a little later but passes a little nearer.

## TYPHOONS

### A Day at Sea: The Ship That Links the Ogasawara Islands to Tokyo, and Why Typhoons Rewrite Its Timetable

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Chichijima is part of Tokyo, but getting there from the capital takes about a day.

The islands have no airport. Their regular link with the mainland is the Ogasawara Maru, a passenger and cargo ship that sails from Takeshiba pier in central Tokyo and takes about 24 hours to cover the roughly 1,000 km to Chichijima.

The ship usually leaves Tokyo about once a week, stays at Chichijima for a few days and then sails back, so a visit to the islands typically lasts at least six days, most of them spent on the islands and two at sea.

Hahajima, about 50 km farther south, is reached from Chichijima by a smaller ship, the Hahajima Maru, in about two hours.

The ship carries more than passengers. Food, fuel, mail, building materials and medical supplies arrive by sea, and when sailings are delayed the islands' shops feel it. Newspapers arrive with each sailing, several days' editions at a time.

When a typhoon threatens, the shipping line may bring a departure forward so that the ship can leave before the seas rise, or postpone it until they fall. Visitors may find their stay shortened or extended at short notice.

Urgent medical cases are flown out by the Self-Defense Forces, whose flying boats and helicopters can reach the islands when the ship cannot.

The Ogasawara Islands were returned to Japan by the United States in 1968 and were listed as a World Natural Heritage site in 2011, for their plants and animals found nowhere else.

The long voyage protects that heritage as much as it inconveniences visitors. Proposals for an airport have been debated for decades, weighing access against the fragile environment.

This weekend the timetable will be written by Koguma. Anyone with a booking should check the shipping line's announcements before setting out.

## ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Takaichi keeps Yana: 'repay with your work', Page 4.

Twenty years since North Korea's first test, Page 6.

The cold chain scrambles after Nissui, Page 7.

IDC Frontier: what is known, Page 9.

## TYPHOONS

### Nolo Stays a Severe Tropical Storm, Passes East of the Islands on Saturday and Becomes Extratropical by Monday

By the Weather Desk

Typhoon No. 28, Nolo, did not strengthen into a strong typhoon as forecast, and is now expected to remain a severe tropical storm until it loses its tropical character east of Japan.

On Thursday morning the agency had expected Nolo to become a strong typhoon by Friday, at 980 hPa and 35 m/s. At 6 a.m. on Friday it was at 990 hPa with winds of 30 m/s.

It was then about 820 km east of Chichijima, moving north-west at 25 km/h. On the forecast track it passes about 630 km north-east of Chichijima on Saturday morning and turns north.

By 3 a.m. on Sunday it is expected to be about 800 km east-south-east of Tokyo, at 990 hPa and 30 m/s, and by 3 a.m. on Monday an extratropical low of 992 hPa with winds of 25 m/s.

Thursday's forecast had it extratropical by Sunday, about 890 km east of Tokyo. The new forecast keeps it tropical a day longer and brings it somewhat closer to the capital, though still far out to sea.

On the forecast track its gales, which extend 390 km to the north-west of the centre, would remain well offshore.

Nolo's chief effect on Japan is likely to be swell on the Pacific coast, adding to the waves already sent towards the shore by the previous storms.

For shipping on the routes east of Japan, the storm remains a hazard through the weekend.

An extratropical low is not necessarily weaker than the typhoon it was. It draws its energy from the contrast between cold and warm air rather than from warm seas, and it can spread its winds over a wider area.

Nolo takes its name from the list used for storms in the central Pacific, where it formed, east of the date line. Koguma, the Japanese name for the constellation Ursa Minor, the little bear, was contributed by Japan to the western Pacific list.

## TYPHOONS

### Ogasawara Prepares for Koguma: The Strongest Winds Are Forecast for the Ocean South-East of the Islands Late in the Weekend

By the Weather Desk

The Ogasawara Islands, about 1,000 km south of central Tokyo, are the part of Japan most exposed to Typhoon No. 29.

On Friday morning's forecast, Koguma reaches its peak, 950 hPa and 45 m/s, at 3 a.m. on Monday, over the ocean south-east of the islands, and then turns north to pass them on the east.

About 450 km east-north-east of Chichijima at 3 a.m. on Tuesday is the agency's best estimate. The forecast circle for that time is wide, and the western edge of the area that could have storm winds during the forecast period runs just east of the island.

Even if the centre stays well out to sea, a storm of this size sends large waves ahead of it. Koguma's gales already extend 390 km to the north of its centre.

Swell, the long, powerful waves that travel far from a storm, is likely to reach the islands before the wind does. Fishing boats and small craft will need to be secured, and beaches and harbour walls avoided.

The islands have no airport. Their link with the mainland is the ship, and decisions on sailings are made at short notice when a typhoon approaches.

Sports Day, Monday, falls in the middle of the period of greatest risk, and visitors who have travelled to the islands for the three-day weekend may find their plans changed.

The islands are used to typhoons, and residents know how to prepare. The concern is the combination of a very strong storm, a holiday weekend and a single line of supply.

Minamitorishima, Japan's easternmost island, where staff of the Self-Defense Forces and the meteorological agency are stationed, lies between the two storms' tracks.

The agency's next bulletins will show whether the

track shifts west, towards the islands, or east, away from them.

## TYPHOONS

### Twenty-Nine Storms by the Second Week of October: How This Year Compares

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Koguma is the 29th typhoon of the year, and October is not yet half over.

The Japan Meteorological Agency numbers each storm in the western North Pacific that reaches tropical storm strength, with winds of about 17 metres a second or more. In an average year about 25 form.

More storms form in August and September than in any other months, but October usually brings several more, and some form as late as December.

With 29 already, this year is well ahead of the average pace, and it is likely to finish above the average. The numbers record only the order in which storms form, not their strength: No. 29 is far stronger than No. 28.

The record is 39, set in 1967. The fewest in a year was 14, in 2010. The agency's statistics begin in 1951.

The number of storms is only one measure of a season. What matters more to people on land is how many approach or strike, and how strong they are when they do.

On average about 11 or 12 storms a year come close to Japan, and about three make landfall on the four main islands. A year with many storms over the open ocean can still spare the country.

This year has not spared it. Typhoon No. 25 left loosened ground in Chiba and Kanagawa prefectures, where caution is still advised in rain.

Scientists studying a warming climate expect the total number of typhoons to change little or even fall, but the proportion of very strong ones, and the rainfall they bring, to rise.

The storms of this autumn will add to the record on which that research depends.

## TYPHOONS

### Swell: The Wave That Arrives Before the Storm, and Why a Sunny Beach Can Be Dangerous

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Long before a typhoon's clouds appear on the horizon, its waves can reach the shore.

Strong winds blowing over a wide area of ocean for many hours raise large waves. As the waves travel away from the storm, the shorter, choppier ones die out, and the longer ones sort themselves into regular, smooth rollers known as swell.

Swell travels fast, faster than many typhoons move, and loses little energy over great distances. It can cross a thousand kilometres of ocean in a day or two.

On a beach the effect is deceptive. The sky may be clear and the wind light, yet every so often a much larger wave arrives and runs far up the sand or over a breakwater.

People fishing from rocks and harbour walls, surfers and walkers on the shore are the most at risk. Every typhoon season brings accidents of this kind, often on fine days.

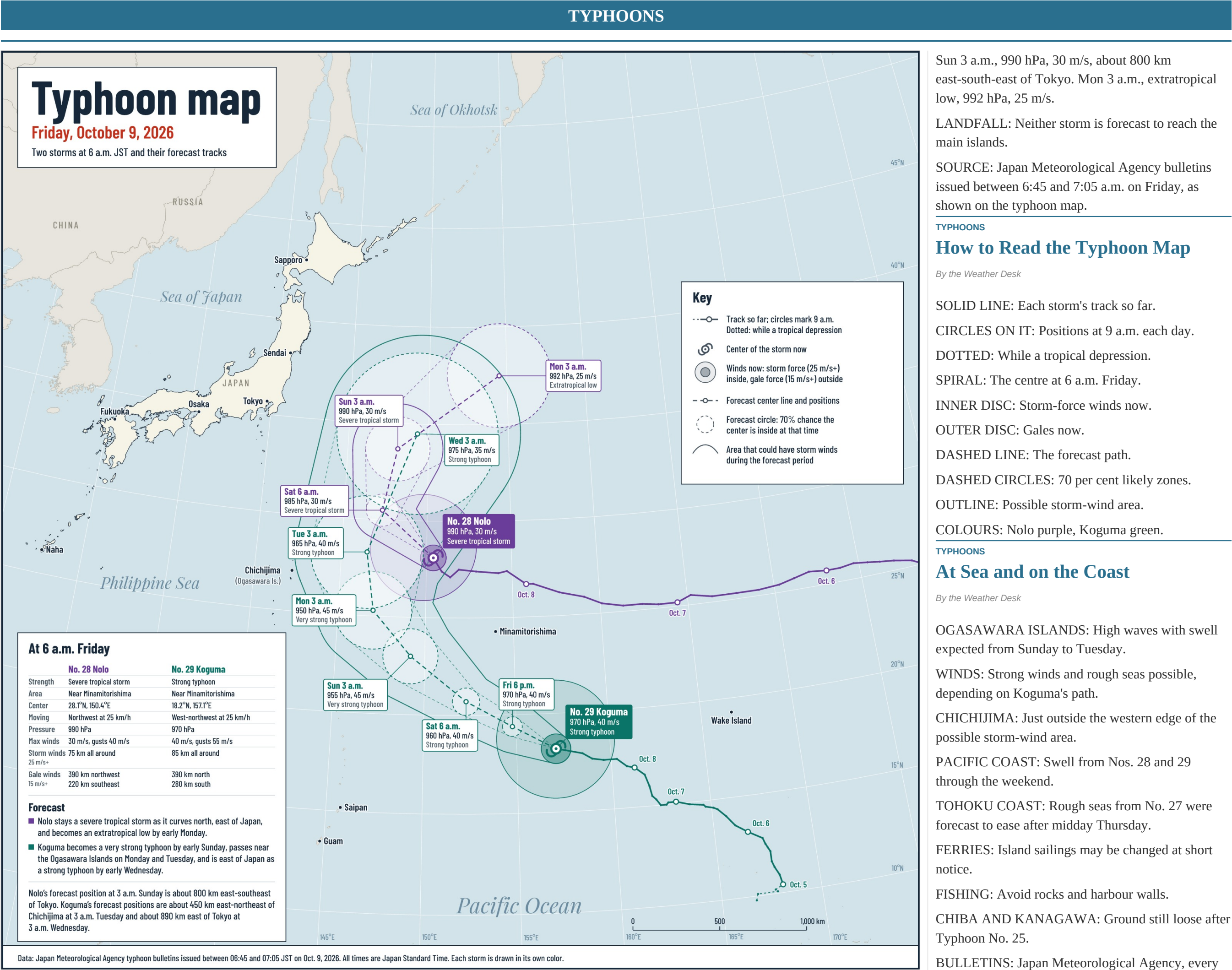
The waves also batter coastal structures and can carry sand and debris inland, and when they arrive with high tide or a storm surge, flooding becomes more likely.

This week the Pacific coast has felt swell from several storms in succession. Rough seas from Typhoon No. 27 on the Tohoku coast were expected to last until about midday on Thursday, and No. 28 and No. 29 will add more.

For the Ogasawara Islands, high waves with swell are expected from Sunday to Tuesday as Koguma approaches.

The safest rule is simple: when a typhoon is anywhere near, stay away from the edge of the sea, however calm the day appears.

Wave forecasts are published by the meteorological agency alongside its typhoon bulletins, and coastal municipalities issue their own warnings.



TYPHOONS

Koguma, Now a Strong Typhoon, Is Forecast to Be Very Strong by Early Sunday and to Pass Near the Ogasawara Islands on Monday and Tuesday

Nolo, still a severe tropical storm, passes about 630 km north-east of Chichijima on Saturday morning and becomes an extratropical low by Monday

By the Weather Desk

Typhoon No. 29, Koguma, had strengthened into a strong typhoon by early Friday and is forecast to become very strong by early Sunday, before passing near the Ogasawara Islands on Monday and Tuesday, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency's bulletins issued on Friday morning.

At 6 a.m. on Friday its centre was at 18.2 degrees north and 157.1 degrees east, in the area the agency describes as near Minamitorishima, moving west-north-west at 25 km/h. The central pressure was 970 hectopascals, with maximum winds of 40 metres a second and gusts of 55.

Storm-force winds of 25 metres a second or more extended 85 km in all directions from the centre, and gales of 15 metres a second or more 390 km to the north and 280 km to the south.

Koguma's forecast

The agency forecasts 970 hPa and 40 m/s at 6 p.m. on Friday, and 960 hPa and 40 m/s at 6 a.m. on Saturday. By 3 a.m. on Sunday Koguma is expected to be a very strong typhoon, at 955 hPa with winds of 45 m/s, and at 3 a.m. on Monday 950 hPa and 45 m/s.

It then weakens a little as it turns north. At 3 a.m. on Tuesday the forecast position is about 450 km east-north-east of Chichijima, at 965 hPa and 40 m/s, a strong typhoon. At 3 a.m. on Wednesday it is

expected about 890 km east of Tokyo, still a strong typhoon, at 975 hPa and 35 m/s.

On the map the area that could have storm winds during the forecast period, outlined in green, stretches north-west across the ocean south-east of Japan. Its western edge runs just east of Chichijima, which leaves the island little margin if the track shifts west.

Nolo turns away

Typhoon No. 28, Nolo, was a severe tropical storm at 6 a.m., at 28.1 degrees north and 150.4 degrees east, also near Minamitorishima, moving north-west at 25 km/h. Its pressure was 990 hPa, with winds of 30 m/s and gusts of 40.

Storm-force winds extended 75 km all around it, and gales 390 km to the north-west and 220 km to the south-east.

The agency expects Nolo to remain a severe tropical storm as it curves north, east of Japan: 985 hPa and 30 m/s at 6 a.m. on Saturday, 990 hPa and 30 m/s at 3 a.m. on Sunday, when it is about 800 km east-south-east of Tokyo, and an extratropical low of 992 hPa with winds of 25 m/s by 3 a.m. on Monday.

The map

The map of both storms, drawn from the agency's bulletins issued between 6:45 and 7:05 a.m. on

at 25 km/h. 970 hPa. Winds 40 m/s, gusts 55.  
WIND AREAS: Storm-force winds 85 km all around. Gales 390 km north, 280 km south.

KOGUMA FORECAST: Sat 6 a.m., 960 hPa, 40 m/s. Sun 3 a.m., 955 hPa, 45 m/s, very strong. Mon 3 a.m., 950 hPa, 45 m/s. Tue 3 a.m., 965 hPa, 40 m/s, about 450 km east-north-east of Chichijima. Wed 3 a.m., 975 hPa, 35 m/s, about 890 km east of Tokyo.

Friday, shows each storm in its own colour, Nolo in purple and Koguma in green, with the tracks they have followed since October 5 and 6.

The shaded discs around each centre mark the present areas of storm-force winds and gales. Each dashed circle shows where the centre is expected to be at that time with a probability of 70 per cent; the circles grow with time because the forecast becomes less certain.

Koguma's solid green line shows its path so far, north-westward from far to the south-east since October 5. Nolo's purple line comes in from far to the east, where the storm formed in the central Pacific, and bends north-west after October 8.

Neither storm is forecast to make landfall on the main islands. Around the Ogasawara Islands, high waves with swell are expected from Sunday to Tuesday, with strong winds and rough seas depending on the path, tenki.jp reports.

Residents and visitors on Chichijima and Hahajima should follow the agency's bulletins and the announcements of the village office and the shipping line through the weekend.

NO. 28 NOLO: Severe tropical storm. Centre 28.1N, 150.4E, near Minamitorishima, about 820 km east of Chichijima.

MOVEMENT AND STRENGTH: North-west at 25 km/h. 990 hPa. Winds 30 m/s, gusts 40.

WIND AREAS: Storm-force winds 75 km all around. Gales 390 km north-west, 220 km south-east.

NOLO FORECAST: Sat 6 a.m., 985 hPa, 30 m/s.

Sun 3 a.m., 990 hPa, 30 m/s, about 800 km east-south-east of Tokyo. Mon 3 a.m., extratropical low, 992 hPa, 25 m/s.

LANDFALL: Neither storm is forecast to reach the main islands.

SOURCE: Japan Meteorological Agency bulletins issued between 6:45 and 7:05 a.m. on Friday, as shown on the typhoon map.

TYPHOONS

How to Read the Typhoon Map

By the Weather Desk

SOLID LINE: Each storm's track so far.

CIRCLES ON IT: Positions at 9 a.m. each day.

DOTTED: While a tropical depression.

SPIRAL: The centre at 6 a.m. Friday.

INNER DISC: Storm-force winds now.

OUTER DISC: Gales now.

DASHED LINE: The forecast path.

DASHED CIRCLES: 70 per cent likely zones.

OUTLINE: Possible storm-wind area.

COLOURS: Nolo purple, Koguma green.

TYPHOONS

At Sea and on the Coast

By the Weather Desk

OGASAWARA ISLANDS: High waves with swell expected from Sunday to Tuesday.

WINDS: Strong winds and rough seas possible, depending on Koguma's path.

CHICHIJIMA: Just outside the western edge of the possible storm-wind area.

PACIFIC COAST: Swell from Nos. 28 and 29 through the weekend.

TOHOKU COAST: Rough seas from No. 27 were forecast to ease after midday Thursday.

FERRIES: Island sailings may be changed at short notice.

FISHING: Avoid rocks and harbour walls.

CHIBA AND KANAGAWA: Ground still loose after Typhoon No. 25.

BULLETINS: Japan Meteorological Agency, every few hours.

LANDFALL: None forecast on the main islands.

POLITICS

The Budget Committee: Where Ministers Face Questions One by One, on Live Television

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

When the opposition says it will pursue a minister in the Diet, it usually means in the budget committee.

Each house has one. Formally they examine the government's budgets. In practice their sessions range over every subject, because almost any question can be connected to spending.

The most important sessions are those at which the prime minister and all the ministers attend, known as basic questioning. They are broadcast live by the public broadcaster, NHK, and they are where the political temperature of a session is set.

The format is unforgiving. A member of the opposition puts a question to a named minister, who must answer from his seat without a long prepared text. Follow-up questions come at once.

Ministers have bureaucrats behind them passing notes, but a minister who cannot answer, or answers inconsistently, is shown doing so on national television.

Questioning time is allotted among the parties according to their strength, but the opposition parties together receive a large share.

Ministers have resigned after poor performances in the committee, and prime ministers' approval ratings have moved with it.

The committee can also demand documents and call witnesses, although the governing parties, with their majority on the committee, decide whether to agree.

For the agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, the committee will be the test of the explanation he has given so far: that he made an inquiry but never lobbied, and that there is no record of a meeting.

The prime minister, who decided to keep him, will be asked about her decision in the same room.

POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at the rostrum of the House of Representatives, in a file image. She has told the agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, to stay in his post and repay the public with his work, and has ruled out an investigation within the government into how budgets were allocated. (Photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

Takaichi Keeps Yana in the Cabinet and Tells Him to 'Repay With Your Work'; She Rules Out a Government Inquiry Into Budgets

The agriculture minister stays despite a recording in which he boasted of cutting road money to towns that had not backed him  
By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has decided that the agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, should remain in his post, and has told him simply to work and repay the public with his work, Sankei News reports.

She also rejected the idea of an investigation within the government into how budgets had been allocated, according to the report.

The decision closes, for now, the question of whether the minister would be the first casualty of her cabinet's autumn session. It does not close the matter itself.

The case began with a recording, made public last week, of remarks at a party gathering in May. In it, a speaker whom Mr Yana has acknowledged was himself said that road budgets for two towns whose mayors had not supported him had been cut drastically.

On Monday Mr Yana withdrew the remarks and apologised, while denying that he had ever approached the land ministry about either town. Reports on Tuesday said he had made an inquiry to the ministry about road budgets in February. On Wednesday he said there was no record of any

meeting.  
An inquiry inside the government would have meant asking the land ministry to examine its own allocations to the two towns. The prime minister's refusal means that, unless new evidence emerges, the official position remains that nothing improper happened.

The opposition parties have said they will continue to pursue him. Their best opportunity comes in the budget committees, where ministers must answer questions one at a time and on television.

For Ms Takaichi the calculation is familiar. Dismissing a minister early in a session can look decisive, but it can also encourage the opposition to target the next one, and her coalition's majority in the Diet is not comfortable.

Keeping him carries its own risk. If further evidence of the kind on the recording appears, the prime minister who kept him will share the blame.

Mr Yana has said he will not resign.  
The photograph shows the prime minister at the rostrum of the House of Representatives.

has withdrawn the remarks and denies approaching the ministry about either town.

Reports this week said he had made an inquiry to the ministry about road budgets in February. The ministry says the inquiry had no effect.

The facts could be tested by comparing the grants to the two towns over several years with those to similar towns, and by examining records of contacts between the minister's office and the ministry. The prime minister has ruled out an investigation within the government.

The budget committees of both houses, where ministers answer questions one by one, are where the opposition will press for those records.

POLITICS

Words That Cost Ministers Their Jobs: From Eto's Rice to Hanashi's Death Penalty Remark

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Japanese ministers have lost their posts for many reasons, but careless words have ended more careers than almost anything else.

The most recent example is in the same ministry. In May last year Taku Eto, then agriculture minister, told a fund-raising gathering that he had never had to buy rice because his supporters gave it to him, at a time when the price of rice was at a record high and households were angry.

He apologised, but the remark was seen as showing how far he was from ordinary shoppers. He resigned within days, and Shinjiro Koizumi took over the ministry.

In November 2022 the justice minister, Yasuhiro Hanashi, resigned after saying that his job only made the news when he signed orders for executions. The remark was widely condemned as making light of the death penalty.

The same autumn two other ministers in the government of Fumio Kishida left in quick succession, one over ties to the Unification Church and one over problems with political funds, a series the press called resignation dominoes.

Prime ministers weigh such cases carefully. Dismissing a minister quickly can contain the damage, but each resignation also invites questions about the prime minister's judgment in appointing him.

A minister who keeps his post is usually expected to explain himself fully in the Diet. The opposition's tactic is to keep the questions going until the explanation runs out.

Mr Yana's case differs from Mr Eto's in one important respect. Mr Eto's words were embarrassing but not an allegation of wrongdoing. Mr Yana's remarks describe the use of public money to punish municipalities, which he denies ever happened.

That makes the evidence decisive. If records or testimony show that he did influence road budgets, the case will become one of the abuse of office, not of an unfortunate turn of phrase.

For now the prime minister has judged that his denial, and the absence of a record, are enough.

POLITICS

The American Forces' Curfew in Okinawa Takes Effect Today as the Three-Day Stand-Down Ends

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The curfew that the American forces in Okinawa announced after the killing of a woman in Naha takes effect today, Friday, as the three-day suspension of their operations ends.

Personnel will be restricted between midnight and 5 a.m. for 30 days, Sankei News reported earlier this week.

The measures follow the arrest on Sunday of a lance corporal, aged 20, from Futenma air station on suspicion of the robbery and murder of a woman of 39 in a hotel in the Wakasa district of Naha. He denies the allegation.

The governor of Okinawa, Genta Koja, told Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Wednesday of his strong indignation. She replied that measures to prevent a recurrence would be discussed between Japan and the United States.

The curfew will still be in force when Exercise Keen Sword, the joint Japanese-American exercise held

every two years, begins on October 19, and it will run into the first week of November.

Curfews have been the American forces' usual response to serious crimes in Okinawa, in 2012 and 2016 among other years, and Okinawan leaders have said each time that restrictions lifted after a few weeks are not enough.

The prefectural government has asked for full co-operation with the investigation, effective measures against a recurrence and a review of the Status of Forces Agreement.

Prosecutors must decide within 23 days of the arrest whether to indict the suspect, under Japanese criminal procedure.

A separate killing in Okinawa, of a young woman in Ginowan on September 30, has also led to an arrest this week. That case involves a former boyfriend of the victim, not a member of the American forces. It is reported on the society pages.

The government has said it will press the United States for tighter discipline. How the two governments agree to measure the effect of their measures, and whether they publish the results, will determine whether Okinawans believe them.

POLITICS

The Prime Minister Telephones Kenso Soai to Congratulate Japan's 31st Laureate

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi telephoned Kenso Soai, the professor emeritus of Tokyo University of Science who shares this year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry, to congratulate him, the morning papers report.

Mr Soai, 76, is the 31st Japanese individual to receive a Nobel prize and the tenth in chemistry. He shares the prize with Henri Kagan of France for the discovery of non-linear effects and autocatalysis in asymmetric organic synthesis.

A telephone call from the prime minister has become a custom when a Japanese scientist is named in Stockholm, and the conversation is usually reported in some detail.

The government has made science and technology a pillar of its economic security policy, and prime ministers have used such moments to speak of the importance of research.

Mr Soai said on Wednesday that his achievement was the product of a high standard of research in Japan. Many scientists have used the attention that follows a prize to argue that the conditions for basic research have deteriorated, and to ask the government to restore them.

The prize is Japan's second in chemistry in two years, after Susumu Kitagawa of Kyoto University won last year.

Mr Soai's reaction, published in 1995, showed how a molecule can multiply its own handedness, turning a tiny imbalance between mirror-image forms into an almost pure product. It bears on how medicines are made and on why the molecules of life are one-handed.

Mr Kagan, who is 95, is a professor emeritus of the Université Paris-Sud.

The two men will receive their medals in Stockholm on December 10.

The chemistry prize was the only one of this week's science prizes to go to a Japanese scientist. The prize in economic sciences is announced on Monday.

POLITICS

Aichi's Governor Says His Remark About the Thai Team 'Did Not Refer to the Whole Team'

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The governor of Aichi, Hideaki Omura, has clarified a remark about Thailand's team at the Asian Games, saying that it did not refer to the team as a whole, the morning papers report.

The remark had drawn criticism locally. The reports did not set out the governor's original words in full.

The Asian Games, held in Aichi and Nagoya, ended on October 4 with a record 83 gold medals for Japan, but their organisation was criticised over a series of problems.

During the first days, Thai media reported that members of Thailand's team were kept waiting for

POLITICS

hours in a hotel lobby before they could enter their rooms, blaming the Japanese side, as Daily Sports reported in September.

Kyodo News also reported a national anthem played in error and transport buses that failed to arrive.

The vice chairman of the prefectural assembly is to resign after a dispute with security guards over the passage of his private car at a venue, a case that has added to the questions about the running of the Games.

A governor's remarks about a visiting team carry diplomatic weight. Thailand is one of Japan's closest partners in Southeast Asia, a major destination for Japanese investment and a large source of visitors.

The governor's clarification appears intended to limit the damage before the Asian Para Games, which open in Aichi and Nagoya on October 18 and will again bring athletes from across the region, Thailand among them.

The prefecture has said it will review the operation of the Games.

For the prefecture, the lesson of the past fortnight is that hospitality is judged as much by small courtesies as by the results on the field.

POLITICS

Politics Digest

By the Politics Desk

YANA: The prime minister keeps the agriculture minister in his post, telling him to repay with his work, and rules out an inquiry within the government.

OKINAWA: The American forces' curfew from midnight to 5 a.m. takes effect today for 30 days.

AICHI: The governor says his remark about the Thai team did not refer to the whole team.

NOBEL: The prime minister telephones Kenso Soai to congratulate him.

NORTH KOREA: Twenty years have passed since the country's first nuclear test, on October 9, 2006.

ICC: Russia asks for the extradition of the court's president, Tomoko Akane, and others, according to reports.

FIGHTER: Germany is reported to be positive about joining the next-generation fighter project of Japan, Britain and Italy.

TAX: The prime minister's call for a cut in the consumption tax faces questions on its funding.

BUDGET: A second supplementary budget for disaster recovery is under consideration.

ELECTIONS: Yokohama elects a mayor on October 18.

POLITICS

The Week Ahead

By the Politics Desk

FRIDAY, OCT. 9: Nobel Peace Prize, about 6 p.m. Japan time. The American forces' curfew in Okinawa takes effect. Takayama autumn festival opens. South Korean markets closed for Hangul Day.

SATURDAY, OCT. 10: Climax Series first stages: Giants v DeNA at Tokyo Dome, Seibu v Nippon-Ham in Tokorozawa. North Korea's ruling party marks its founding anniversary.

SUNDAY, OCT. 11: World judo championships end with the mixed team event in Baku. Typhoon No. 29 forecast to be very strong.

MONDAY, OCT. 12: Sports Day. Izumo university relay. Nobel prize in economic sciences. Typhoon No. 29 near the Ogasawara Islands.

TUESDAY, OCT. 13: Typhoon No. 29 forecast about 450 km east-north-east of Chichijima. Rain from a front forecast for the main islands on Tuesday and Wednesday.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 14: Central League final stage at Koshien.

SUNDAY, OCT. 18: Yokohama mayoral election. Asian Para Games open in Aichi and Nagoya.

OCT. 19 TO 29: Exercise Keen Sword.

OCT. 29 AND 30: Bank of Japan policy meeting.

NOV. 3: Culture Day; American midterm elections.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

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The cold chain scrambles after Nissui, Page 7.

IDC Frontier: what is known, Page 9.

INTERNATIONAL

Russia Asks for the Extradition of the ICC's Japanese President, Tomoko Akane; the Netherlands Is Expected to Refuse

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Russia's Prosecutor General's Office has requested the extradition of Tomoko Akane, the Japanese president of the International Criminal Court, and other officials of the court, according to reports on Thursday.

The court sits in The Hague, and the request would fall to the Netherlands, which is expected to refuse it.

The request is the latest step in a confrontation that began in March 2023, when the court issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin on suspicion of the unlawful deportation of children from occupied parts of Ukraine to Russia.

Moscow, which does not recognise the court's jurisdiction, responded by opening criminal cases against the court's prosecutor and several of its judges, Ms Akane among them, and placing them on its wanted lists.

An extradition request to the country that hosts the court has no prospect of success. The Netherlands is bound by its agreement with the court to protect its officials, and it is a member of the court itself.

Its purpose appears to be political: to signal that Russia regards the court's officials as criminals, and to restrict where they can travel safely.

Ms Akane, a former Japanese prosecutor, has been a judge of the court since 2018 and its president since March 2024, the first Japanese to hold the post.

Japan is one of the court's strongest supporters and its largest financial contributor. The Japanese government has in the past expressed its concern over Russia's measures against the court's officials.

The court has also faced pressure from Washington. The United States, which is not a member, has imposed sanctions on several of its officials over its investigations involving Israel and Afghanistan.

The reports did not say whether the Japanese government had commented on the latest request.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump Says He Will Not Attack Iran Before the Midterm Elections and Will Keep Negotiating; Rubio Calls Ukraine a 'Dangerous Stalemate'

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

President Donald Trump has said that he will not attack Iran before the American midterm elections on November 3 and will continue negotiations with Tehran, Kyodo News reports.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, speaking about the war in Ukraine, described the situation there as a dangerous stalemate, according to the report.

The two remarks frame the administration's foreign policy four weeks before an election in which control of Congress is at stake.

The United States struck Iran's nuclear facilities at Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan in June last year, after Israel had begun its own attacks, and Mr Trump has since alternated between threats and offers of talks.

His statement that no attack would come before the election suggests that he does not want a war in the Middle East during the campaign, though it leaves open what might follow.

The markets are watching the region closely. Crude oil in New York rebounded to the 91-dollar range overnight on buying prompted by news from the Middle East, Kyodo reports, and higher oil prices weighed on Tokyo shares on Thursday.

Japan has a direct interest. Most of its crude oil comes from the Middle East, much of it through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran borders.

On Ukraine, Mr Rubio's description reflects the state of a war now in its fifth year, in which neither side has been able to break through and negotiations have not produced a ceasefire.

Japan has supported Ukraine with financial and humanitarian aid and has joined Western sanctions on Russia.

The midterm elections will decide all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and about a third of the

Senate.

INTERNATIONAL

Germany Looks to Join the Fighter Japan Is Building With Britain and Italy, After Walking Away From Its Project With France

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Germany is positive about taking part in the next-generation fighter programme being developed by Japan, Britain and Italy, the morning papers report.

Berlin has held exploratory talks about joining the Global Combat Air Programme, known as GCAP, Politico reported recently after reviewing internal German government documents, according to the defence news site EurAsian Times. The German defence ministry said it had held preliminary discussions on the programme's requirements.

The interest follows the collapse of Germany's own project with France and Spain. Chancellor Friedrich Merz's government walked away from the Future Combat Air System in June, after years of disputes between Airbus and France's Dassault Aviation over work-sharing and design.

Mr Merz raised the idea of GCAP during a visit to Italy in February, and Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni responded favourably, according to the report.

The internal German documents also expressed caution, citing a bad experience with Britain's BAE Systems on the Eurofighter and concern that a newcomer would not be treated as an equal. They suggested a partnership with Sweden and Spain as an alternative.

Japan has been the most reluctant of the three partners to add members. Tokyo needs a replacement for its F-2 fighters by the mid-2030s and fears that new partners, each with their own requirements, would cause delays. It opposed Saudi Arabia's entry earlier.

Britain and Italy have been more open. Canada was admitted as an observer in July, and the chief executive of Italy's Leonardo said at the Farnborough air show that a country could join before the end of this year.

German money and industry would strengthen the programme, which is expected to cost tens of billions of dollars. Britain has committed 8.6 billion pounds to it in its defence investment plan.

Any decision to admit Germany would require the agreement of all three governments, and Japan's view will be decisive.

For Tokyo, the question is whether the benefits of a larger programme outweigh the risk to its timetable, at a moment when China's air power is growing quickly.

INTERNATIONAL

GCAP: The Stealth Fighter Japan, Britain and Italy Agreed to Build Together in 2022

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

In December 2022 Japan, Britain and Italy announced that they would develop a new fighter together, merging Japan's plans for a successor to its F-2 with the British-led Tempest project, which Italy had joined.

It was the first time Japan had developed a major defence system with partners other than the United States since the Second World War.

The three governments signed a treaty in December 2023 creating an international organisation to manage the programme, with its headquarters in Britain. Its first chief executive is Japanese.

The industrial work is led by a joint company called Edgewing, formed by BAE Systems of Britain, Leonardo of Italy and Japanese industry, in which Mitsubishi Heavy Industries plays the leading role.

The aircraft is meant to enter service around 2035. It is expected to be a large, long-range stealth fighter able to operate with drones and to share data with other aircraft and ships.

For Britain and Italy it will replace the Eurofighter Typhoon. For Japan it will replace the F-2, a fighter developed with the United States from the American F-16.

The programme required Japan to loosen its rules on arms exports. In March 2024 the cabinet approved

the export of the new fighter to third countries, under strict conditions, so that sales abroad could help to bring down costs.

Work is shared among the partners' industries, a source of constant negotiation. Adding a new member would mean dividing the work again.

Japan's timetable is the tightest of the three, because its F-2s are ageing and China's air force has grown rapidly.

Germany's interest is a sign of the programme's standing. Whether it is a help or a hindrance to Japan depends on terms not yet negotiated.

INTERNATIONAL

Washington Raises the Fee for Foreign Graduates Who Want to Work in America to About 11 Million Yen, Some 140 Times the Present Level

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

The American administration has raised the fee charged to international students who want to work in the United States after graduating to about 11 million yen, some 140 times the present amount, the morning papers report.

The reports concern the programme known as Optional Practical Training, which allows foreign students on student visas to work for up to a year after completing a degree, and for longer in science and technology fields.

For many students, particularly from India and China, the programme is the bridge between an American degree and a career in the United States, often leading to a skilled-worker visa.

Reports in July said the administration was considering a fee of 100,000 dollars for such work. The White House later cleared a proposal on the fee, Bloomberg Tax reported.

Last September President Donald Trump imposed a fee of 100,000 dollars on new applications for H-1B visas, the main route for skilled foreign workers.

The administration argues that such programmes allow companies to hire foreign workers in place of Americans. Universities, many technology companies and business groups say they deprive the country of talent it trained.

A fee of this size would put the programme beyond the reach of most graduates unless their employers pay, and many smaller employers would not.

Japan sends fewer students to the United States than India or China, and fewer of them stay to work. But Japanese universities and companies that send staff to study in America are watching closely.

The measure could also make other countries more attractive to international students, a competition in which Japan has been trying to raise its own numbers.

Legal challenges are likely, as they were to the H-1B fee.

INTERNATIONAL

World Digest

By the International Desk

STOCKHOLM: The Nobel Prize in Literature goes to the Canadian poet and classicist Anne Carson, 76.

OSLO: The Nobel Peace Prize is announced this evening.

PYONGYANG: Twenty years have passed since North Korea's first nuclear test. The ruling party marks its anniversary tomorrow.

THE HAGUE: Russia asks for the extradition of the ICC's president, Tomoko Akane, according to reports.

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump says he will not attack Iran before the midterm elections; Secretary of State Marco Rubio calls the war in Ukraine a dangerous stalemate.

BERLIN: Germany is reported to be positive about joining the fighter programme of Japan, Britain and Italy.

BEIJING: Chinese travellers made 2.144 billion journeys over the National Day holiday.

NEW ORLEANS: Hurricane Isaias, with winds of about 100 mph, heads for the northern Gulf Coast.

SEOUL: South Korea's markets close today for Hangul Day.

BAKU: Japan has won seven of the ten world judo titles decided so far.

INTERNATIONAL



A B-1B Lancer bomber of the United States Air Force, in a file image. American bombers have repeatedly flown near the Korean Peninsula with Japanese and South Korean fighters in response to North Korean launches. North Korea conducted its first nuclear test 20 years ago today. (Photo: U.S. Air Force)

INTERNATIONAL

Twenty Years Since North Korea's First Nuclear Test: Six Explosions, Missiles That Can Reach America, and an Arsenal Sankei Puts at 112 Weapons

Japan marks the anniversary facing a neighbour that has never been more heavily armed, or more closely aligned with Russia

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

Twenty years ago today, on October 9, 2006, North Korea carried out its first nuclear test, in tunnels beneath a mountain at Punggye-ri in the north-east of the country.

The explosion was small, smaller than many outside experts expected, and some doubted that it had fully succeeded. But it made North Korea the first country to test a nuclear weapon in the 21st century, and it changed the security of Japan.

It came three months after the North had launched a long-range Taepodong-2 missile that failed shortly after lift-off. Five days after the test, on October 14, the United Nations Security Council imposed its first sanctions on the country's weapons programmes.

Five more tests followed, in 2009, 2013, twice in 2016 and in September 2017. The last, by far the largest, was described by Pyongyang as a hydrogen bomb designed for an intercontinental missile.

The Sankei Shimbun reports that North Korea now possesses 112 nuclear weapons. Outside estimates vary widely, because no inspector has seen the arsenal; the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute estimated last year that the country had assembled about 50 warheads and had material for more.

The missiles

The weapons matter because of what can carry them. North Korea has tested missiles of every range, from short-range weapons aimed at South Korea and Japan to intercontinental missiles that could reach the United States, including solid-fuelled models that can be launched at short notice.

Several of its missiles have flown over Japanese territory, in 2017 and 2022, triggering emergency alerts. Many more have fallen into the sea within or near Japan's exclusive economic zone.

The United States has repeatedly answered launches by flying bombers, among them the B-1B shown here, with Japanese and South Korean fighters near the peninsula, a show of the alliance's capacity to respond.

INTERNATIONAL

Six Tests in Eleven Years: How North Korea's Nuclear Explosions Grew From a Fizzle to a Claimed Hydrogen Bomb

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

North Korea's six nuclear tests were all conducted at Punggye-ri, a site in mountainous country in the north-east, in tunnels driven horizontally into a mountain.

OCTOBER 9, 2006: The first test. Its explosive yield was estimated at less than one kiloton, a fraction of the Hiroshima bomb, and some experts judged it a partial failure.

MAY 25, 2009: A second, larger test, conducted after North Korea walked out of the six-party talks with the United States, China, Russia, South Korea and Japan.

Sanctions and their limits

The United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions after each test, restricting the North's trade in arms, coal, textiles, seafood and oil. Their enforcement has weakened. In 2024 Russia vetoed the renewal of the panel of experts that monitored compliance.

Smuggling networks have helped Pyongyang evade the restrictions. The Sankei also reports that smuggling operations linked to North Korea continue from a multi-tenant building in the Shimbashi district of Tokyo.

Japan's position

The government describes North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes as a grave and imminent threat. The abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korean agents in the 1970s and 1980s remains unresolved, and successive prime ministers have called it a priority.

Japan's answer has been to strengthen its defences. In December 2022 the government decided to acquire the capability to strike missile bases in enemy territory, including American Tomahawk cruise missiles, and since December 2023 Japan, the United States and South Korea have shared warning data on North Korean launches in real time.

Pyongyang's alignment with Moscow has deepened. The two countries signed a treaty of comprehensive strategic partnership with a mutual defence clause in June 2024, and North Korean troops have fought for Russia against Ukrainian forces in the Kursk region, as both governments have acknowledged.

North Korea's ruling party marks the anniversary of its founding tomorrow, a date on which the regime has staged military parades in the past.

The photograph shows a B-1B Lancer of the United States Air Force, in a file image.

FEBRUARY 12, 2013: The third test, the first under Kim Jong-un, who had succeeded his father at the end of 2011.

JANUARY 6, 2016: The fourth, which Pyongyang claimed was a hydrogen bomb. Outside experts doubted it, judging the yield too small.

SEPTEMBER 9, 2016: The fifth, on the anniversary of the founding of the North Korean state, and larger again.

SEPTEMBER 3, 2017: The sixth and largest, with an estimated yield many times that of the Hiroshima bomb. Pyongyang said it was a hydrogen bomb for an intercontinental missile. The tremor was detected by seismic stations around the world, including those of the Japan Meteorological Agency.

In 2018, during a period of diplomacy with South Korea and the United States, North Korea blew up tunnel entrances at the site in front of foreign journalists. Satellite images later showed work to

restore parts of it.

There has been no test since 2017, though American and South Korean officials have repeatedly warned that the site could be used again at short notice.

Each test drew new United Nations sanctions. None stopped the programme.

INTERNATIONAL

Tomoko Akane and the Court She Leads: A Japanese Prosecutor at the Head of the World's Criminal Court

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The International Criminal Court was established by the Rome Statute, a treaty adopted in 1998, and began work in 2002. It tries individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

It is a court of last resort. It acts only when the countries concerned are unwilling or unable to prosecute, and it has no police force of its own; it depends on member states to arrest suspects.

More than 120 countries are members. The United States, Russia, China and India are not.

Japan joined in 2007. It has since been the largest contributor to the court's budget, which is shared among members broadly in proportion to their economies.

Tomoko Akane spent her career as a prosecutor in Japan, rising to senior posts, and also served in diplomatic and international roles, including as Japan's ambassador for international judicial co-operation.

She was elected a judge of the court and took office in 2018. In March 2024 the judges elected her president, the court's senior judicial post, making her the first Japanese to lead it.

The president represents the court and oversees its administration. Ms Akane has spoken publicly about the pressure on the court from powerful states and has defended its independence.

The court's arrest warrant for Mr Putin in 2023 made it a target for Russia. Its investigations into the conduct of the war in Gaza made it a target for the United States, which sanctioned several officials.

Japan's support for the court reflects its stated commitment to the rule of law in international affairs, a theme the government emphasises in its diplomacy.

Russia's request for her extradition is unlikely to change anything in The Hague. It is a reminder that the court's judges now work under threats from more than one direction.

INTERNATIONAL

China's National Day Holiday Brings 2.144 Billion Journeys, but Japan Is Not Among the Top Ten Destinations Abroad

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Chinese travellers made a total of 2.144 billion journeys during the National Day holiday that ended on Wednesday, according to the reports, and Japan was not among the ten most popular destinations for trips abroad.

The figure counts every journey within China and beyond during the week-long holiday, known as Golden Week, which began on October 1.

The absence of Japan from the top ten is a sharp change. A year ago Japan was among the most popular overseas destinations for the holiday, according to the data of travel companies.

The reason is political. In November last year, after Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said in the Diet that a crisis over Taiwan could pose a threat to Japan's survival, the Chinese government advised its citizens to avoid travelling to Japan. Airlines cut flights, and travel agencies stopped selling tours.

Chinese visitors had been the largest group of foreign tourists in Japan before the pandemic and were again among the largest afterwards. Their absence has been felt in department stores, hotels and resorts that depended on them.

Visitors from other countries have filled much of the gap, with travellers from South Korea, Taiwan, the United States and Southeast Asia continuing to arrive in large numbers.

But the Chinese market was distinctive. Chinese tourists spent more per person than most visitors, and their tour groups filled hotels outside the big cities.

The holiday spending figures within China are watched as a gauge of consumer confidence in an economy weighed down by a long property slump.

Relations between Tokyo and Beijing remain cool, and there has been no sign that the travel advice will be lifted soon.

Mainland China's financial markets reopened on Thursday after the holiday.

INTERNATIONAL

Hurricane Isaias, With 100 mph Winds, Heads for the Northern Gulf Coast of the United States

By the Weather Desk

Hurricane Isaias, with winds of about 100 miles an hour, is heading for the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and the National Hurricane Center expects it to make landfall late on Friday or early on Saturday, local time.

Its forecast track is drawn on the map of the United States on the Weather Abroad page, which traces the storm's expected path northward across the Gulf.

Winds of 100 miles an hour, about 45 metres a second, make Isaias a Category 2 hurricane on the American scale, strong enough to damage roofs, uproot trees and cut power over wide areas.

Clouds are thickening across the American South-east ahead of it. Atlanta is cloudy, with a high of 79 degrees Fahrenheit, and New Orleans turns cloudy.

Isaias is the ninth named storm of this year's Atlantic hurricane season. The name was last used in 2020, for a hurricane that struck North Carolina.

Atlantic storms are named from six lists used in rotation, with names alternating between men's and women's. Names of particularly destructive storms are retired.

Hurricanes and typhoons are the same kind of storm. The word used depends on where it forms: hurricane in the Atlantic and the eastern Pacific, typhoon in the western Pacific.

American forecasters measure maximum winds as averages over one minute, while Japan's meteorological agency uses ten minutes, so their figures are not directly comparable.

The rest of the United States has quieter weather. It is sunny and warm from Texas to the northern Plains, and rain reaches Seattle and Portland.

The full American forecast is on the Weather Abroad page.

INTERNATIONAL

The Nobel Peace Prize Is Announced in Oslo This Evening

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

The Norwegian Nobel Committee announces this year's Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo at 11 a.m. local time, 6 p.m. in Japan.

There are 287 nominations, 208 individuals and 79 organisations, the committee has said.

Nominations are kept secret for 50 years, but those who nominate may disclose their choices. Among the nominations made public are President Donald Trump, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine, Yulia Navalnaya and Pope Leo XIV, and organisations including Sudan's Emergency Response Rooms.

The committee's five members are chosen by the Norwegian parliament. Their deliberations are confidential, and their choices have often surprised.

Last year's prize went to María Corina Machado, the Venezuelan opposition leader. In 2024 it was awarded to Nihon Hidankyo, the Japanese confederation of survivors of the atomic bombings.

The prize is the fifth of the week. Literature went on Thursday to the Canadian poet Anne Carson, chemistry on Wednesday to Henri Kagan and Kenso Soai, physics on Tuesday to Francis Halzen and medicine on Monday to Karl Deisseroth, Peter Hegemann and Georg Nagel.

The prize in economic sciences follows on Monday.

The Peace Prize is presented in Oslo on December 10, the same day as the other prizes are presented in Stockholm.

Its value is the same as that of the other prizes, and it may be shared by up to three laureates.

The result will be reported in tomorrow's edition.

ECONOMY



The head office of the Nichirei group beside the Kachidoki Bridge in Tokyo. Nichirei Foods, one of the clients of Nissui Logistics, has moved goods to other warehouses after the cyberattack that stopped all 17 of Nissui Logistics' warehouses. (Image supplied for this edition)

BUSINESS

Frozen Goods on the Move: Nichirei Foods and Other Clients Shift Stock as Nissui Logistics' 17 Warehouses Stand Still

The second attack on a leading cold-chain operator in three months, after Nichirei's own logistics arm was hit in July  
By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

Customers of Nissui Logistics were moving frozen goods to other warehouses on Thursday after a cyberattack forced the company to stop receiving and shipping at all 17 of its cold-storage sites, the reports say.

About 1,200 businesses use the company's warehouses. Nichirei Foods, one of the country's largest makers of frozen food, is among those that have switched to other warehouses.

Nissui Logistics is the low-temperature storage and transport subsidiary of Nissui, the seafood and frozen-food group. Its warehouses hold frozen fish, prepared foods and ingredients for manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and restaurants.

A cold-storage warehouse is not a simple shed. Its computer systems record where every pallet is, which customer owns it, when it arrived and when it must leave. Without them, goods can be kept cold but cannot easily be found, released or shipped.

That is why an attack on information systems stops physical work. The freezers keep running; the business does not.

Twice in three months

The cold chain has now been hit twice in quick succession. In July a cyberattack disrupted cold-storage operations across the Nichirei Logi Group, the logistics arm of the Nichirei group and

one of the largest cold-storage operators in Japan. Nichirei began resuming receipts and shipments on July 17, with orders partly restricted, and aimed to return all sites to normal by July 25, according to the company's announcements at the time.

Nichirei Foods, part of the same group, is now among the customers moving stock away from Nissui's warehouses, a reminder of how closely the industry's companies depend on one another's facilities.

What it means for shoppers

The reports did not indicate shortages in shops. Large food companies hold stock in several places, and frozen goods keep for months.

The pressure falls on the system's slack. Space in cold storage is limited, especially near the big cities, and trucks equipped for frozen loads are in short supply, a problem that has worsened since limits on drivers' overtime took effect in 2024.

The longer the shutdown lasts, the more goods must be moved, and the more the costs of moving them will be passed along the chain.

The photograph shows the head office of the Nichirei group beside the Kachidoki Bridge in Tokyo.

In New York the Dow Jones industrial average rose 51 points overnight, after falling 341 points the day before.

The yen was little changed, at 157.83 to 157.93 to the dollar in New York and 157.78 to 157.89 in Tokyo on Thursday morning. A weaker yen raises the yen cost of imported oil, compounding the effect of a higher dollar price.

Japan's long-term interest rate stood at 3.105 per cent on Tuesday, and the coupon on ten-year government bonds was set at 3.1 per cent, the highest since 1996.

The Bank of Japan holds its next policy meeting on October 29 and 30.

ECONOMY

Why Wall Street Moves Tokyo: Overnight Trading, Foreign Investors and the Interest-Rate Link

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Tokyo's market opens each morning a few hours after New York closes, and what happened overnight is often the first thing that moves it.

There are three main channels.

The first is foreign investors, who account for a large share of trading on the Tokyo Stock Exchange. Many of them manage global portfolios and adjust their holdings in Tokyo in response to events in America.

The second is interest rates. When yields on American government bonds rise, the return available without risk goes up, and investors demand more from shares. Companies whose profits lie far in the future, such as technology growth stocks, are hit hardest.

The third is the exchange rate. Higher American rates tend to strengthen the dollar against the yen, which helps Japanese exporters' profits in yen but raises the

cost of imports.

Futures contracts on the Nikkei average trade in Chicago and Singapore overnight, so by the time Tokyo opens, the market has often already priced in much of the news.

The relationship is not one-way. Tokyo's moves affect markets elsewhere in Asia, and large Japanese investors, among them pension funds and life insurers, are major holders of American bonds.

This week showed the pattern. Rising American yields and a rebound in oil prices preceded a fall of nearly 1,000 yen in the Nikkei average on Thursday.

Japanese investors watch American economic data closely for the same reason: figures on jobs and inflation in the United States can move the Nikkei more than many domestic statistics.

Over long periods, though, Tokyo's market follows the profits of Japanese companies, which have risen strongly in recent years.

ECONOMY

The Yen Near 158 to the Dollar: What Keeps It Weak, Who Gains and Who Pays

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The yen traded at about 157.8 to 157.9 to the dollar in New York and Tokyo this week, close to the weakest levels of recent years.

The main reason is the difference in interest rates. American long-term rates remain well above Japanese ones, so investors can earn more by holding dollars, and money flows out of the yen.

The Bank of Japan has raised its policy rate in steps since 2024, ending years of negative and near-zero rates, but its rates remain far below those of the Federal Reserve. Japan's ten-year government bond yields about 3.1 per cent.

A weak yen helps exporters. Carmakers and other manufacturers that sell abroad earn more yen for each dollar of sales, and their profits rise. It also makes Japan cheaper for foreign tourists, who have come in record numbers.

It hurts importers and households. Japan buys almost all its oil and gas and much of its food from abroad, and a weak yen raises their price. With crude oil back in the 91-dollar range, the effect on petrol and electricity bills is felt quickly.

The government has intervened in the currency market before when the yen fell fast. In 2022 and again in 2024 the Ministry of Finance sold dollars and bought yen; in July 2024 the yen touched about 162 to the dollar, its weakest since 1986, before recovering.

Officials do not target a particular level. They say they act against excessive and speculative movements, which leaves the market guessing about where the line lies.

The yen's weakness is also a judgement on Japan's economy. Strong growth and higher productivity would attract investment and support the currency; slow growth and large government debt weigh on it.

For investors in Tokyo shares, a weak yen has been one of the supports of the market's rise, because it lifts the profits of the large exporters that dominate the indexes.

The Bank of Japan's next policy meeting, on October 29 and 30, will be watched for any sign of a further rise in rates, which would tend to strengthen the yen.

ECONOMY

Women Hold 9.3 Per Cent of Management Posts at Companies in Ibaraki, Down for a Second Year

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Women hold 9.3 per cent of management positions at companies in Ibaraki Prefecture, a figure that has fallen for the second year in a row, according to a survey by the credit research company Teikoku Databank reported by Sankei News.

Teikoku Databank surveys companies across the country each year on the proportion of women among their managers, and publishes the results by prefecture.

Its surveys have found the national proportion rising slowly over the past decade, but still far below the government's goals and the levels of other advanced economies.

Ibaraki, north-east of Tokyo, is a manufacturing

prefecture, home to large factories in electrical machinery, chemicals and food, and to many small and medium-sized companies. Manufacturing and construction have traditionally had low proportions of women in management.

A fall in a single prefecture's figure can reflect changes in the companies that respond to the survey, as well as real changes in promotion. Two years in a row of decline, however, suggest that progress has stalled there.

The government has set the goal of raising the share of women in leadership positions to 30 per cent as early as possible by 2030, after failing to meet an earlier target for 2020.

Under a law that took effect in 2016, companies above a certain size must set targets for the promotion of women and publish data on their progress. Larger companies must also disclose the pay gap between men and women.

Researchers cite familiar obstacles: long working hours, the expectation that managers will accept transfers to other cities, and the burden of childcare and care for elderly relatives, which still falls largely on women.

Companies that have raised the proportion of women in management usually point to changes in how work is organised, such as flexible hours, remote work and the evaluation of results instead of time spent in the office.

The national figures from the same survey will show whether Ibaraki's decline is part of a wider pause or a local exception.

ECONOMY

The Bank of Japan's October Meeting: A New Forecast, a 1.25 Per Cent Policy Rate and a Market Watching for the Next Step

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The Bank of Japan's next policy meeting, on October 29 and 30, will be watched closely after a week in which Tokyo shares fell back below 70,000 and the yen stayed near 158 to the dollar.

The bank's policy board has nine members, including the governor, Kazuo Ueda, and meets eight times a year to set monetary policy.

The October meeting is one of four each year at which the bank publishes its Outlook for Economic Activity and Prices, with the board's forecasts for growth and inflation for the next few years.

The policy rate stands at 1.25 per cent. The bank has raised it in several steps since March 2024, when it ended eight years of negative interest rates and abandoned its control of long-term bond yields.

The case for further increases rests on prices and wages. Consumer prices have risen faster than the bank's target of 2 per cent for much of the period since 2022, and wages are now rising faster than prices: real wages rose 1.5 per cent in August, the eighth monthly increase in a row.

A weak yen adds to the pressure, because it raises the cost of imported energy and food. Higher rates in Japan would narrow the gap with American rates and tend to support the currency.

The case for caution rests on growth and markets. Higher rates raise borrowing costs for companies, households and a heavily indebted government. Japan's long-term interest rate stood at 3.105 per cent on Tuesday, a level unthinkable a few years ago.

The government's fiscal plans also matter. The prime minister has called a cut in the consumption tax the best method of supporting households, with its funding still to be decided.

The bank does not announce its decisions in advance, and its officials choose their words carefully in the weeks before a meeting. Investors read every speech for clues.

Whatever the board decides, the outlook report will show how it sees the economy after a year of rising wages, a weak currency and a stock market that crossed 70,000 for the first time.

ECONOMY

Markets at a Glance

By the Markets Desk

NIKKEI AVERAGE (Thursday close): 69,042.11, down 993.60 yen. Second fall in a row; back below 70,000.

ECONOMY

TOPIX: 4,091.46, down 62.65 points.

TWO DAYS: The Nikkei has lost about 1,642 yen since Tuesday's close of 70,683.98.

CAUSES: Higher American long-term interest rates and higher crude oil prices, according to Nikkei.

YEN: 157.83 to 157.93 to the dollar in New York; 157.78 to 157.89 in Tokyo on Thursday morning. Euro in the upper 176-yen range.

OIL: New York crude rebounded to the 91-dollar range on news from the Middle East.

NEW YORK: Dow Jones industrial average up 51 points, after a fall of 341 the day before.

BONDS: Long-term rate 3.105 per cent on Tuesday; ten-year coupon 3.1 per cent.

BANK OF JAPAN: policy rate 1.25 per cent. Next meeting October 29 and 30.

BREWERS: The Fair Trade Commission's investigation of Asahi, Kirin, Suntory and Sapporo continues; criminal charges are being considered.

BUSINESS

## The Cold Chain: How Frozen Food Travels From Factory and Port to the Supermarket Freezer Without Ever Warming Up

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

Every packet of frozen dumplings or fried rice in a Japanese supermarket has travelled through a chain of refrigerated spaces, and the chain must not break.

Industry standards call for frozen food to be kept at minus 18 degrees or below throughout its journey. Warming even briefly can spoil texture and taste, and repeated thawing and freezing can make food unsafe.

The chain begins at the factory or, for imported goods, at the port, where frozen containers are unloaded into cold-storage warehouses.

Cold-storage warehouses are graded by temperature, from chilled rooms just above freezing for fruit and vegetables to deep-freeze rooms far below zero. The coldest, at around minus 50 degrees or lower, are used for tuna destined for sushi.

From the warehouses, refrigerated trucks carry goods to distribution centres and then to supermarkets, convenience stores, restaurants, hospitals and schools.

Each handover is recorded by computer: what was received, at what temperature, where it was stored and where it went. The records are needed for food safety and to trace problems back to their source.

Japan's frozen food industry has grown steadily, as more households have come to rely on frozen meals and ingredients. The cold chain behind it has become critical infrastructure in all but name.

It is also concentrated. A handful of large companies, Nichirei and Nissui among them, operate a large share of the country's cold-storage capacity, along with many regional operators and the warehouses of large retailers.

That concentration brings efficiency. It also means that an attack on one company's systems can affect hundreds of customers at once, as this week has shown.

Cold-storage operators are not among the sectors designated as core infrastructure under the economic security law, which carries obligations to report and prepare for cyberattacks.

BUSINESS

## Nissui and Nichirei: Two Century-Spanning Food Groups Built on Fish, Ice and Freezers

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The two companies at the centre of this week's disruption in the cold chain are among the oldest names in Japanese food.

Nissui traces its origins to 1911 and grew into one of the world's great fishing and seafood companies, with trawler fleets in distant waters for much of the 20th century.

As fishing rights at sea were restricted in the 1970s and later, it turned increasingly to processing, aquaculture and frozen food. Its products include surimi, the fish paste used in kamaboko and crab sticks, and fish oils used in medicines and supplements.

It changed its formal name from Nippon Suisan Kaisha to Nissui Corporation in 2022, adopting the

short name by which it had long been known.

Its logistics subsidiary, Nissui Logistics, operates cold-storage warehouses and refrigerated transport, serving other companies as well as the group itself.

Nichirei was founded in 1942, during the war, from the merger of fishery and refrigeration businesses, and took its present name in 1985.

It is now best known for two things: frozen foods, through Nichirei Foods, whose fried rice and fried chicken are fixtures of Japanese freezers, and cold-storage logistics, through the Nichirei Logi Group, one of the largest operators of refrigerated warehouses in the country and with operations in Europe and Asia.

Both groups therefore sit on both sides of the cold chain: as manufacturers that need cold storage, and as operators that provide it to others.

Both have now been hit by cyberattacks within three months: Nichirei's logistics arm in July, Nissui Logistics this week.

The industry, which has invested heavily in automated warehouses and computer systems to cope with a shortage of workers, now faces the other side of that investment: the more a warehouse depends on its systems, the more an attack on them can stop it.

BUSINESS

## Why Minus 18? The Temperature That Keeps Frozen Food Safe, and the Day Named After It

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

Frozen food in Japan, as in most of the world, is kept at minus 18 degrees Celsius or below from the factory to the shop. The figure explains why a warehouse that cannot ship is such a problem.

At minus 18 degrees the growth of the bacteria that cause food poisoning almost stops, and the quality of food can be kept for long periods. The figure is used internationally; it corresponds roughly to zero on the Fahrenheit scale.

Japan's legal standard under the Food Sanitation Act requires frozen foods to be stored at minus 15 degrees or below. The industry keeps to the stricter minus 18 throughout the chain, in factories, warehouses, refrigerated trucks and supermarket freezers.

The Japan Frozen Food Association made the number into a date. In 1986 it named October 18 Frozen Food Day: October because the word for freezing, reito, can be read as a play on the number ten, and the 18th for minus 18 degrees.

Maintaining that temperature requires an unbroken chain. Every transfer, from a truck to a warehouse or from a warehouse to a shop, is a moment of risk, and each step is recorded so that the temperature history of a product can be traced.

When a warehouse's systems stop, the freezers themselves usually keep running. The problem is that goods cannot be moved in or out in an orderly way, and trucks waiting at the doors cannot be loaded.

Frozen food has become a staple of Japanese life. Lunch boxes, ready meals, dumplings and fried chicken fill supermarket freezers, and restaurants, hospitals and school kitchens depend on frozen ingredients.

Its growth reflects smaller households, more working parents and an ageing society in which many people cook less. It also depends on the cold chain working every day without notice.

The companies at the centre of this week's news, Nissui and Nichirei, are among the largest makers of frozen food in the country, and both groups run cold-storage businesses.

Frozen Food Day falls in nine days' time. This year it may be marked with particular attention to the warehouses that make the freezer aisle possible.

BUSINESS

## Data Centres and the AI Boom: Why SoftBank Took Its Data-Centre Business Back From IDC Frontier

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

A data centre is a building full of servers, together with the electricity, cooling, security and network connections that keep them running day and night.

For decades they were the unglamorous back rooms of the internet. The boom in artificial intelligence has

turned them into some of the most sought-after property in the world, because training and running large AI models requires enormous computing power.

That boom explains the reorganisation that IDC Frontier and its parent, SoftBank Corp., carried out in April. SoftBank took over IDC Frontier's data-centre business, saying that data centres were becoming central to AI infrastructure and that it wanted to develop them as a business for the next generation.

IDC Frontier, in turn, took over the development and operation of cloud services previously run by SoftBank, so that each company would concentrate on what it does best, according to their announcement in December.

SoftBank has announced plans for large data centres for AI, including one on the site of a former liquid-crystal panel factory of Sharp in Sakai, Osaka Prefecture, and another in Tomakomai, Hokkaido.

Data centres in Japan are concentrated in and around Tokyo and Osaka, close to customers and to the main network routes. The government has encouraged companies to build in other regions, both to spread the risk of earthquakes and to use the electricity, including renewable power, that is available outside the big cities.

Electricity is the great constraint. A large AI data centre can consume as much power as a small city, and the growth in demand from data centres is one reason why forecasts of Japan's electricity needs, which had been falling, are now rising.

Security is the other. A data centre concentrates the computing of many customers in one place, which makes it a target for physical attack as well as for intrusion through networks.

This week's ransomware attack hit IDC Frontier's cloud service rather than a building. But it illustrated the same principle: the more that is concentrated, the more depends on its protection.

The investment continues regardless. Japanese and foreign companies have announced plans worth trillions of yen for new data centres in Japan in the next few years.

BUSINESS

## Sapporo Named Alongside Asahi, Kirin and Suntory as the Fair Trade Commission Weighs Criminal Charges Over Beer Prices

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The four beer companies investigated by the Japan Fair Trade Commission are Asahi, Kirin, Suntory and Sapporo, the morning papers report, confirming that the inquiry covers the entire big four of Japanese brewing.

The commission is investigating them on suspicion of forming a cartel over the wholesale prices at which they ship their products, and it is considering filing a criminal complaint with prosecutors, according to the reports.

The investigation is being conducted as a compulsory investigation, with warrants from a judge, the procedure the commission uses in cases it may refer for prosecution.

Criminal referrals under the Antimonopoly Act are rare, usually no more than one a year. Recent examples include bid-rigging on the construction of the Chuo maglev line and bid-rigging connected with the Tokyo Olympics.

If the commission refers the case and prosecutors charge the companies, individuals found responsible could face prison sentences of up to five years and the companies fines of up to 500 million yen each. Surcharges would be ordered separately.

No finding has been made. The companies are presumed not to have broken the law unless the commission or a court establishes that they did, and the reports did not include their responses.

The suspected price coordination is reported to have lasted several years, a period in which the brewers raised their prices more than once, citing the cost of malt, aluminium, energy and transport.

The investigation coincides with the last step of the liquor tax reform agreed in 2017, which took effect on October 1 and brought beer, low-malt beer and the cheaper beer-like drinks to a single tax rate.

Together the four brewers sell almost all the beer drunk in Japan, which is why the commission regards

the case as one with a wide effect on daily life.

The investigation is expected to take many months.

BUSINESS

## Starbucks Is Considering a Bid for Chipotle Worth About 6 Trillion Yen, Kyodo Reports

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

Starbucks is considering acquiring Chipotle Mexican Grill, the American chain of burrito restaurants, for about 6 trillion yen, Kyodo News reports.

No agreement has been announced, and the report described the plan as under consideration.

The link between the two companies is personal. Starbucks's chief executive, Brian Niccol, ran Chipotle before he was hired by the coffee chain in 2024, and is credited with reviving its fortunes after a series of food-safety problems.

Chipotle, founded in Denver in 1993, popularised fast-casual dining in the United States: freshly made food served quickly, at prices above those of traditional fast food.

Starbucks, the world's largest coffee chain, has spent the past two years trying to restore growth in its American shops, where sales had slowed, and to compete in China with fast-growing local rivals.

A combination would bring together two of the best-known restaurant brands in the United States. It would also face scrutiny from competition authorities and shareholders, and from investors who may question whether a coffee company should own a burrito chain.

Chipotle has no restaurants in Japan.

Starbucks has nearly 2,000 shops in Japan, operated by Starbucks Coffee Japan, which it has owned outright since 2015.

The yen value of the reported deal reflects a price of roughly 38 billion dollars at the current exchange rate.

The report did not say how a purchase would be financed or when a decision might be made.

BUSINESS

## Fixed Prices, Returns and Two Big Wholesalers: How Books Reach Japanese Shops, and Why the Nippan Sales Raised Questions

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Japan's book trade runs on rules that are unusual among rich countries, and they help explain why publishers reacted sharply to reports that Nippan had sold books to an American AI developer.

The first rule is resale price maintenance. Under an exemption in the Antimonopoly Act, publishers may set the retail price of books, magazines, newspapers and music recordings, and shops must sell at that price. A new novel costs the same in a Tokyo department store as in a village shop.

The second is the returns system. Most books are supplied to shops on consignment, which means that shops can return unsold copies. This encourages them to stock a wide range, but it also means that a large share of the books printed come back.

The third is the role of the wholesalers, known as toritsugi. They distribute books from thousands of publishers to thousands of shops, handle the returns and manage the flow of money. Two companies, Nippan and Tohan, dominate the trade.

The system was designed for a market of many bookshops, and that market is shrinking. The number of bookshops has fallen steeply this century, and in 2024 about 28 per cent of municipalities had none at all, according to the Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture.

In 2024 the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry set up a project team to support bookshops, a sign of how seriously the decline is taken.

Against that background, the publishers' association asked Nippan in September what kind of contract had governed large, high-value sales to an overseas company, and whether they had been made outside the resale price system.

The questions go to the heart of the trade. Publishers set prices and supply books on the understanding that they will be sold to readers. A bulk sale to a company that scans and discards them, to train software, is a use the system was never designed for.

BUSINESS

Nippan has acknowledged the sales and said it had not known their purpose, according to reports of its reply. How many books were sold, and on what terms, has not been disclosed.

For readers, the system's virtues are real: fixed prices protect small shops, and the returns system keeps shelves varied. Its future depends on whether it can adapt to a market in which books are also data.

BUSINESS

Business Digest

By the Business Desk

CLOUD: A ransomware attack shuts down a cloud service of IDC Frontier, a SoftBank group company; 495 companies and local governments are affected, and there was no prospect of recovery by Thursday evening.

COLD CHAIN: Nissui Logistics halts receipts and shipments at all 17 warehouses after a cyberattack; about 1,200 clients; Nichirei Foods and others switch warehouses.

MARKETS: The Nikkei average falls 993 yen to 69,042.11, below 70,000. The TOPIX falls 62.65 points.

OIL: New York crude rebounds to the 91-dollar range.

BEER: The Fair Trade Commission's investigation covers Asahi, Kirin, Suntory and Sapporo; criminal charges are being considered.

RESTAURANTS: Starbucks is considering acquiring Chipotle for about 6 trillion yen, Kyodo reports.

WOMEN MANAGERS: Ibaraki's proportion falls to 9.3 per cent, a second annual decline.

SHOES: Mizuno unveils a racing shoe weighing 96 grams.

CHINA: Golden Week brings 2.144 billion journeys; Japan is not among the top ten overseas destinations.

STUDENTS: Washington raises the fee for foreign graduates to work in America to about 11 million yen.

TECHNOLOGY

IDC Frontier: What Is Known About the Cloud Outage, and What Its 495 Customers Are Waiting to Hear

The attack began before dawn on Wednesday; by Thursday evening the company could not say when service would return

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

The ransomware attack on IDC Frontier began at about 3:40 a.m. on Wednesday, when most of its customers' offices were dark, Nikkei reports.

By Thursday evening, about 40 hours later, the company's cloud service was still down and there was no prospect of recovery, according to the report. The customers affected number 495, among them companies and local governments.

IDC Frontier is a wholly owned subsidiary of SoftBank Corp. that operates cloud computing services. Under a reorganisation that took effect on April 1, its data-centre business passed to SoftBank, which wants to build up data centres for artificial intelligence, and it took over the development and operation of cloud services previously run by its parent, according to the companies' announcement last December.

A cloud service of this kind rents computing power, storage and software to customers who would otherwise run their own servers. Customers' systems run on shared machinery in the provider's data centres, managed through common tools.

What customers need to know

For the 495 customers, the questions are practical. Is their data intact? Has any of it been copied by the attackers? When will their systems return, and in what state?

The reports available on Thursday did not answer them. Ransomware groups commonly steal data before encrypting it, so that they can threaten to publish it if no ransom is paid, but there was no indication on Thursday of whether that had happened here.

Recovery from ransomware is slow because systems cannot simply be switched back on. Investigators must first establish how the attackers got in and make sure they are gone; otherwise restored systems can be encrypted again.

Data must then be restored from backups that the

attackers did not reach, and checked. For a provider serving hundreds of customers, each with their own systems, the work can take weeks.

Local governments

Local governments among the customers face particular pressure. Their systems handle services for residents, and many have been preparing to move their core systems to standardised platforms on approved clouds under a national programme.

The reports did not name the councils affected or the services interrupted.

Companies that suffer leaks of personal data must report them to the Personal Information Protection Commission. Whether that obligation applies will depend on what the investigation finds.

The other case

The same day, Nissui Logistics, the cold-storage subsidiary of the Nissui group, halted receipts and shipments at all 17 of its warehouses after a cyberattack. The reports did not say whether the two cases are connected.

TECHNOLOGY

Pulling the Plug: Why a Precautionary Shutdown Can Spread an Outage to Places the Attackers Never Reached

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

One detail in this week's reports deserves attention: in at least one case, a precautionary shutdown of a management system spread the disruption to sites that had not themselves been attacked.

Shutting systems down is the standard first response to ransomware. If attackers are moving through a network, cutting connections can stop them from reaching more machines and encrypting more data.

The cost is that everything connected to the systems that are shut down stops too. A management screen, or console, through which a company controls many sites at once, is a single point on which those sites depend.

When it is switched off, warehouses, offices or servers that were never touched by the attackers may be unable to operate, because they cannot receive instructions, record transactions or confirm what they are doing.

Security specialists describe this as a trade-off between containment and continuity. Shut down too little, and the attack spreads. Shut down too much, and the defenders do the attackers' work for them.

The answer lies in preparation. Networks divided into segments, so that a problem in one part can be isolated without stopping the rest, give defenders more precise options.

So do manual procedures that let a warehouse or office keep working, slowly, on paper or on separate systems, while the main systems are down. Many companies practised such procedures after earlier attacks.

Backups kept offline, out of reach of attackers, allow systems to be restored. Rehearsals of recovery reveal how long it will really take.

Japanese companies hit by ransomware in recent years have often needed weeks, and sometimes months, to restore their systems fully. After the attack on Asahi Group last autumn, the brewer took orders by telephone and fax for weeks before its computer systems returned.

This week's cases will be studied for the same lessons.

TECHNOLOGY

How Ransomware Works: Break In, Spread, Steal, Encrypt, Demand

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

Ransomware attacks follow a pattern that has become depressingly familiar to companies around the world.

The attackers first get inside. Common routes are stolen or guessed passwords, especially for remote-access systems; flaws in network equipment or software that have not been patched; and deceptive e-mails that trick staff into running malicious programs.

Once inside, they move quietly through the network, seeking the accounts with the highest privileges, the ones that administrators use to manage everything else.

Before revealing themselves, many groups copy large amounts of data out of the network. This allows double extortion: pay, or the data will be published.

Then they strike, usually at night or at weekends, when fewer people are watching. Malicious software encrypts files and systems across the network, and a note appears with instructions for contacting the attackers.

Many groups operate as businesses. A core group develops the software and runs the negotiations and the leak sites, and affiliates carry out the attacks in return for a share of the ransom.

Governments, including Japan's, advise against paying. Payment funds further crime, does not guarantee that data will be returned or deleted, and marks the victim as willing to pay.

Japan's National Police Agency has recorded roughly 200 ransomware cases a year reported to the police in recent years, a figure that captures only the incidents victims choose to report.

International police co-operation has had successes. A 28-year-old Russian believed to be a key member of the Qilin group, which claimed last year's attack on Asahi, was detained in Osaka in May and has been handed over to Germany, it was reported this week. German investigators suspect him of an attack on a German logistics company.

Defences are well known: patching, strong authentication, segmented networks, monitoring, and backups kept offline. The difficulty is applying them everywhere, all the time.

TECHNOLOGY

Qilin and the Business of Ransomware: How a Criminal Brand Recruits Affiliates, Splits the Takings and Names Its Victims

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The ransomware group Qilin became familiar in Japan last autumn, when it claimed responsibility for the attack that halted orders and shipments at Asahi Group for weeks.

This week the group was in the news again, for a different reason: a 28-year-old Russian believed to be one of its key members, detained in Osaka in May, has been handed over to Germany.

Qilin, which first appeared in 2022, operates on a model known as ransomware as a service. A core group develops the malicious software, maintains the infrastructure and runs a website on which it publishes the names of victims and the data stolen from those who do not pay.

Affiliates, recruited on criminal forums, carry out the attacks. They break into networks, steal data and deploy the software, and in return they keep most of the ransom, passing a share to the core group.

The model has made ransomware into something resembling an industry, with specialists in breaking in, in selling access to networks that others have broken into, in negotiating and in laundering payments.

Qilin has been among the most active groups in the world in the past two years. In June 2024 it attacked Synnovis, a company that provides pathology services to hospitals in London, forcing the postponement of thousands of appointments and operations.

Like many groups, it has produced versions of its software that attack the servers on which companies run many virtual machines at once, multiplying the damage of a single intrusion.

German investigators suspect the man handed over this week of an attack on a German logistics company in September last year, in which data was stolen and encrypted and a ransom of cryptocurrency worth about 26 million yen was extorted.

Arrests of members of such groups are rare, because most live in countries that do not extradite their citizens. When they travel, they can be caught, as this case shows.

Nothing reported so far connects Qilin with this week's attacks on IDC Frontier or Nissui Logistics, and the reports available on Thursday did not say whether any group had claimed them.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Anne Carson wins the literature prize, Page 16.

Editorial: One cloud lock, Page 19.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 13.

TECHNOLOGY

When Cyberattacks Stopped Work in Japan

By the Technology Desk

FEBRUARY 2022: An attack on Kojima Industries, a parts supplier, forces Toyota to halt all of its domestic assembly plants for a day.

OCTOBER 2022: Ransomware cripples the electronic records of the Osaka General Medical Center, after intruders enter through the systems of a supplier of patient meals.

JULY 2023: Ransomware stops the container terminals at the port of Nagoya for more than two days.

JUNE 2024: An attack takes down Kadokawa's video site Niconico and disrupts the publisher's operations for weeks.

DECEMBER 2024: A flood of malicious traffic disrupts Japan Airlines' systems on December 26, delaying flights at the start of the year-end holidays.

SEPTEMBER 2025: Ransomware halts ordering and shipping at Asahi Group; the Qilin group claims responsibility.

OCTOBER 2025: An attack on the office-supplies retailer Askl also stops online shops that depend on its logistics.

JULY 2026: A cyberattack disrupts cold-storage operations at the Nichirei Logi Group.

OCTOBER 2026: IDC Frontier's cloud service is knocked out, affecting 495 customers; Nissui Logistics halts all 17 warehouses.

THE PATTERN: In case after case, the damage spread through suppliers, shared systems and logistics partners.

TECHNOLOGY

One Cloud, Many Customers: The Efficiency and the Risk of Putting Everyone's Systems in the Same Place

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

The appeal of cloud computing is easy to understand. A company that rents computing power from a provider need not buy and maintain its own servers, and it can expand or shrink its capacity as its needs change.

Providers achieve economies of scale by running many customers' systems on shared machinery, managed through common tools by specialist staff who are usually better at security than a small company's own employees.

That is the efficiency. The risk is concentration: when a provider is hit, every customer that depends on the affected service is hit at once.

Large global providers design their services to contain failures, dividing them into separate regions and zones so that a problem in one does not spread. Even so, outages at the biggest providers have repeatedly disrupted thousands of services worldwide.

For customers, the lesson is that moving to the cloud transfers some risks but not all. A company remains responsible for its own data and for its plans to keep working if a provider fails.

Common precautions include keeping backups with a different provider or offline, being able to run essential functions elsewhere, and testing how long recovery would take.

Few small companies or local governments can afford full duplication. For them, the choice of provider, the terms of the contract and the provider's own security become the main defence.

Regulators have begun to take notice. Financial supervisors in Japan and abroad now expect banks to manage their dependence on outside technology providers as a risk in itself.

The national government's programme to move local governments' core systems onto approved cloud services is partly an attempt to raise the security of thousands of separate systems by concentrating them in fewer, better-protected places.

This week's attack is a reminder that concentration raises the stakes of every failure that does occur.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Crossword, Page 15.

Koguma: the map and the bulletins, Page 3.

TECHNOLOGY

TECHNOLOGY

Active Cyber Defence, Eight Days In: What the New Laws Allow, and Why This Week's Victims Are Mostly Outside Them

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

Japan's laws on active cyber defence took effect on October 1, eight days before this week's attacks came to light.

Passed by the Diet last year, they give the state powers it did not have before. Under conditions, the police and the Self-Defense Forces may enter servers abroad or at home that are being used for serious attacks and render them harmless.

The laws also allow the government, from next autumn, to analyse communications data passing through Japan to detect attacks, with an independent body set up to oversee the practice.

Operators of core infrastructure, designated under the economic security law, are obliged to report cyber incidents to the government and to tell it about the computer equipment they use.

Those designated sectors include electricity, gas, oil, water, railways, trucking, shipping, ports, aviation, airports, telecommunications, broadcasting, the post, finance and credit cards.

Cloud computing and cold storage are not on that list as sectors in their own right. Companies outside the designated sectors may still report attacks voluntarily, and the police can investigate any crime.

The list can be widened, and has been: port transport was added after ransomware stopped the container terminals at Nagoya in 2023. Cases like this week's will be cited by those who argue that the cold chain and major cloud services should be next.

Supporters of the laws say they finally give Japan the means to fight back against attackers, as its allies can. Critics have warned about the privacy implications of monitoring communications.

The powers to neutralise servers are aimed at state-backed attackers and serious criminal groups, and their use is expected to be rare and secret.

For the victims of this week's attacks, the new laws offer no immediate help. Recovery remains their own task.

TECHNOLOGY

The Government Cloud: Japan's Plan to Move Thousands of Local Systems Onto Approved Services

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Japan has about 1,700 municipalities, and for decades each built or bought its own computer systems for the registry of residents, local taxes, welfare and other services.

The result was thousands of incompatible systems, costly to maintain and uneven in their security.

In 2021 the national government launched a programme to standardise the systems for twenty core municipal functions and to move them onto a government cloud, a set of cloud services approved and contracted by the Digital Agency, which was founded that year.

The approved providers include the American giants Amazon Web Services, Google, Microsoft and Oracle, and the Japanese company Sakura Internet.

The original target was for municipalities to complete the move by the end of the fiscal year that ended in March 2026. Many could not, because of shortages of engineers and problems with vendors, and the government allowed later dates for some systems.

Supporters argue that the programme will reduce costs and raise security by concentrating systems in large, well-defended platforms.

Critics have pointed to the reliance on foreign companies and to the risk that problems in a few platforms could affect many municipalities at once.

Local governments also use many other systems outside the programme, often supplied by private companies. IDC Frontier is not one of the government cloud providers.

The attack on IDC Frontier, whose customers include local governments, will add to the debate about where municipal data should be kept and who should protect it.

Residents rarely think about where their council's computers are. They notice when the counter cannot

issue a certificate.

TECHNOLOGY

Yakiniku King App Leak Exposes the Names, E-mail Addresses and Phone Numbers of About 10.79 Million Members

*Monogatari Corporation says passwords and payment details were not taken; the cause of the intrusion is still being investigated*  
By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Personal data belonging to almost every member of the official app of Yakiniku King, the all-you-can-eat barbecue chain, has leaked after an intrusion into the company's systems.

Monogatari Corporation, the restaurant group based in Toyohashi, Aichi Prefecture, that runs the chain, announced on Monday that the records of 10,788,963 members had been taken. The app had 10,808,784 registered users.

The leaked data are member numbers, the names registered in the app, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers, according to the company.

Login passwords, dates of birth, gender, postcodes, points balances and records of restaurant visits were not leaked, the company said. It does not hold credit card numbers or other payment details.

Unauthorised access by a third party to the system that manages members was confirmed on October 2. The company cut off communications and took defensive measures, and confirmed the next day that member data had been taken.

How the intruders got in, and how it became possible, are still under investigation. At the time of the announcement there was no confirmed case of the data being published or misused, and no leak had been found from the apps of the group's other restaurant brands.

The Yakiniku King app remains in service with additional security measures. Monogatari's shares fell sharply after the announcement.

A record year for leaks

The case is one of the largest leaks of personal data in Japan in recent years, and it comes in a year of many. The Yomiuri Shimbun reported on Wednesday that 506 leak incidents had been counted so far this year, the most on record, and that attackers were using artificial intelligence to find weaknesses in systems.

NHK reported on Tuesday that a security company had seen damage increase since July and judged it highly likely that AI was being misused in cyberattacks.

Under the Act on the Protection of Personal Information, companies must report leaks caused by unauthorised access to the Personal Information Protection Commission and notify the people affected.

Names, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers are exactly what fraudsters need to send convincing messages. Members should treat with suspicion any e-mail, text message or call that appears to come from the company or that mentions the leak, and should not follow links in such messages.

TECHNOLOGY

Your Data Has Leaked. What Now? Seven Sensible Steps

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Notices of data leaks have become so common that many people no longer read them. Yet a leak changes the risks for the people affected, and a few habits reduce them.

First, read the company's notice and establish what was taken. A leak of names and e-mail addresses calls for different precautions from a leak of passwords or card numbers.

Second, expect fraudulent messages. Criminals use leaked lists to send e-mails and text messages that appear to come from the company, often offering compensation or warning of a problem with an account. The safe rule is never to follow a link in such a message, and to reach the company through its official app or website.

Third, if a password was leaked, or if the same password is used elsewhere, change it, and use a different password for every service. A password manager makes this practical.

Fourth, turn on two-step verification wherever it is offered, so that a password alone is not enough to enter an account.

Fifth, if card numbers were taken, check statements for charges that are not yours and ask the card company about reissuing the card.

Sixth, be wary of telephone calls. A caller who knows your name and number can sound convincing. Hang up and call back on a number you have found yourself.

Seventh, keep a record of the notices you receive. If the data are misused later, the record helps when dealing with the company, the police or a consumer centre.

The national consumer hotline, 188, connects callers to a local consumer centre. The police consultation line, #9110, is for advice that is not an emergency.

None of these steps makes anyone invulnerable. Together they turn a leak from an open door into a locked one with a known weakness.

TECHNOLOGY

AI on Both Sides: How Attackers Use It to Find Weak Points and Write Better Lures, and How Defenders Use It to Catch Them

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Two reports this week suggested that artificial intelligence is changing the scale of cyber crime in Japan.

The Yomiuri Shimbun reported on Wednesday that 506 data leak incidents had been counted so far this year, the most on record, and that attackers were using AI to find weaknesses in systems. NHK reported on Tuesday that a security company had seen damage increase since July and judged it highly likely that AI was being misused.

AI helps attackers in several ways. Programs that can read and write code can scan software for known kinds of flaw far faster than a human can, and can help less skilled criminals adapt attack tools.

Generative AI writes fluent, natural text in any language. For years, clumsy Japanese was one of the clearest signs of a fraudulent e-mail, and the language acted as a partial barrier against foreign criminals. That barrier has largely gone.

Voice-cloning software can imitate a person from a short recording, making telephone fraud more convincing. Image generators can produce fake identity documents and fake photographs.

Defenders have the same tools. AI systems watch networks for unusual behaviour, such as an account that suddenly copies large amounts of data at night, and can raise an alarm in seconds rather than days.

They also help analysts sift the enormous volume of alerts that modern networks produce, so that people can concentrate on the most serious, and they can find flaws in a company's own software before attackers do.

The contest is not new. Every advance in computing has been used by both sides. What is new is the speed at which capabilities spread, and the number of people who can now use them.

The basic defences still work against AI-assisted attacks: prompt updates, strong authentication, divided networks, monitoring and offline backups. Most intrusions still begin with a stolen password or an unpatched flaw.

For individuals, the lesson is that a well-written message is no longer evidence that it is genuine. Verification through an independent channel is the only reliable test.

TECHNOLOGY

Italy's Meloni Seeks an EU Trademark for Her Voice Against AI Fakes, a Week After a Tokyo Court Ruled That a Voice Is a Symbol of Personality

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

Giorgia Meloni, the Italian prime minister, has applied to the European Union Intellectual Property Office to register her voice as a trademark, as a defence against fakes made with artificial intelligence.

The application, first reported by the newspaper La Repubblica, includes a four-second recording of Ms Meloni saying, in Italian, 'Io sono Giorgia Meloni', or 'I am Giorgia Meloni'. The Associated Press checked the office's records on Monday, and an Italian official confirmed the filing.

The phrase echoes a speech she gave at a rally in 2019, which was turned into a dance remix that spread online, and it became the title of her autobiography in 2021.

Manipulated images of Ms Meloni have circulated online, sometimes passed off as real. In May, after fake images appeared, she said: 'I can defend myself, but many others cannot.' In 2024 she brought a legal case against a man accused of creating and posting pornographic deepfake images of her; it is still before an Italian court.

Italian media reported that even if the application is approved, the trademark would not automatically prevent imitations of her voice, but it would give her an additional legal tool against unauthorised use.

She is following entertainers. The American actor Matthew McConaughey was among the first major celebrities to use trademark registrations to secure rights to clips of his voice. The actress Scarlett Johansson objected in 2024 to a chatbot voice that she said sounded eerily similar to hers; OpenAI denied imitating her and withdrew the voice.

A first in Tokyo

In Japan, the courts have begun to address the question. On September 30 the Tokyo District Court, ruling in a case brought by the voice actor Kenjiro Tsuda against the operator of TikTok, said that a person's voice, like a person's likeness, is a symbol of that individual's personality, and that it is protected by the right of publicity.

It was the first judicial ruling on the protection of the voice in Japan. An account had posted 188 videos between July 2024 and September 2025 with narration imitating Mr Tsuda's voice. The court nevertheless rejected his request to have the videos deleted, as they had already been removed.

Japan has accepted sounds as trademarks since April 2015, mainly for jingles and other sound logos used in advertising.

Voices have become easy to copy. A few seconds of recorded speech can be enough for software to produce a convincing imitation, which is why politicians, actors and fraud investigators are all paying attention.

TECHNOLOGY

Voices That Lie: Why Cloned Voices Worry the Police in a Country Where Telephone Fraud Already Costs Billions

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Japan knows telephone fraud better than most countries. For two decades criminals have called elderly people pretending to be a son or grandson in trouble, a police officer or an official, and persuaded them to hand over cash or transfer money.

These crimes, known as special fraud, have been joined in recent years by investment and romance scams conducted through social media. Losses from the two together exceeded 300 billion yen in 2025, the worst on record, the National Police Agency reported in February.

Voice cloning threatens to make such fraud more convincing. Software can now imitate a person's voice from a few seconds of recorded speech, and recordings of many people are easy to find in videos posted online.

A call that sounds exactly like a grandson, or a company president instructing an urgent transfer, is harder to doubt than a stranger's voice claiming to be a relative with a cold.

Cases abroad have shown the risk. Criminals have used imitated voices of executives to order transfers, and fake video calls in which several participants were generated by computer.

The defences are simple, and they work. Families can agree on a word or a question that only they know. Anyone asked for money by telephone should hang up and call back on a number they already have.

Companies should never authorise payments on the strength of a voice or a video call alone, however senior the caller appears.

The law is beginning to respond. Last week the Tokyo District Court ruled that a person's voice, like a likeness, is a symbol of personality protected by the right of publicity, in a case brought by the voice actor Kenjiro Tsuda.

Politicians are protecting their own voices too. Italy's

TECHNOLOGY

prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, has applied for a European trademark on a recording of her voice.

One hundred and fifty years after Bell and Watson first spoke to each other over outdoor wires, the old question of the telephone, who is really at the other end, has never mattered more.

TECHNOLOGY

### Nippan Acknowledges Selling Books to an American AI Developer; Publishers Want to Know How Many, and on What Terms

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

Nippan Group Holdings, one of the country's two biggest book wholesalers, has acknowledged selling books to an American developer of artificial intelligence, in a reply to the Japan Book Publishers Association, which had asked it to confirm the facts, the Asahi Shimbun reported on Tuesday.

According to reports of the reply, the buyer was Anthropic, the sales continued for about a year from December 2024, and Nippan said it had not been aware that the books were intended for training AI.

The association had written to Nippan in a letter dated September 17, after Nikkei Business and other outlets reported that court documents in the United States showed a contract for the sale of Japanese books.

The letter asked what dealings had taken place with the company and, if large, high-value deals had been made with an overseas company without a contract under the resale price maintenance system that governs book prices in Japan, under what kind of contract they had been made.

Nippan had earlier said it could not answer questions about individual transactions, including whether they had taken place.

Several questions remain open: how many copies were sold, on what terms, and whether other wholesalers made similar sales.

**Scanned and discarded**

The background lies in American litigation. Documents in a class action brought by authors against Anthropic showed that the company had bought millions of printed books, removed their bindings, scanned the pages and discarded the originals, in order to use the text to train its AI models.

In June 2025 a federal judge, William Alsup, ruled that training on books that had been lawfully bought was fair use under American copyright law, but that keeping pirated copies downloaded from the internet was not. Anthropic agreed later that year to pay 1.5 billion dollars to settle the authors' claims over the pirated books.

Selling a book that has been lawfully bought is not in itself an infringement of copyright, in Japan or in the United States. The concerns of Japanese authors and publishers centre on whether they consented to their work becoming training data, and on whether they should be paid.

The episode has given new urgency to a long-running debate in Japan about how the law treats the use of copyrighted works to train AI. That law is explained alongside.

**TECHNOLOGY**

### Article 30-4: The Clause in Japan's Copyright Law That Lets Machines Learn From Books, and Its Limits

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Japan's Copyright Act contains one of the world's broadest permissions for using copyrighted works to train artificial intelligence.

It is Article 30-4, added by an amendment passed in 2018 that took effect on January 1, 2019. It allows works to be used without the copyright holder's permission when the purpose is not to enjoy the thoughts or feelings expressed in them, and it names data analysis among such purposes.

Machine learning, in which a program analyses large quantities of text or images to find patterns, falls within that description. So a developer in Japan may copy works into a training data set without asking permission.

The permission has a limit. It does not apply where the use would unreasonably prejudice the interests of the copyright holder, in light of the nature and purpose of the work and the circumstances of its use.

In March 2024 the Agency for Cultural Affairs published guidance on how the provision applies to AI. It said, among other things, that training intended to make an AI produce output reproducing the creative expression of particular works may fall outside the permission, because the purpose then includes enjoyment of that expression.

The guidance also said that copying databases that are sold for the purpose of analysis, without paying for them, could fall under the limit, because it would undercut a market that the copyright holder has created.

Article 30-4 concerns what happens in Japan. Copying carried out abroad is governed by the law of the country where it takes place, as in the American case of Anthropic.

Output is treated separately from training. If an AI produces an image or text that is similar to a protected work and derived from it, the ordinary rules of infringement apply, whatever happened during training.

Newspaper and publishing groups have called for the provision to be revisited, arguing that it leaves creators without control over, or payment for, a use that is now commercially valuable. AI developers argue that broad access to data is essential if Japanese companies are to compete.

The sale of books by Nippan, reported this week, will be cited on both sides of that argument.

**TECHNOLOGY**

### October 9, 1876: Bell and Watson Hold the First Two-Way Telephone Conversation Over Outdoor Wires

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 9, 1876, Alexander Graham Bell and his assistant, Thomas Watson, held a conversation by telephone over about three kilometres of telegraph wire between Boston and Cambridgeport, in Massachusetts.

It was the first two-way telephone conversation carried over outdoor wires, and it showed that the invention could work over distances that mattered.

Bell had received his patent in March that year, and on March 10 he had spoken the first words over his apparatus, calling Watson from another room: 'Mr Watson, come here, I want to see you.'

The October test went further: both men spoke and both heard, over a line exposed to the weather, like the telegraph lines that already crossed the country.

Within a year the first telephone companies were being formed, and within a few years exchanges connected subscribers in many cities.

Japan followed quickly. Telephones were brought to the country in 1877, the year after Bell's patent, and public telephone service began between Tokyo and Yokohama in 1890.

The telephone transformed business and private life over the following century, before the mobile phone and the internet transformed it again.

The question that a telephone line poses has not changed: who is at the other end? It is the question at the heart of every fraudulent call and every intrusion into a network.

Bell, born in Edinburgh, spent much of his life working with deaf people, and his interest in sound and speech came from that work.

The two men spoke again in 1915, at the opening of the first transcontinental line. Bell, in New York, repeated his request for Watson to come to him; Watson, in San Francisco, replied that it would now take him days to get there.

**TECHNOLOGY**

### October 9, 2006: Google Agrees to Buy YouTube, a Site Not Yet Two Years Old, for 1.65 Billion Dollars

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 9, 2006, Google announced that it would buy YouTube for 1.65 billion dollars in stock.

YouTube had been founded in February 2005 by three former employees of PayPal: Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim. The first video, a 19-second clip of Karim at a zoo, was posted in April that year.

By the autumn of 2006 the site was one of the fastest-growing on the internet, but it was losing money and faced the threat of legal action from

copyright holders over clips that users had uploaded.

Many thought Google had paid too much. Google's own video service had failed to catch on, and it was buying an audience it could not build.

The purchase proved one of the most successful in the history of the technology industry. YouTube became the world's largest video platform, a search engine in its own right and a major source of advertising revenue.

It also changed entertainment and the news. Ordinary people became broadcasters, and some became stars with audiences larger than television channels.

In Japan, YouTube is among the most used services, and creators known as YouTubers have become a recognised profession that children name when asked what they want to be.

The site's influence has brought scrutiny: over misinformation, the protection of children and the treatment of copyright.

The deal established a pattern for the industry, in which the largest companies buy promising young rivals before they grow into threats.

Twenty years on, video is no longer a feature of the internet. For many people it is the internet.

**TECHNOLOGY**

### October 9, 1874: The Treaty That Created a Single Postal Territory for the World, and Why Today Is World Post Day

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 9, 1874, representatives of 22 countries signed a treaty in Bern, Switzerland, creating what became the Universal Postal Union.

Before it, sending a letter abroad meant paying postage calculated under a tangle of bilateral agreements, which varied with the route and the countries the letter crossed.

The treaty made its members a single postal territory for the exchange of letters, with uniform rates and the principle that each country would deliver mail from the others.

Japan joined in 1877, six years after it had established its modern postal service under Hisoka Maejima, the founder of the Japanese post, whose portrait appeared on the one-yen stamp for decades.

The union, now an agency of the United Nations, is one of the oldest international organisations in the world.

October 9 was declared World Post Day by the union's congress held in Tokyo in 1969, in recognition of the date of the treaty.

The post has been an early network in every sense. It carried information across borders long before the telegraph, the telephone or the internet, and its principles of universal service and reciprocal delivery still shape communications policy.

Post offices around the world mark the day with events and special stamps.

In Japan, the postal service was privatised in stages after a law passed in 2005, and Japan Post Holdings was listed on the stock exchange in 2015.

Letter volumes are falling as messages move online. Parcels, driven by online shopping, are rising.

**TECHNOLOGY**

### This Week in 1982: Sony Puts the First Compact Disc Player on Sale, and Music Becomes Digital

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 1, 1982, Sony put the CDP-101 on sale in Japan. It was the first compact disc player sold anywhere, and it cost 168,000 yen.

The same day, the first albums on compact disc went on sale in Japan. The title most often named as the first is Billy Joel's 52nd Street, issued by CBS/Sony.

The compact disc was developed jointly by Sony and the Dutch company Philips, which agreed on a common standard in 1980.

The disc is 12 centimetres across and holds about 74 minutes of music. A story Sony has often told holds that the capacity was chosen so that a single disc could hold Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Music is stored as numbers: the sound is measured 44,100 times a second, and each measurement is recorded as a 16-bit value. A laser reads the microscopic pits pressed into the disc, so nothing

touches the surface and the disc does not wear with playing.

The difference from the vinyl record and the cassette tape, which degraded with use and carried hiss and crackle, was immediately audible.

Within a few years the CD had displaced the long-playing record, and it went on to carry computer software and data as the CD-ROM.

Downloads and then streaming took its place in most countries in the 2000s and 2010s. Japan has been an exception: it remains one of the few large markets where physical discs still account for a substantial share of recorded-music sales.

The CD also marked a shift in Japanese industry, from making machines to setting the standards on which a global market would run.

Forty-four years on, the principle it introduced to the home, sound turned into data, underlies every song on every phone.

**TECHNOLOGY**

### Just a Hobby: Thirty-Five Years After a Helsinki Student Released Linux, It Runs the Servers, the Phones and Every One of the Top Supercomputers

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

In August 1991 a 21-year-old student at the University of Helsinki, Linus Torvalds, announced on an internet discussion group that he was writing a free operating system for personal computers.

It was, he wrote, just a hobby, and would not be big and professional like the GNU project, an effort to build a free version of the Unix operating system.

He released the first version of his program, the kernel that manages a computer's processor, memory and devices, on September 17, 1991. Version 1.0 followed in March 1994.

From 1992 the kernel was distributed under the GNU General Public License, which allows anyone to use, study, change and share the code provided that they pass on the same freedoms. Thousands of programmers and, later, many of the world's largest technology companies contributed to it.

Thirty-five years on, Linux runs most of the servers behind the internet and the cloud services that this week's attacks have put in the news. Android, the most widely used operating system for smartphones, is built on the Linux kernel.

Since November 2017 every one of the 500 most powerful supercomputers in the twice-yearly TOP500 list has run Linux. Japan's Fugaku, at the Riken Center for Computational Science in Kobe, uses a version of Red Hat Enterprise Linux.

Its ubiquity makes it a target. Ransomware groups now commonly produce versions of their programs designed to attack Linux servers, including those that run many virtual machines at once.

Mr Torvalds still oversees the development of the kernel, releasing a new version roughly every two to three months.

Linux's history is an argument for openness: a system whose code anyone can inspect, and whose flaws are found and fixed by many hands.

It is also a reminder that infrastructure is built by people. A program begun by one student is now among the foundations on which hospitals, banks, warehouses and governments rely.

**TECHNOLOGY**

### From Sputnik's Beeps to the Phone in Your Pocket: How a Satellite Launched 69 Years Ago This Week Led to Satellite Navigation

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite, a polished sphere 58 centimetres across that broadcast a simple beep as it circled the Earth.

In the United States, two young physicists at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, William Guier and George Weiffenbach, listened to the signal and noticed that its pitch shifted as the satellite approached and receded, the Doppler effect.

By measuring the shift, they found that they could calculate the satellite's orbit from a single pass.

TECHNOLOGY

A colleague, Frank McClure, saw that the method could be reversed: if a satellite's orbit were known, a receiver on the ground could work out its own position from the same signals.

That idea became Transit, a navigation system for the United States Navy, whose first satellite was launched in 1960 and which entered service in 1964. It was the ancestor of the Global Positioning System, whose first satellite was launched in 1978 and which reached full capability in 1995.

Today receivers in phones, cars, ships, aircraft and farm machinery fix their positions from several satellite systems: the American GPS, Russia's GLONASS, Europe's Galileo and China's BeiDou.

Japan has its own, the Quasi-Zenith Satellite System, known as Michibiki. Its satellites follow orbits that keep one of them high over Japan for long periods, so that signals are not blocked by mountains and tall buildings.

Michibiki has provided a service with four satellites since November 2018 and is being expanded, so that Japan can fix positions with its own satellites alone.

Satellite positioning also supplies precise time. Telecommunications networks, power grids and financial systems synchronise their clocks with it, which is why a disruption to the signals would be felt far beyond navigation.

It all began with a beep. The week of Sputnik is also remembered as the start of the space age; it was the start of the age of knowing where we are.

TECHNOLOGY

This Week in 1959: Luna 3 Photographs the Far Side of the Moon, Which No Human Had Ever Seen

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Because the Moon turns once on its axis in the time it takes to orbit the Earth, it always shows the same face to us. Until October 1959, no one had seen the other side.

On October 4, 1959, two years to the day after Sputnik, the Soviet Union launched Luna 3, a probe designed to loop around the Moon and look back at it.

On October 7, from a distance of more than 60,000 km, its cameras took 29 photographs of the far side over about 40 minutes, covering about 70 per cent of it.

The technology was ingenious. There was no digital camera. The probe carried photographic film, which it developed, fixed and dried on board. A small spot of light from a cathode-ray tube then scanned each frame, and the signal was sent to Earth like a fax.

About 17 images reached the ground, grainy and faint. They were enough to show that the far side looked very different from the near side, with few of the dark plains, the maria, that form the familiar face of the Moon.

The Soviet Union named the features it could see. A dark plain became the Sea of Moscow, and craters were named after the rocket pioneer Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, Jules Verne, Marie Curie and Thomas Edison.

Why the two sides differ is still studied. The crust on the far side is thicker, which may have prevented the volcanic flooding that created the maria on the near side.

Sixty-seven years later the far side is no longer unknown. Spacecraft have mapped it in detail, and in 2019 China's Chang'e 4 made the first soft landing there. In 2024 Chang'e 6 brought back the first samples from the far side.

Japan has its own place in lunar exploration. Its Kaguya orbiter mapped the Moon from 2007 to 2009, and in January 2024 its SLIM lander made Japan the fifth country to achieve a soft landing on the Moon.

The grainy pictures of 1959 began that story. They were the first time humans saw something that had been hidden from them for all of history.

TECHNOLOGY

On This Day in Technology: October 9

By the Technology Desk

1874: The Treaty of Bern creates the General Postal Union, later the Universal Postal Union.

1876: Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Watson

hold the first two-way telephone conversation over outdoor wires, between Boston and Cambridgeport.

1604: Observers in Europe first record a new star in the constellation Ophiuchus, the supernova that Johannes Kepler went on to study.

1936: Hoover Dam begins transmitting electricity to Los Angeles, more than 400 kilometres away.

1969: The Universal Postal Union's congress in Tokyo declares October 9 World Post Day.

1992: A meteorite falls on a parked car in Peekskill, New York, one of the best documented meteorite falls.

2006: Google announces its purchase of YouTube for 1.65 billion dollars.

2006: North Korea conducts its first nuclear test, detected by seismic stations around the world.

THIS WEEK, 1957: The Soviet Union launches Sputnik 1, on October 4.

THIS WEEK, 1959: Luna 3 photographs the far side of the Moon, on October 7.

THIS WEEK, 1982: Sony's CDP-101, the first compact disc player, goes on sale, on October 1.

THIS WEEK, 2026: Nobel prizes for optogenetics, the IceCube observatory and the chemistry of handedness.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology Digest

By the Technology Desk

CLOUD: IDC Frontier's cloud service, hit by ransomware, remains down; 495 customers are affected.

COLD CHAIN: Nissui Logistics stops work at all 17 warehouses after a cyberattack.

SHUTDOWN: A precautionary shutdown of a management system spreads the disruption to sites not directly attacked, the reports say.

LAW: The active cyber defence laws, in force since October 1, do not cover cloud companies or cold storage.

POLICE: A Russian believed to be a key member of the Qilin ransomware group, detained in Osaka in May, has been handed over to Germany.

SHOES: Mizuno unveils a 96-gram racing shoe.

NOBEL: The chemistry prize to Kenso Soai and Henri Kagan is followed by literature for Anne Carson; peace is announced tonight.

LEAKS: Data leak incidents this year have reached a record 506, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported on Wednesday, saying attackers are using AI to find weaknesses.

HISTORY: The first two-way telephone conversation over outdoor wires took place 150 years ago today.

POST: Today is World Post Day.

SOCIETY

Today's Weather: Sunny and Warmer, 29 Degrees in Kyoto, Osaka, Hiroshima and Kochi; Cloud in the Far South-West

By the Weather Desk

Friday is sunny again across most of Japan, and warmer than Thursday. The weather map for 19 cities gives Tokyo sunshine, a high of 26 and a low this morning of 17.

Highs reach 29 degrees in Kyoto, Osaka, Hiroshima and Kochi in the west, and in Kagoshima and Naha in the far south-west, where the skies are mostly cloudy.

Sapporo, Kushiro and Kochi have some cloud at times, and Fukuoka is cloudy until mid-afternoon before the sun comes out, reaching 28.

North and east

In Hokkaido, Sapporo has a high of 23 after a low of 11, and Kushiro 21 after 9, the coldest morning on the map. In Tohoku, Aomori reaches 24, Akita 23 and Sendai 23, all sunny.

On the Sea of Japan coast, Niigata reaches 24 and Kanazawa 26. Inland, Nagano rises from 10 degrees this morning to 26, the widest range of the day at 16 degrees and four degrees warmer than Thursday.

Centre and west

Nagoya reaches 28 after a low of 17. Kyoto has 29 after 16 and Osaka 29 after 18, the mildest morning on Honshu.

In Chugoku, Matsue reaches 27 and Hiroshima 29. In

Shikoku, Takamatsu has 27 and Kochi 29, with some cloud at times.

In Kyushu, Fukuoka reaches 28 and Kagoshima 29 under cloud, after a low of 21. Naha, also cloudy, has a high of 29 and a low of 25, the warmest morning and the narrowest range, four degrees.

The typhoons

A panel on the map describes Typhoon No. 28, Nolo, a severe tropical storm of 990 hPa at 6 a.m., about 820 km east of Chichijima and just off the map, moving north-west at 25 km/h. Its forecast track is drawn on the right, with circles for Saturday morning and early Sunday.

It passes about 630 km north-east of Chichijima on Saturday morning, turns north, is about 800 km east-south-east of Tokyo early on Sunday and becomes an extratropical low by Monday.

The panel adds that Typhoon No. 29, Koguma, a strong typhoon about 1,820 km east-south-east of Chichijima, is forecast to become very strong and to pass east of the Ogasawara Islands around Monday and Tuesday.

The full weather page, with the chart of every city's high and low, is inside.

SOCIETY

Former Boyfriend Arrested Over the Killing of a 23-Year-Old Woman in Ginowan Who Had Reported Him for Stalking

Police issued a prohibition order in February; ten days before her death a tracking device was found on her car

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

Okinawa prefectural police have arrested a 25-year-old man on suspicion of murdering his former girlfriend, a 23-year-old part-time worker who was found stabbed to death in Ginowan on September 30, NHK reported.

The man has admitted the allegation, according to NTV.

The woman was found in the grounds of an apartment complex in the Kakazu district of the city. An autopsy found that she died of blood loss from a stab wound to the neck. She also had several cuts on her arms, which police are examining as possible defensive wounds.

She had reported to the prefectural police in December last year that she was being stalked by the man. In February the police issued a prohibition order against him under the Anti-Stalking Act, forbidding him to follow or harass her.

On September 20 she told Ginowan police station that a device had been attached to her car. Officers removed it and kept it as evidence. On September 29, the day before she died, police received information that the tracking tag was connected to the man, the Ryukyu Shimpo reported.

The police contacted her that day to check on her situation, but did not tell her of the new information, saying that it needed further investigation, according to the newspaper.

After the killing, a police officer saw the man driving on National Route 330 and tried to stop him, but he drove off. He was found afterwards at an apartment complex in the Mafuga district of Naha with a wound to his neck, and was taken to hospital.

Police seized the rented car he had been driving and a bloodstained blade found at the scene in Naha.

The case is separate from the killing of a woman at a hotel in Naha, for which an American marine has been arrested.

The police's handling of the warnings that preceded the killing is likely to come under scrutiny, as it has in other cases in which victims of stalking had sought help before they died.

Anyone who needs to talk can call the police consultation line, #9110, or, in an emergency, 110.

SOCIETY

One Week After the Sannomiya Crash, Flowers at the Crossing Where a Student Died, and a Passenger's Account That the Driver Suddenly Fell Ill

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

A week after a car ploughed into pedestrians on Flower Road in central Kobe, killing a university student and injuring three other people, flowers have

been laid at the crossing.

The crash happened at about 3:30 p.m. on October 1 at the intersection in front of the Kobe International House, about 350 metres south of JR Sannomiya Station, one of the busiest parts of the city.

According to the Kobe Shimbun, the car had been stopped at a red light in the leftmost of three southbound lanes when it suddenly accelerated diagonally to the right, struck pedestrians on and near the crossing, entered the intersection, mounted the central reservation and hit a truck.

A 21-year-old woman, a university student, died. A 38-year-old man suffered a fractured skull, and a 62-year-old man and a 77-year-old woman were slightly injured.

The driver, a 58-year-old company executive from Tokushima, was seriously injured, with fractures to his right hand. No brake marks were found, and police believe the brakes were not applied. The car had no dashboard camera.

A passenger in the front seat told investigators that the driver's condition changed suddenly while the car was waiting at the signal and that he began to shake, the newspaper reported.

Fukiai police station is investigating the case on suspicion of negligent driving causing death and injury, and the prefectural police are examining whether a sudden medical problem caused the crash.

On Thursday, one week after the crash, flowers were laid at the crossing.

Flower Road, a broad avenue that runs south from Sannomiya past Kobe City Hall towards the port, is one of the city's main streets.

The case has revived questions about how drivers with medical conditions are identified and what more can be done to protect pedestrians in busy centres. The rules are explained alongside.

SOCIETY

Hay Fever Relief Ahead in the East: Next Spring's Cedar Pollen Is Forecast at About Half This Year's Level in Kanto and 30 Per Cent in Tohoku

By the Weather Desk

People who suffer from hay fever in eastern and northern Japan can expect a lighter season next spring, according to the first forecasts for 2027.

Weathernews, the private forecaster, said on October 1 that it expects cedar and cypress pollen in the Kanto region to be about 50 per cent of this spring's level, and in Tohoku about 30 per cent. In Aomori Prefecture it forecasts 16 per cent.

Nationally, it expects about 67 per cent of this year's level and about 88 per cent of the average for the past ten years.

Western Japan is the exception. Weathernews expects many areas of Kyushu to exceed 150 per cent of this year's level, and Chugoku and Shikoku to see increases.

The Japan Weather Association, in its own forecast issued on September 30, expects pollen from Kyushu to Tokai at 110 to 130 per cent of the average, and from Kanto-Koshin to Hokkaido at 50 to 70 per cent of the average.

Two factors drive the forecasts. Cedar trees form more of the male flowers that release pollen after a hot, sunny summer. And a season of heavy pollen is usually followed by a lighter one, as the trees recover.

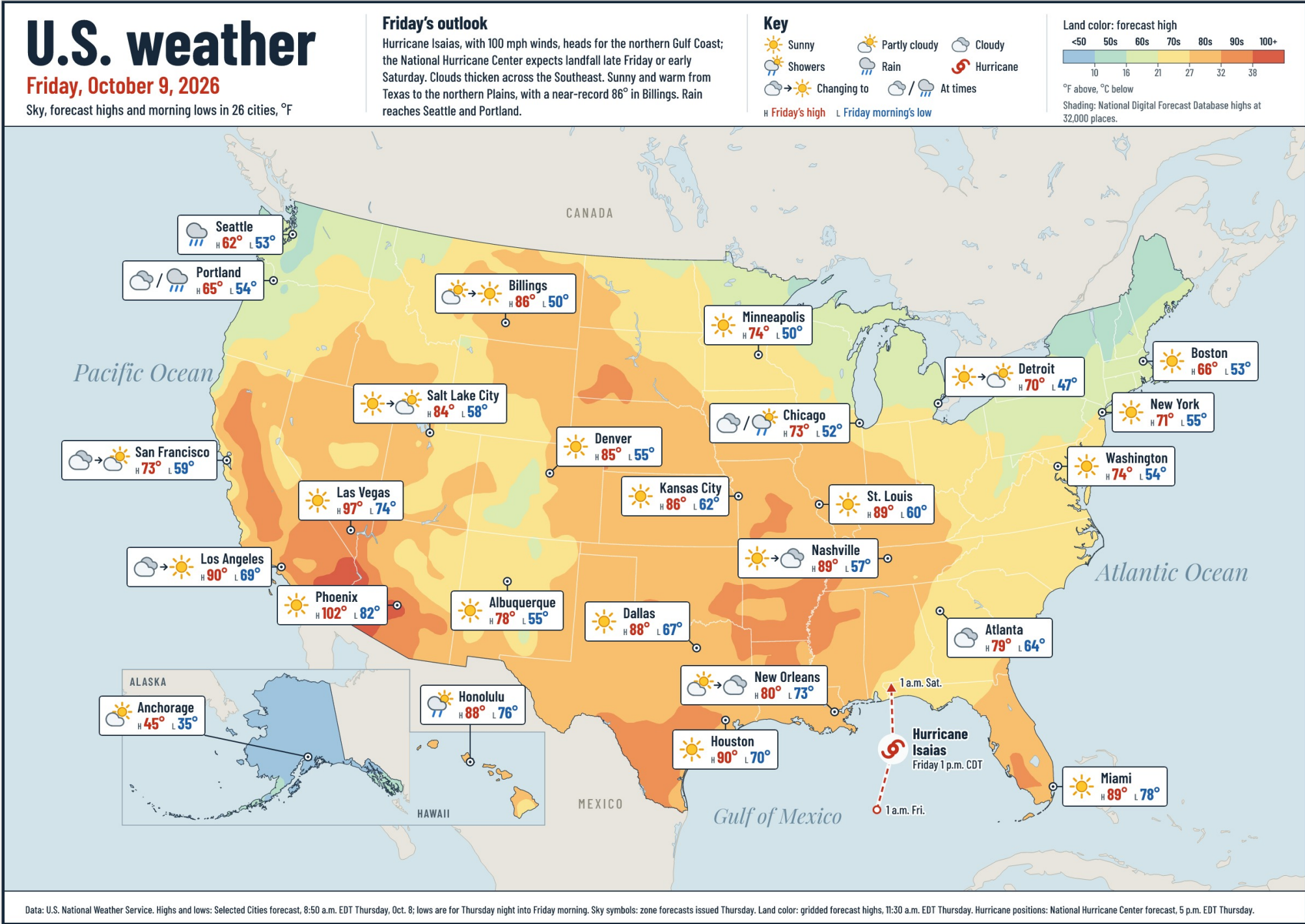
This spring's pollen was heavy in Kinki and from Kanto to Hokkaido. This summer, high pressure brought many sunny days to western and northern Japan, while fronts and humid air reduced the sunshine in eastern Japan and on the Pacific side of Tohoku.

Lighter is not the same as none. Even half of a heavy season can be enough to trouble people with allergies, and forecasters advise sufferers not to let their guard down.

Cedar was planted widely in Japan after the Second World War to supply timber, and the trees that are now mature release enormous quantities of pollen each spring. Hay fever affects a large share of the population.

Weathernews plans a second forecast, with the expected start and peak of the season, in early December.





United States weather for Friday, October 9, 2026: the sky, forecast highs and morning lows in degrees Fahrenheit for 26 cities, and the forecast track of Hurricane Isaias towards the northern Gulf Coast, in the map supplied for this edition. (Data: U.S. National Weather Service selected-cities forecast issued at 8:50 a.m. Eastern time on Thursday, gridded forecast highs issued at 11:30 a.m., and the National Hurricane Center's forecast of 5 p.m. Thursday)

SOCIETY

Weather Abroad: Hurricane Isaias Nears the Gulf Coast as Phoenix Reaches 102 and Billings a Near-Record 86

By the Weather Desk

Hurricane Isaias, with winds of 100 miles an hour, is heading for the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and the National Hurricane Center expects it to make landfall late on Friday or early on Saturday, local time, according to the map of the United States for Friday.

The map traces the storm's forecast path northward across the Gulf, from 1 a.m. on Friday to 1 p.m. Central time and 1 a.m. on Saturday, towards the coast east of New Orleans.

Clouds thicken across the South-east ahead of it. New Orleans turns cloudy, with a high of 80 degrees Fahrenheit and a low of 73, and Atlanta is cloudy at 79.

From Texas to the northern Plains it is sunny and warm. Houston reaches 90, Dallas 88, Kansas City 86

and Denver 85, and Billings, in Montana, has a near-record 86 after partly cloudy skies give way to sun.

The South-west is hot. Phoenix reaches 102 after a low of 82, Las Vegas 97 and Los Angeles 90, after morning cloud.

Rain reaches the Pacific North-west: Seattle has rain and a high of 62, and Portland cloud with rain at times and 65. San Francisco clears to partly cloudy skies at 73.

The Midwest is mild. Chicago has cloud with showers at times and a high of 73, Minneapolis sunshine and 74, St. Louis 89 and Nashville 89, turning cloudy.

The North-east is sunny and cool. Boston reaches 66,

New York 71 and Washington 74. Detroit, at 70, had the coldest morning among the map's cities outside Alaska, at 47.

Miami is sunny at 89, with a low of 78. Honolulu has showers and 88, and Anchorage, partly cloudy, reaches 45 after a low of 35.

The map's figures are from the National Weather Service's forecast issued at 8:50 a.m. Eastern time on Thursday; the lows are for Thursday night into Friday morning, and the hurricane positions are from the National Hurricane Center's forecast at 5 p.m. Eastern time on Thursday.

Converted to Celsius, Phoenix's 102 is about 39 degrees and Anchorage's 45 about 7.

SOCIETY

The Ginowan Case: Key Dates

By the Society Desk

DECEMBER 2025: The woman reports to Okinawa prefectural police that her former boyfriend is stalking her.

FEBRUARY 2026: Police issue a prohibition order against him under the Anti-Stalking Act.

SEPTEMBER 20: She reports a device attached to her car; police remove it as evidence.

SEPTEMBER 29: Police receive information linking the tracking tag to the man; they contact her but do not tell her.

SEPTEMBER 30: She is found stabbed to death at an apartment complex in Kakazu, Ginowan.

SAME DAY: The man flees a police officer on Route 330 and is found with a neck wound in Mafuga, Naha.

OCTOBER 1: An autopsy finds that she died of blood loss; police seize a rented car and a blade.

OCTOBER 7: The man, 25, is arrested on suspicion of murder.

REPORTED ADMISSION: He admits the allegation, according to NTV.

SOURCES: Ryukyu Shimpo, NHK, NTV.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 13.

Crossword, Page 15.

Koguma: the map and the bulletins, Page 3.

Takaichi keeps Yana: 'repay with your work', Page 4.

SOCIETY

The Anti-Stalking Act: Warnings, Prohibition Orders and Tracking Devices, and What the Figures Show

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Japan's Anti-Stalking Act was passed in 2000, after the murder of a university student in Okegawa, Saitama Prefecture, in 1999. She had been stalked by a former boyfriend and had sought help from the police before she was killed.

The law makes it an offence to repeatedly follow, watch, wait for or approach a person, to demand meetings, to make silent or repeated telephone calls, or to send unwanted messages, out of romantic feelings or resentment at their rejection.

The police can issue a warning to a stalker. A prefectural public safety commission can issue a prohibition order, and breaking such an order is a crime carrying heavier penalties.

The law has been amended several times to keep up with technology: in 2013 to cover repeated e-mails, in 2016 to cover messages on social media, and in 2021 to cover attaching GPS devices to a person's belongings without consent and obtaining their location in that way.

The 2016 amendment also removed the requirement for a warning before a prohibition order, and allowed orders to be issued immediately in urgent cases.

In 2025 the police received 22,881 consultations about stalking, the second-highest number since the law took effect, the National Police Agency reported in March.

Arrests in stalking cases reached a record 3,717. Of these, 1,546 were under the Anti-Stalking Act itself and 2,171 under other laws, including the Penal Code. Prohibition orders reached a record 3,037, and warnings numbered 1,577.

Behind the numbers lie difficult judgments. A prohibition order can deter many stalkers, but not all, and the police must decide how far to intervene before a crime has been committed.

Victims' groups have long argued for closer protection of people at high risk, faster sharing of information with victims, and treatment programmes for offenders.

The Ginowan case, in which the victim had a prohibition order in place and had reported a tracking device ten days before her death, will be examined against those arguments.

SOCIETY

Illness at the Wheel: What Drivers Must Declare, What Doctors May Report, and Why the Rules Changed in 2014

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Japan tightened its rules on drivers with certain medical conditions in 2014, after two crashes that shocked the country.

In April 2011 a crane truck ran into a line of schoolchildren in Kanuma, Tochigi Prefecture, killing six. The driver had epilepsy and had not taken his medication. In April 2012 a car ploughed through pedestrians in the Gion district of Kyoto, killing seven people as well as the driver, who had also been diagnosed with epilepsy.

From June 2014, people applying for or renewing a driving licence must answer a questionnaire about symptoms of certain illnesses, such as losing consciousness. False answers are punishable by up to a year in prison or a fine of up to 300,000 yen.

Doctors who examine a patient they believe is unfit to drive may report the patient to the prefectural public safety commission, which can suspend or revoke the licence. The reporting is voluntary, and doctors are protected from breach-of-confidentiality claims.

A separate law that took effect in May 2014 created an offence of dangerous driving caused by the influence of certain illnesses, for drivers who drive knowing that their condition may impair their driving.

Most conditions do not bar anyone from driving. Epilepsy that is controlled, for example, is compatible with a licence under conditions. The aim is to stop people driving when their condition is not under control.

A sudden illness that a driver had no reason to expect is different. The law does not punish a driver for a seizure or a heart attack that could not have been foreseen, although investigators examine the medical history closely.

For older drivers, licence renewal from the age of 75 includes a test of cognitive function.

Engineers offer another line of defence. Many new cars have automatic emergency braking, and some carmakers are developing systems that detect a driver who has lost consciousness and bring the car to a stop.

In the Sannomiya case, investigators are examining whether a sudden medical problem caused the crash. Their findings will decide which of these rules, if any, applies.

SPORTS

Ninety-Six Grams: Mizuno's Featherweight Racing Shoe, and Its Bid for a Tenth of the Hakone Ekiden

By the Sports Desk

Mizuno has unveiled a racing shoe that weighs about 96 grams, which it describes as the lightest of its kind in the world, and it hopes the shoe will help it win more than ten per cent of the shoes worn at the Hakone Ekiden, the Sankei Shimbun reports.

The shoe, the HyperWarp 96, weighs about 96 grams in a size of 27 centimetres, according to the specialist site Gizmodo Japan. It goes on sale on December 4 at Mizuno's online store and its own shops, limited to 696 pairs worldwide, at 88,000 yen including tax.

Its midsole uses a lighter version of Mizuno's foam developed for the shoe and shaped by a special carving process. The upper is made by spraying fibres of thermoplastic polyurethane, varying their density and direction from one part of the foot to another.

A carbon plate runs the full length of the sole, with a section cut away at the heel to save weight. The stack, the thickness of the sole, is about 39 mm at the heel and 33 mm at the forefoot, within the 40 mm limit set by World Athletics for road races.

The price of lightness is durability: the shoe is expected to last about 100 km.

For comparison, Asics's Metaspeed Ray weighs about 130 grams and adidas's Adizero Adios Pro Evo 3 about 97 grams in the same size, the site reports.

The Hakone market

The Hakone Ekiden, the university relay from Tokyo to Hakone and back on January 2 and 3, is the most watched race in Japan, and the shoes on its runners' feet have become a measure of a brand's standing.

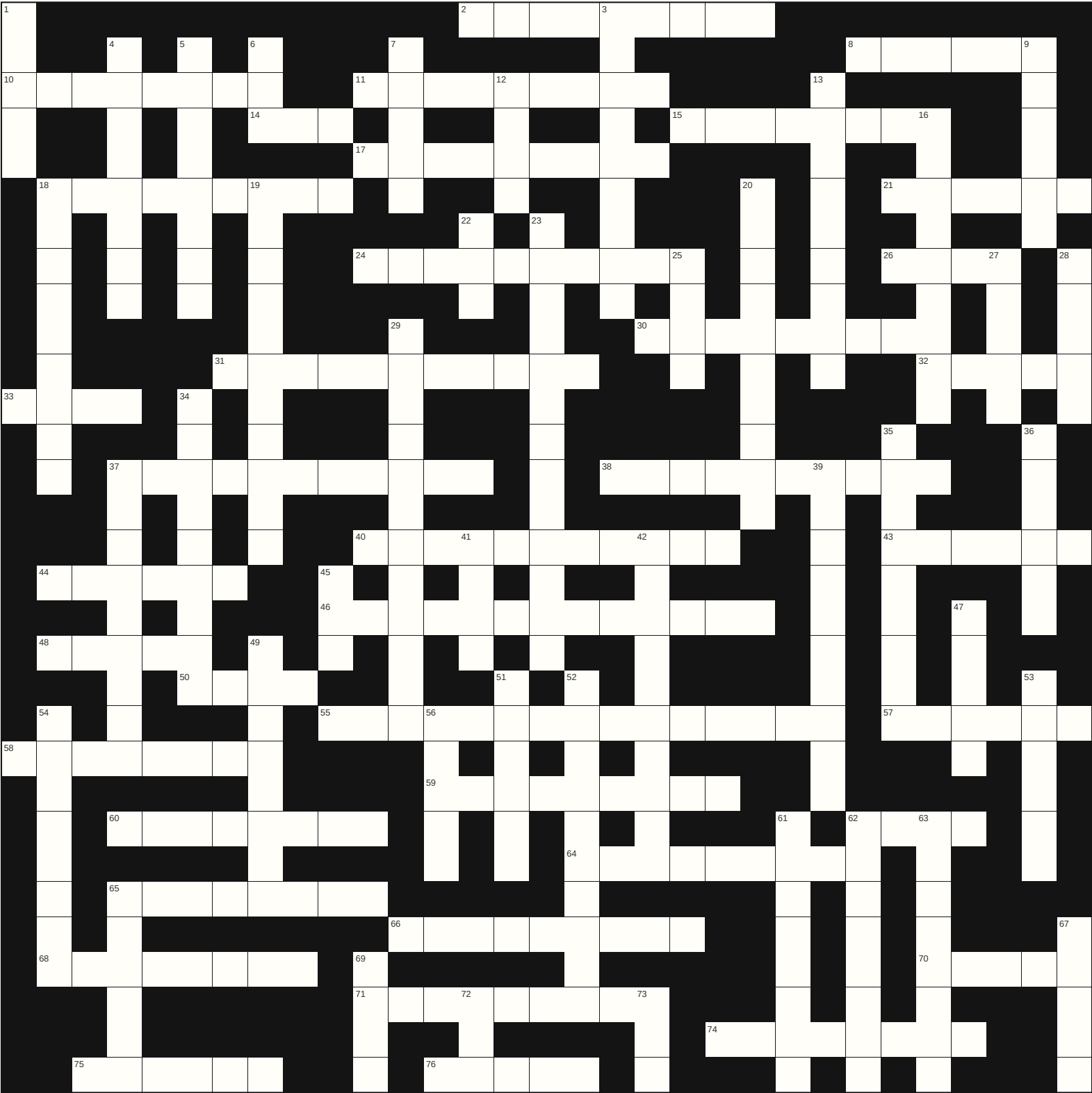
Since the late 2010s, carbon-plated shoes have transformed distance running, and the share of the field wearing each brand at Hakone is reported every year like the results of an election.

Mizuno, a Japanese company founded in Osaka in 1906, has a long history in athletics but has had a small share of Hakone in recent years. A shoe that turns heads is a step towards changing that, though runners choose shoes for comfort and speed over 20 km, not for weight alone.

The university relay season begins on Monday, Sports Day, with the Izumo Ekiden.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 80 Words



SPORTS

## Murao Retains His World Title at 90 kg Without Conceding a Point, Beating Bekauri in 38 Seconds and Tajima in the Final

Shiho Tanaka misses a second title at 70 kg; Japan's judoka have won seven of the ten titles decided in Baku

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

Sanshiro Murao won the men's 90 kg title at the world judo championships in Baku on Thursday, his second world title in a row, beating his compatriot Goki Tajima by ippon in the final.

Murao, the silver medallist at the Paris Olympics, won all five of his contests without conceding a single score.

On the way he beat Lasha Bekauri of Georgia, the two-time Olympic champion, by ippon in 38 seconds, according to reports from Baku. It was Bekauri who had beaten Murao in the Olympic final in Paris two years ago.

The final was a repeat of last year's, when Murao also beat Tajima to win his first world title. Tajima, the 2024 world champion, again took the silver.

It was an all-Japanese final for the second year running, a measure of the country's depth in the class. Bekauri, the man Murao beat on the way, won Olympic gold in Tokyo in 2021 and again in Paris in 2024.

The championships are being held at the National Gymnastics Arena in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, which also hosted the event in 2018.

### Tanaka out in the third round

In the women's 70 kg class, Shiho Tanaka, the defending champion, lost in the third round to Giovanna Scoccimarro of Germany in golden score, the extra time played when a contest is level, and missed out on a second title.

The title went to Ai Tsunoda of Spain, her first world championship.

After five days, Japanese judoka have won titles in four women's weight classes and three men's, seven golds in all. Haruka Kaju retained her title in the women's 63 kg class on Wednesday.

The championships continue on Friday with the men's 100 kg and women's 78 kg classes, and on Saturday with the heaviest classes, before ending on Sunday with the mixed team event.

### Discipline

Five contests without a score against him is a mark of control as much as of attack. At this level, opponents study one another closely, and few found a way through.

The win over Bekauri carried particular weight. Defeat in an Olympic final is the hardest kind to put right, and a victory in 38 seconds, two years later, will be noted throughout the division as the cycle towards the Los Angeles Olympics gathers pace.

SPORTS

## The Sanshiro of Reiwa: A New York-Born Judoka Who Carries the Name of Japan's Most Famous Fictional Fighter

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

Japanese sports writers like to call Sanshiro Murao the Sanshiro of Reiwa, and the nickname is not only about his first name.

Sanshiro Sugata is the hero of a novel by Tsuneo Tomita, published in 1942, about a young man who masters the new art of judo in the Meiji era. Akira Kurosawa made it the subject of his first film as a director, in 1943.

The fictional Sanshiro was modelled in part on Shiro Saigo, one of the early stars of the Kodokan, the school of judo founded by Jigoro Kano in 1882.

To carry the name in the sport is to carry an expectation. Murao has spent the past several years meeting it.

He was born in New York and rose through Japan's school and university judo, the most demanding proving ground in the sport.

The 90 kg class is one of the deepest in the sport. It has produced champions from Europe, Asia and the Americas, and no one has dominated it for long. Japan's last Olympic champion in the class was Mashu Baker, in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

Since his silver medal in Paris, after defeat by Bekauri in the final, he has won two world titles.

Judo became an Olympic sport at the Tokyo Games of 1964, and for Japanese judoka the Olympic title has remained the one that counts most.

The next goal is obvious: the Olympic title in Los Angeles in 2028, the one prize that has eluded him.

Kano's maxims for judo, maximum efficiency with minimum effort and mutual welfare and benefit, still hang in dojos across Japan. A five-contest run

without conceding a point is as close to the first of them as competition allows.

SPORTS

## Golden Score: How Judo Settles a Contest That Is Level When Time Runs Out

By the Sports Desk

A judo contest lasts four minutes. If neither competitor has scored by then, or if the scores are level, the contest goes to golden score.

In golden score there is no time limit. The first competitor to score wins, whether with a waza-ari, the lesser score, or an ippon, which ends a contest at any time.

Penalties matter too. Referees give penalties, called shido, for passivity, for avoiding grips and for other infringements, and a third shido means disqualification, which ends the contest.

Golden score can last a long time. Some contests have run on for longer than the four minutes of regulation time, and the extra time tests stamina and concentration as much as technique.

The format replaced decisions by the judges, who used to choose a winner when a contest ended level. Golden score has removed most of that subjectivity.

It also changes tactics. A competitor who expects to be stronger in a long contest may be content to reach golden score; one who tires may try to finish early.

Shiho Tanaka's defeat in the third round in Baku on Thursday came in golden score, against Giovanna Scoccimarro of Germany.

The rules of international judo are set by the International Judo Federation, which reviews them after each Olympic Games. The changes in recent cycles have aimed to reward attacking judo and clean throws.

An ippon, the perfect score, is awarded for throwing an opponent largely on the back with force, speed and control, for a hold of 20 seconds, or for a submission by armlock or strangle.

Murao's five victories in Baku included the ippon in 38 seconds against Bekauri, the opposite of a golden-score contest: the decision came almost before it began.

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## From Tokyo in 1956 to Baku in 2026: Seventy Years of World Judo Championships

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The first world judo championships were held in Tokyo in 1956, with a single open category for men and no weight classes.

The winner was Shokichi Natsui of Japan, and the event confirmed what everyone expected: Japan, the home of judo, was unbeatable.

That changed in 1961, when the Dutchman Anton Geesink won the world title in Paris, the first non-Japanese world champion. Three years later he won the open category at the Tokyo Olympics, where judo made its Olympic debut, a defeat that shocked Japan and announced the sport's globalisation.

Weight classes were introduced in the 1960s and have been revised several times since. Today there are seven for men and seven for women.

The first women's world championships were held in New York in 1980. Women's judo became a full Olympic sport at the Barcelona Games in 1992.

The championships, once held every two years, have been held annually in recent times, and a mixed team event, in which teams of men and women compete together, was added in 2017.

Japan remains the most successful nation, but champions now come from every continent. Georgia, France, Brazil, South Korea, Mongolia, Azerbaijan and many others have produced world champions.

Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, has become one of judo's principal venues. It also hosted the world championships in 2018.

Japan's tally after five days, seven titles, shows that its system of school, university and company teams still produces depth that few nations can match.

The championships end on Sunday with the mixed team event, in which Japan's depth across the weight classes is its greatest asset.

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## The Climax Series Begins Tomorrow: Giants Host DeNA at Tokyo Dome and Seibu Host Nippon-Ham in Tokorozawa

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

Professional baseball's play-offs, the Climax Series, begin on Saturday with the first stages in both leagues.

In the Central League, the Yomiuri Giants, who finished second, play the Yokohama DeNA BayStars at Tokyo Dome in a best-of-three series. All the games are played at the higher-placed team's ground, and the Giants advance if the series ends level.

In the Pacific League, the Saitama Seibu Lions, who secured second place, play the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters in Tokorozawa under the same format. Seibu beat the Chiba Lotte Marines 3-0 on Tuesday.

The winners go on to the final stages. In the Central League, the Hanshin Tigers, who won the pennant for the second year in a row, the first time in the club's history that it has done so, wait at Koshien from Wednesday, October 14, and start the series one win ahead.

In the Pacific League, the Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks, the champions, wait in Fukuoka. Under a rule introduced this season, they start two wins ahead, an advantage granted to a champion whose opponent finished ten or more games behind or with a losing record.

The final stages are played to four wins, including the champion's advantage, over up to six games. The winners meet in the Japan Series.

Weekend games in the first stages are played in the daytime. The weather on the main islands is forecast to be fine through the three-day weekend, although Tokyo Dome and Seibu's ground in Tokorozawa are both roofed.

For DeNA, the first stage brings back memories of 2024, when the BayStars finished third in the regular season, beat the Giants in the final stage and went on to win the Japan Series.

For the Giants, home advantage and the tie-break rule offer a margin, but a best-of-three series leaves little room for error. One bad game can end a season.

The Climax Series was introduced in both leagues in 2007; the Pacific League had already held play-offs from 2004. It remains debated: critics say it devalues the pennant race; supporters say it keeps more teams and their fans in contention to the end.

SPORTS

## J1 Leaders Kobe Open Round Nine at Kashiwa Tonight

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Vissel Kobe, top of the J1 league after eight rounds, open the ninth round away to Kashiwa Reysol tonight, Friday, with kick-off at 7 p.m. at the Sankyo Frontier Kashiwa Stadium.

The rest of the round is played over the weekend. On Saturday, Cerezo Osaka play Yokohama F. Marinos, FC Tokyo play Urawa Reds, Avispa Fukuoka play Fagiano Okayama and Kyoto Sanga play Machida Zelvia.

On Sunday, JEF United Chiba meet V-Varen Nagasaki, Mito HollyHock play Shimizu S-Pulse, Tokyo Verdy play Sanfrece Hiroshima, and Kawasaki Frontale play Nagoya Grampus.

This is the first season played under the J.League's new calendar, which runs from August to the following spring, in line with the main European leagues.

The change was decided in 2023 after years of debate. Supporters argued that it would help Japanese clubs in the Asian Champions League and make transfers to and from Europe easier; opponents worried about matches in the snow of northern Japan in winter.

The league inserted a winter break to reduce that problem, and the first half of 2026 was played as a special, shorter competition to bridge the old and new calendars.

Kobe, champions in 2023 and 2024, have started the new season strongly. Kashiwa, at home, will try to slow them.

The match at Kashiwa is one of the most intimate in

the league. The stadium is built for football, with stands close to the pitch, and the home supporters are known for their noise.

The Emperor's Cup, the national knockout competition, continues alongside the league, and the J.League's YBC Levain Cup provides a third competition for J1 clubs.

The weekend's weather on the main islands is forecast to be fine.

SPORTS

## Major League Baseball Proposes Cutting the Season to 154 Games From 2029 and Lengthening the Division Series to Seven Games

By the Sports Desk

Major League Baseball has proposed shortening the regular season from 162 games to 154 from 2029 and expanding the Division Series of the play-offs from five games to seven, in collective bargaining with the players' union, Kyodo News and American media report.

The season would be spread over 180 days in most years instead of 187, giving most teams a day off on Mondays, apart from up to two nationally broadcast games.

A weekly day off is good for players' health, the league's spokesman, Glen Caplin, said. He added that a shorter regular season would make October even better for fans.

In the play-offs, each Division Series would be played over 11 days instead of nine, and the post-season would gain nine days off, up to a maximum of 42 days, which could allow the best starting pitchers to pitch more often.

The Wild Card Series would remain best of three, hosted by the higher seed. Higher seeds in the early rounds would be allowed to choose their opponents.

Each team would play four day-night double-headers, one against each division rival. Players' salaries would not be reduced for the shorter season, but bonuses tied to games played would be adjusted.

### A salary cap fight

The players' union said it would review the plan and respond at the bargaining table, but that the league had once again made clear that all its proposals depended on the players agreeing to a salary cap, which the union opposes.

The five-year collective bargaining agreement expires on December 1. The owners are expected to lock the players out if there is no agreement, which could delay or even cancel the 2027 season.

For Japanese fans, who follow the many Japanese players in the major leagues closely, a lockout would mean a winter without signings and perhaps a spring without baseball across the Pacific.

Japan's own professional leagues play 143 games a season. The 162-game schedule has been standard in the major leagues since the early 1960s.

SPORTS

## What a Lockout Means: Baseball's Labour Wars, From the Cancelled World Series of 1994 to the Winter of 2021

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

Major League Baseball's latest proposals, for a shorter season and longer play-off series, come as the league and its players approach a deadline that has produced bitter disputes before.

The collective bargaining agreement between the clubs and the players' union expires on December 1. Without a new agreement, the owners are expected to lock the players out.

A lockout is the employers' counterpart of a strike. The owners close their doors to the players: no work, no pay, no use of club facilities, and, in baseball's case, no signings or trades of players on major league rosters.

The last lockout began on December 2, 2021, when the previous agreement expired, and lasted 99 days. It ended in March 2022 with an agreement that delayed the start of the season by about a week.

The worst dispute in the sport's history was the players' strike of 1994 and 1995, which began in August 1994, cancelled the rest of that season and the World Series for the first time in 90 years, and delayed the start of the following season.

At the centre of the present dispute is a salary cap, a limit on how much each club can spend on players. The owners have made it a condition of their proposals; the union has said it will never accept one.

Major League Baseball is the only one of the big American professional leagues without a salary cap. Its clubs instead pay a tax when their payrolls exceed a threshold.

For Japanese fans, the dispute matters because of the many Japanese players in the major leagues. A long lockout would also freeze the market for players moving from Japan.

The posting system, under which Japanese clubs can release players to negotiate with major league teams, depends on major league clubs being able to sign them.

There are still almost two months before the deadline. Labour disputes in baseball have a habit of being settled late, but they have also, more than once, been settled only after real damage.

SPORTS

## Sports Scoreboard

By the Sports Desk

JUDO, WORLDS, BAKU, DAY FIVE: Men's 90 kg: Sanshiro Murao (Japan) beat Goki Tajima (Japan) by ippon in the final; second consecutive title.

MURAO'S RUN: Five wins, no score conceded; beat Lasha Bekauri (Georgia) by ippon in 38 seconds.

WOMEN'S 70 KG: Ai Tsunoda (Spain) won; Shiho Tanaka (Japan) lost in the third round to Giovanna Scoccimarro (Germany) in golden score.

JAPAN AFTER FIVE DAYS: Seven titles, four women's and three men's.

JUDO TODAY: Men's 100 kg, women's 78 kg. Saturday: men's over 100 kg, women's over 78 kg. Sunday: mixed team.

CLIMAX SERIES, SATURDAY: Central, Giants v DeNA, Tokyo Dome. Pacific, Seibu v Nippon-Ham, Tokorozawa. Best of three.

FINAL STAGES: Hanshin at Koshien from Wednesday, one win up; SoftBank in Fukuoka, two wins up.

J1 TONIGHT: Kashiwa v Kobe, 7 p.m., Sankyo Frontier Kashiwa Stadium. Kobe lead after eight rounds.

MLB: League proposes a 154-game season from 2029 and best-of-seven Division Series.

MONDAY: Izumo All-Japan University Ekiden, the first of the three big university relays.

CULTURE

## Anne Carson, the Canadian Poet and Classicist, Wins the Nobel Prize in Literature 'for Her Bold and Inventive Oeuvre'

*The Swedish Academy praises a playful dialogue with the classical tradition; the laureate, reached in Iceland, calls the news 'crazy'*

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Nobel Prize in Literature for 2026 has been awarded to Anne Carson, the Canadian poet, essayist, translator and scholar of ancient Greek, the Swedish Academy announced in Stockholm on Thursday evening, Japan time.

The academy honoured her for her bold and inventive oeuvre that, in playful dialogue with the classical tradition, has created new forms for contemporary literature.

Almost all her literary production has centred on the intersection between the philologist's obsession with words and the poet's desire for new meaning, the academy said. It added that her translations from classical Greek can be seen as independent works.

Ingrid Carlberg, the academy's permanent secretary, said Ms Carson had been very taken by surprise. She was in Iceland when the news reached her, listening to the wind.

Speaking to RUV, the Icelandic broadcaster, Ms Carson said: 'Crazy. I think they're all crazy.'

### A scholar who writes poems

Ms Carson was born in Toronto on June 21, 1950, and is 76. She studied classics at the University of Toronto, where she earned three degrees, and has taught at universities including McGill, Princeton, Michigan and New York University.

Her first book, Eros the Bittersweet, published in 1986, was a work of scholarship on desire in ancient

Greek poetry that read like an essay by a poet. It set the pattern for a career in which the line between scholarship and art has never been fixed.

Her best-known work, Autobiography of Red, published in 1998, is a novel in verse built on the fragments of an ancient Greek poem. Her translations of Sappho, If Not, Winter, appeared in 2002. Nox, in 2010, an elegy for her brother, was published as a folded facsimile of a handmade book in a box.

She has written more than 20 books, some of them adapted for the stage, including versions of Greek tragedy in modern speech.

In 2001 she became the first woman to win the T. S. Eliot Prize for poetry, for The Beauty of the Husband, a book-length poem about a failing marriage. She has also won the Griffin Poetry Prize twice, a MacArthur fellowship and the Princess of Asturias Award for Literature.

### Prize and ceremony

The prize is worth 12 million Swedish kronor, raised this year from 11 million. It will be presented in Stockholm on December 10, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death.

Ms Carson succeeds the Hungarian novelist László Krasznahorkai, last year's laureate. She is the first Canadian to win since Alice Munro in 2013.

Her work is often described as difficult. It is also funny, tender and surprising, and readers who have been put off by the word classicist may find that it is the most direct way into the oldest literature of Europe.

CULTURE

## Sappho in Brackets: How Carson Translated a Poet Who Survives Mostly in Scraps

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Sappho, who lived on the Greek island of Lesbos around 600 BC, was so admired in antiquity that an epigram attributed to Plato called her the tenth Muse.

Scholars in Alexandria later collected her poems into nine books. Almost all of them have been lost.

What survives comes in two forms: quotations by later ancient writers, who cited a line or a phrase to illustrate a point of grammar or style, and scraps of papyrus recovered from the sands of Egypt, often torn, holed or used to wrap mummies.

Only one poem, a prayer to Aphrodite, is generally regarded as complete. Most of the rest are fragments of a few lines, or a few words, or a single word.

Translators have long faced a choice: fill the gaps with guesses, to make readable poems, or leave them, at the cost of readability.

Anne Carson's translation, If Not, Winter, published in 2002, took the second path and made a virtue of it. She marked the missing parts with square brackets, so that the reader sees on the page where the papyrus is torn and the words run out.

The effect is unexpectedly moving. A few surviving words followed by an empty bracket invite the reader into the silence around them, and the gaps become part of the poem.

Carson explained in her introduction that the brackets were an aesthetic gesture as well as a scholarly one: they let the reader feel the drama of trying to read a damaged text.

The book was widely praised, and it changed the way many readers think about fragments, not as failures of survival but as forms in their own right.

The Swedish Academy's phrase for her work, a playful dialogue with the classical tradition, describes this book exactly. It is scholarship, translation and poetry at once.

CULTURE

## Autobiography of Red: A Winged Red Monster From a Lost Greek Poem Becomes a Shy Boy With a Camera

By the Culture Desk

Anne Carson's best-known book begins with a poet most readers have never heard of.

Stesichorus, a Greek lyric poet of the sixth century BC from Sicily, wrote a long poem about Geryon, a red, winged monster who lived on an island at the edge of the world with a herd of red cattle.

In the myth, Geryon is killed by Herakles, whose

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tenth labour was to steal the cattle. Only fragments of Stesichorus's poem survive.

Carson's Autobiography of Red, published in 1998, opens with an essay on Stesichorus and her own translations of the fragments, some of them deliberately playful. Then comes the main work: a novel in verse.

In it, Geryon is a modern boy, red and with small wings, shy and sensitive, who becomes a photographer. Herakles is a charming, careless young man with whom he falls in love, and who breaks his heart.

The story follows Geryon from childhood through adolescence to a journey to South America, where he meets Herakles again. It is about desire, loneliness, art and growing up, told in long lines of free verse.

Readers who know nothing of the myth can read it as a love story. Those who know it find a reversal: the monster becomes the hero, and the hero the one who wounds.

The book made Carson's name beyond the academic and poetry worlds. It was followed in 2013 by a sequel, Red Doc>, in which Geryon, now older, is called G.

It also shows the method the Swedish Academy praised: an ancient text, read with a scholar's precision, opened up by a poet's freedom.

Japanese readers who know how classical tales are retold in modern novels, manga and anime will recognise the impulse. Carson does with Greek fragments what many Japanese writers have done with the tales of the court and the samurai.

CULTURE

### Nox: A Book That Is a Box, an Elegy That Is a Translation

By the Culture Desk

Of all Anne Carson's books, Nox, published in 2010, is the hardest to describe and the easiest to remember.

It is an elegy for her brother, Michael, who left Canada as a young man, lived abroad for many years and died in 2000. She had seen him rarely, and she had to piece his life together from letters, a few telephone calls and the memories of others.

She did so through a poem by Catullus, the Roman poet of the first century BC, who wrote a short elegy, known as poem 101, at the grave of his own brother near Troy, in Asia Minor. It ends with the famous words 'ave atque vale', hail and farewell.

Carson worked on the poem word by word, as a scholar does. In the book, each Latin word has a dictionary entry of her own making, in which the definitions drift towards her brother, to night, to loss.

Facing the entries are fragments of her own story: photographs, letters, scraps of paper, painted pages, notes on her mother and on her brother's last years.

The book was published not as a bound volume but as a facsimile of the notebook she made, printed on a single long sheet folded like an accordion and placed in a grey box.

Nox is Latin for night. In another of Catullus's poems, death is a perpetual night in which one must sleep.

The form makes the reader handle grief physically. The pages unfold, one into the next, and cannot easily be put back.

Critics have called it one of the most original books of elegy in modern literature. It is also an argument for the value of translation: the slow, exact work of reading another language as a way of bearing one's own sorrow.

Readers coming to Carson after Thursday's announcement could do worse than start here, with a box.

CULTURE

### Where to Start With Anne Carson

By the Culture Desk

EROS THE BITTERSWEET (1986): Her first book, on desire in ancient Greek poetry.

GLASS, IRONY AND GOD (1995): Poems and essays, including The Glass Essay.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF RED (1998): A novel in verse about Geryon, the red monster of Greek myth.

MEN IN THE OFF HOURS (2000): Poems; the first of her two Griffin prizes.

THE BEAUTY OF THE HUSBAND (2001): A

book-length poem about a marriage; the T. S. Eliot Prize.

IF NOT, WINTER (2002): Her translations of the fragments of Sappho.

DECREATION (2005): Poems, essays and an opera libretto.

NOX (2010): An elegy for her brother, published as a folded facsimile in a box.

RED DOC> (2013): The sequel to Autobiography of Red.

LATER WORKS: Float (2016), Norma Jeane Baker of Troy (2019), H of H Playbook (2021) and Wrong Norma (2024).

CULTURE

### Carson on the Stage: Euripides, Sophocles and Aeschylus in Words That Actors Can Speak Today

By the Culture Desk

Anne Carson's translations of Greek tragedy have made her as familiar to theatre companies as to readers of poetry.

Grief Lessons, published in 2006, gathered four plays by Euripides. An Oresteia, in 2009, did something unusual: instead of the three plays of Aeschylus's trilogy, it combined plays by each of the three great tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, to tell the story of the house of Atreus.

Antigonick, in 2012, was a playful, illustrated version of Sophocles's Antigone. In 2015 her translation of Antigone was staged by the Belgian director Ivo van Hove with the French actress Juliette Binoche in the title role, and her version of Euripides's Bakkhai opened at the Almeida Theatre in London with Ben Whishaw.

Norma Jeane Baker of Troy, published in 2019, reimagined Euripides's Helen through the life of Marilyn Monroe. It was first performed in New York that year, with Ben Whishaw and the soprano Renée Fleming.

In 2021 she published a version of The Trojan Women as a comic, with drawings by Rosanna Bruno, in which the characters appear as animals and objects.

What unites the work is a refusal to make the ancient plays sound ancient. Her characters speak in modern idiom, sometimes in slang, and the gods can be funny as well as terrible.

Critics have occasionally objected that the freedom goes too far. Actors and directors have generally welcomed it, because it gives them lines that live in the mouth.

The approach rests on deep scholarship. Carson knows exactly what the Greek says, and her departures from it are choices, not mistakes.

The Swedish Academy said her translations from classical Greek can be seen as independent works. The stage is where that independence is most visible, and most audible.

For Japanese audiences, who know classical drama in noh and kabuki as living traditions rather than museum pieces, her method may feel familiar.

CULTURE

### The 19th Woman: Carson's Prize, and a Pattern of Alternation Since the Swedish Academy's Crisis

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Anne Carson is the 19th woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature since it was first awarded in 1901.

The first was Selma Lagerlöf of Sweden, in 1909. For most of the twentieth century women were rare among the laureates: Grazia Deledda, Sigrid Undset, Pearl Buck, Gabriela Mistral and Nelly Sachs, and then, from 1991, Nadine Gordimer, Toni Morrison and Wislawa Szymborska.

The pace has quickened in this century, with Elfriede Jelinek, Doris Lessing, Herta Müller, Alice Munro, Svetlana Alexievich, Olga Tokarczuk, Louise Glück, Annie Ernaux and, in 2024, Han Kang of South Korea.

Since the academy's crisis of 2018, when a scandal led it to postpone that year's prize, the laureates have alternated between women and men: Tokarczuk, Peter Handke, Glück, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Ernaux, Jon Fosse, Han, László Krasznahorkai and now Carson.

The academy has never said that it follows such a pattern, and it insists that literary merit alone decides. But the reforms it made after the crisis, including bringing outside experts on to its prize committee, were meant to widen its view.

Carson is also a poet, a category that the prize has rewarded less often in recent decades than novelists. The last laureate known chiefly as a poet was Glück, in 2020.

She is Canada's second laureate, after Munro, who was honoured in 2013 as a master of the short story. Saul Bellow, the 1976 laureate, was born near Montreal but was an American writer.

Japan's two laureates in literature, Yasunari Kawabata in 1968 and Kenzaburo Oe in 1994, were both men. Haruki Murakami is named every year by bookmakers and every year passed over.

The prize's history of men from Europe has been challenged in recent decades by laureates from Africa, Asia and the Americas. Carson, a Canadian who writes in English about Greek, brings it back to Europe's oldest literature by another road.

The academy's choice will send readers to her books in many languages. That, more than the medal, is what the prize does best.

CULTURE

### Walcott, Heaney, Glück and Now Carson: The Laureates Who Talked to the Ancients

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Anne Carson is not the first Nobel laureate in literature to build a body of work in conversation with Greek and Roman antiquity. She joins a line of poets who found new voices in old stories.

Derek Walcott of St Lucia, the laureate of 1992, wrote Omeros, published in 1990, an epic poem that moves the world of Homer to the Caribbean, where fishermen called Achille and Hector quarrel over a woman named Helen.

Seamus Heaney of Ireland, honoured in 1995, adapted Sophocles twice: his Philoctetes as The Cure at Troy in 1990, and his Antigone as The Burial at Thebes in 2004. His translation of the Old English epic Beowulf, published in 1999, became a best-seller.

Louise Glück of the United States, the laureate of 2020, returned again and again to myth. Her collection Averno, in 2006, retold the story of Persephone, and Meadowlands, in 1996, set the marriage of Odysseus and Penelope beside a modern marriage in trouble.

Joseph Brodsky, the Russian-born poet who won in 1987, wrote poems addressed to Roman figures and set in the landscapes of the ancient world.

Why do the ancients keep returning? Partly because their stories of war, exile, love and grief remain the shared inheritance of European literature. Partly because the distance of the ancient world allows a poet to speak about the present without seeming to.

Carson's distinction is that she is a professional classicist as well as a poet. Her engagement with the ancients is not borrowing but scholarship, carried on in a different register.

The Swedish Academy's citation describes her dialogue with the classical tradition as playful. Walcott's was epic, Heaney's political and Glück's personal. The conversation has many tones.

Japanese literature has its own classical inheritance, from the Manyoshu to The Tale of Genji, and modern writers have retold it in similar ways.

Every generation finds that the oldest books are still talking. The laureates are those who answered back most memorably.

CULTURE

### Greek Tragedy on the Japanese Stage: From an All-Male Medea to the Trojan Women

By the Culture Desk

Anne Carson's Nobel prize has honoured a writer who brings ancient Greek literature into the present. Japanese theatre has been doing something similar for half a century.

In February 1978 the director Yukio Ninagawa staged Euripides's Medea in Japanese with an all-male cast, with the actor Mikijiro Hira in the title role. The production drew on the conventions of

kabuki, in which men play women's roles, and on the visual boldness for which Ninagawa became famous.

It was revived many times over more than two decades and toured widely abroad, introducing audiences around the world to a Japanese way of performing Greek tragedy.

Ninagawa also staged other Greek plays, among them Oedipus Rex, alongside the Shakespeare productions that made him one of the best-known directors in the world.

Tadashi Suzuki, another leading director, created his own version of Euripides's The Trojan Women in the 1970s, setting the fall of Troy against images of Japan after its defeat in war.

Why does Greek tragedy speak so readily to Japanese theatre? Scholars point to shared features: masks, which Greek actors wore and noh actors still wear; choruses; music and dance; and a view of human beings caught in forces larger than themselves.

Noh, which took shape in the fourteenth century, is often compared with Greek tragedy for its ghosts, its laments and its ritual stillness.

Translations of the Greek tragedies into Japanese have been made since the early twentieth century, and classical Greek is taught at several Japanese universities.

Carson herself has written versions of Greek plays for the stage, in modern speech; the Swedish Academy said her translations from Greek could be seen as independent works.

Her prize may send Japanese readers and theatre makers back to the Greeks, as Ninagawa's Medea once sent many of them to the theatre.

CULTURE

### Nobel Week 2026: The Laureates So Far

By the Culture Desk

MONDAY, OCT. 5, MEDICINE: Karl Deisseroth, Peter Hegemann and Georg Nagel, for optogenetics.

TUESDAY, OCT. 6, PHYSICS: Francis Halzen, for the detection of high-energy neutrinos from space with IceCube.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 7, CHEMISTRY: Henri Kagan and Kenso Soai, for non-linear effects and autocatalysis in asymmetric organic synthesis.

THURSDAY, OCT. 8, LITERATURE: Anne Carson, for her bold and inventive oeuvre in playful dialogue with the classical tradition.

TODAY, PEACE: Announced in Oslo at about 6 p.m. Japan time.

MONDAY, OCT. 12: The prize in economic sciences.

JAPAN: Kenso Soai is the country's 31st laureate and its tenth in chemistry.

PRIZE: 12 million Swedish kronor for each prize, shared where there is more than one laureate.

CEREMONIES: December 10, in Stockholm and, for peace, in Oslo.

DECEMBER 10: The anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death in 1896.

CULTURE

### Eleven Floats and Their Puppets: The Autumn Festival of Takayama Opens Today

By the Culture Desk

The autumn festival of Takayama, in the mountains of Gifu Prefecture, is held today and tomorrow, October 9 and 10, as it is every year.

Formally the Hachiman Matsuri, it is the festival of Sakurayama Hachiman Shrine, the guardian shrine of the northern half of the old castle town.

Its centrepiece is a set of eleven festival floats, known as yatai, lavishly decorated with carving, lacquer, metalwork and embroidered hangings by the craftsmen of the Hida region over the past three centuries.

Some of the floats carry karakuri, mechanical puppets operated by strings, whose sudden, lifelike movements draw gasps from the crowds.

Takayama has two festivals. The spring festival, the Sanno Matsuri, is held at Hie Shrine in the southern half of the old town in April. Together they are counted among the most beautiful festivals in Japan.

In 2016 the Takayama festival floats were inscribed,

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together with those of more than 30 other festivals across the country, on UNESCO's list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as float festivals of Japan.

For the rest of the year the floats are kept in tall storehouses in the neighbourhoods that own them, and some can be seen in an exhibition hall near the shrine.

Each float belongs to a neighbourhood, whose residents maintain it, pull it and pass on its traditions. The festival is a demonstration of a community's continuity as much as of its craft.

Takayama's old merchant quarter, with its dark wooden houses, sake breweries and morning markets, draws large numbers of visitors from Japan and abroad, and the festival days are among the busiest of the year.

The weather in central Japan is forecast to be fine.

CULTURE

## World Post Day: Hisoka Maejima, the Man on the One-Yen Stamp Who Built Japan's Post in a Single Generation

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Today is World Post Day, and Japanese post offices have a founder to honour.

Hisoka Maejima, born in 1835 in Echigo, the present Niigata Prefecture, is known as the father of the Japanese post. His portrait has appeared on the one-yen stamp since 1947.

He drew up plans for a national postal service in 1870. It opened in 1871, with a service between Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka, while he was in Britain studying the British post, and on his return he built it into a national network with uniform rates on the British model.

Before it, letters were carried by private couriers at prices that varied with distance and urgency. The new service made it possible for anyone to send a letter anywhere in Japan for the same price.

Maejima is credited with choosing the Japanese words for the post, yubin, and for the postage stamp, kitte, which are still in use.

In 1877 Japan joined the Universal Postal Union, created by the treaty signed in Bern on October 9, 1874, the date that World Post Day commemorates.

Maejima's interests went beyond the post. As a young man he submitted a proposal to the shogunate to abolish the use of Chinese characters in favour of the phonetic kana script, an idea that was not adopted but anticipated later debates about the Japanese writing system.

He also promoted newspapers and education, and was involved in the early development of telegraphs and railways.

His achievement was organisational as much as visionary: a network of post offices, carriers and routes built across a country that had only recently emerged from feudal isolation.

The Postal Museum Japan in Tokyo tells his story. A letter that costs the same to send to Hokkaido as to the next street is his monument.

CULTURE

## The Glass Essay: The Poem That Introduced Many Readers to Anne Carson

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

For many readers, the way into Anne Carson's work was a single long poem: The Glass Essay, published in her collection Glass, Irony and God in 1995.

It tells the story of a woman whose lover has left her. She goes to stay with her mother in a cold northern landscape, visits her father in a care home, and reads Emily Bronte.

The poem moves between three kinds of material: the narrator's grief, observed with unsparing precision; the mother's sharp, ordinary conversation; and the life and work of Emily Bronte, the author of Wuthering Heights, whose solitude on the Yorkshire moors becomes a mirror for the narrator's own.

Woven through it are visions the narrator calls Nudes, images of her own pain that she sees when she closes her eyes and that change as the poem proceeds.

The poem is written in long, plain lines, close to prose, and it reads more like a story than many

contemporary poems do. Its intellectual range, from Victorian literature to theology, never interrupts its emotional force.

It established a pattern in Carson's work: a personal crisis examined through the lens of another writer's life and words, so that scholarship becomes a form of feeling.

Glass, Irony and God was published with an introduction by the American writer Guy Davenport, and it brought Carson to a wide readership in North America and Britain.

Readers often return to The Glass Essay at moments of loss, and teachers of poetry use it to show that a poem can think and grieve at once.

In honouring her, the Swedish Academy spoke of the philologist's obsession with words and the poet's desire for new meaning. The Glass Essay shows both at work on the oldest subject of all.

The prize will bring the poem, and the rest of her work, to many readers who have never opened a book of poetry.

CULTURE

## The Telephone Comes to Japan: From Imported Sets in 1877 to the Black Phone in Every Home

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Japan met the telephone almost as soon as the rest of the world did.

In 1877, the year after Alexander Graham Bell's patent, telephones were brought to Japan and tested by the government. Within a few years they linked government offices and the homes of officials.

According to an often-told story, two Japanese students in Boston, Shuji Isawa and Kentaro Kaneko, had already spoken Japanese over Bell's apparatus in its first months, making Japanese one of the first languages carried by the invention.

Public telephone service began on December 16, 1890, between Tokyo and Yokohama, with a small number of subscribers. The date is still marked in Japan as the anniversary of the telephone's founding.

The first public telephones were installed in 1900 at Shimbashi and Ueno stations in Tokyo. Calls were connected by operators, many of them women, a new profession for the Meiji era.

Automatic exchanges, which let callers dial numbers themselves, spread from the 1920s, and after the Second World War the state telephone corporation set out to put a telephone in every home.

The black rotary telephone introduced in the early 1960s became a fixture of Japanese life, in homes, shops and the pink and red public telephones on street corners.

The telephone corporation was privatised as NTT in 1985, and in 1999 NTT Docomo launched i-mode, which brought the internet to mobile phones years before the smartphone.

Today there are far more mobile contracts than people, and public telephones are disappearing from the streets, though a minimum number is kept for emergencies.

Bell's question, who is at the other end of the line, has followed the telephone through every stage, from the operator's switchboard to the voice-cloning software that now worries the police.

CULTURE

## Listening to the Wind: Iceland, Where the New Laureate Heard the News, and Its Own Love of Books

By the Culture Desk

When the Swedish Academy reached Anne Carson on Thursday, she was in Iceland, listening to the wind, according to the academy's permanent secretary, Ingrid Carlborg.

It was an apt place to receive a literary prize. Iceland, a country of about 400,000 people, has one of the richest literary traditions in Europe.

Its medieval sagas, written down in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, tell the stories of the settlers and their feuds in a spare, realistic prose that still reads as modern.

The country's only Nobel laureate in literature is Halldór Laxness, who won in 1955. His novels, among them Independent People, portray the hardship and stubbornness of Icelandic farming life.

Icelanders are famous readers and writers. Many new books are published in the weeks before Christmas, when books are among the most popular gifts, a custom known as the Christmas book flood.

Reykjavik was named a UNESCO City of Literature in 2011.

The island's landscape, of volcanoes, glaciers, lava fields and wind, has drawn many foreign writers and artists, and Carson's remark that it was crazy, made to the Icelandic broadcaster RUV, was widely reported.

Iceland's language has changed so little that modern Icelanders can read the sagas in the original with relative ease, a continuity that a classicist might envy.

Carson's work is full of weather and landscape, from the northern moors of The Glass Essay to the volcano at the end of Autobiography of Red. The wind of Iceland seems a fitting place for the news to have found her.

Japan and Iceland share more than they might seem to: both are volcanic islands on the edge of great oceans, and both have literatures that reach back a thousand years.

CULTURE

## World Post Day: The Dragon Stamps of 1871, Japan's First Postage Stamps

By the Culture Desk

When Japan's modern postal service opened in 1871, it needed stamps, and its first issue has become one of the treasures of Japanese philately.

They are known as the dragon stamps, after their design of two dragons facing each other around the value.

There were four values, 48, 100, 200 and 500 mon, the old currency of the Edo period, which was still in use as the new yen was introduced.

The stamps were printed from hand-engraved plates, and small differences between them allow collectors to identify the position of each stamp on its sheet.

Within a year the denominations changed to sen, the hundredth part of the new yen, and new designs followed, among them stamps featuring cherry blossoms.

Hisoka Maejima, the founder of the Japanese post, oversaw the system from its early days, and his own face has long since joined the stamps: it is on the one-yen issue.

Stamps soon became a form of national expression. Commemorative issues marked imperial events, anniversaries and, later, the Olympic Games of 1964.

Japan joined the Universal Postal Union in 1877, and from then its stamps could carry letters to every member country.

Philately remains popular in Japan, and the Postal Museum Japan in Tokyo holds a large collection of Japanese and foreign stamps.

On World Post Day, the dragons of 1871 are a reminder that the network of today began with a few sheets of paper engraved by hand.

CULTURE

## Before the Telephone, the Classroom: Alexander Graham Bell, Teacher of the Deaf

By the Culture Desk

Alexander Graham Bell is remembered as the inventor of the telephone, which carried its first two-way conversation over outdoor wires 150 years ago today. He thought of himself first as a teacher of the deaf.

Born in Edinburgh in 1847, he grew up in a family devoted to speech. His father, Alexander Melville Bell, devised a system of symbols called Visible Speech to show how sounds are formed, and his mother was deaf.

Bell moved to North America with his family in 1870 and began teaching deaf pupils in Boston, using his father's methods. He later became a professor of vocal physiology at Boston University.

His work on sound and hearing led him to experiment with transmitting speech by electricity. The telephone grew out of research meant to help deaf people.

He married Mabel Hubbard, a former pupil who had lost her hearing in childhood. Her father, Gardiner Greene Hubbard, became an important backer of the telephone.

Bell remained involved in deaf education all his life and used part of his fortune to support it. In 1887 he founded the Volta Bureau in Washington to spread knowledge about deafness, with money from a French prize awarded for the telephone. Helen Keller, the deaf and blind writer, dedicated her autobiography to him.

His legacy in the field is contested. Bell favoured teaching deaf people to speak and lip-read over sign language, and many in the deaf community regard that approach as having suppressed their language for generations.

Japan's own schools for the deaf date from the Meiji era. The first, in Kyoto, opened in 1878.

The telephone itself, ironically, was for a century a barrier for deaf people, until text messages and video calls made it accessible.

Bell's double legacy, a machine that connected the world and a teaching method that divided a community, is a reminder that inventions carry their makers' assumptions with them.

CULTURE

## Kaguya: From the Shining Princess of the Bamboo Cutter's Tale to the Spacecraft That Mapped the Moon

By the Culture Desk

Japan's oldest surviving prose tale ends on the Moon.

The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter, written in the ninth or tenth century, tells of an old man who finds a tiny girl shining inside a stalk of bamboo. She grows into Kaguya-hime, the shining princess.

Five noble suitors seek her hand, and she sets each an impossible task. All fail, and even the emperor cannot win her.

At last she reveals that she comes from the Moon, and on the night of the full moon a heavenly escort carries her home.

She leaves the emperor an elixir of immortality, which he orders to be burned on the highest mountain in the land. One traditional explanation links the name of Mount Fuji to that story.

Isao Takahata retold the tale in the animated film The Tale of the Princess Kaguya, released by Studio Ghibli in 2013. Its drawings, in charcoal and watercolour, recall the picture scrolls of the Heian court.

When Japan launched its lunar orbiter in 2007, it was named Kaguya. It mapped the Moon's surface and gravity until 2009, including the far side that Luna 3 first glimpsed in 1959.

In January 2024 Japan's SLIM lander made Japan the fifth country to achieve a soft landing on the Moon.

In Japanese folklore the markings on the Moon's near side are a rabbit pounding rice cakes, a picture children still look for at the autumn moon-viewing.

Of the far side, no tale had anything to say. It took a Soviet probe, this week 67 years ago, to show it.

SOCIETY

## Hurricane Categories, and Why They Differ From Japan's Typhoon Classes

By the Weather Desk

CATEGORY 1: Winds of 74 to 95 miles an hour.

CATEGORY 2: 96 to 110 miles an hour. Hurricane Isaias, at about 100, is in this class.

CATEGORY 3: 111 to 129 miles an hour, the first of the major hurricanes.

CATEGORY 4: 130 to 156 miles an hour.

CATEGORY 5: 157 miles an hour or more.

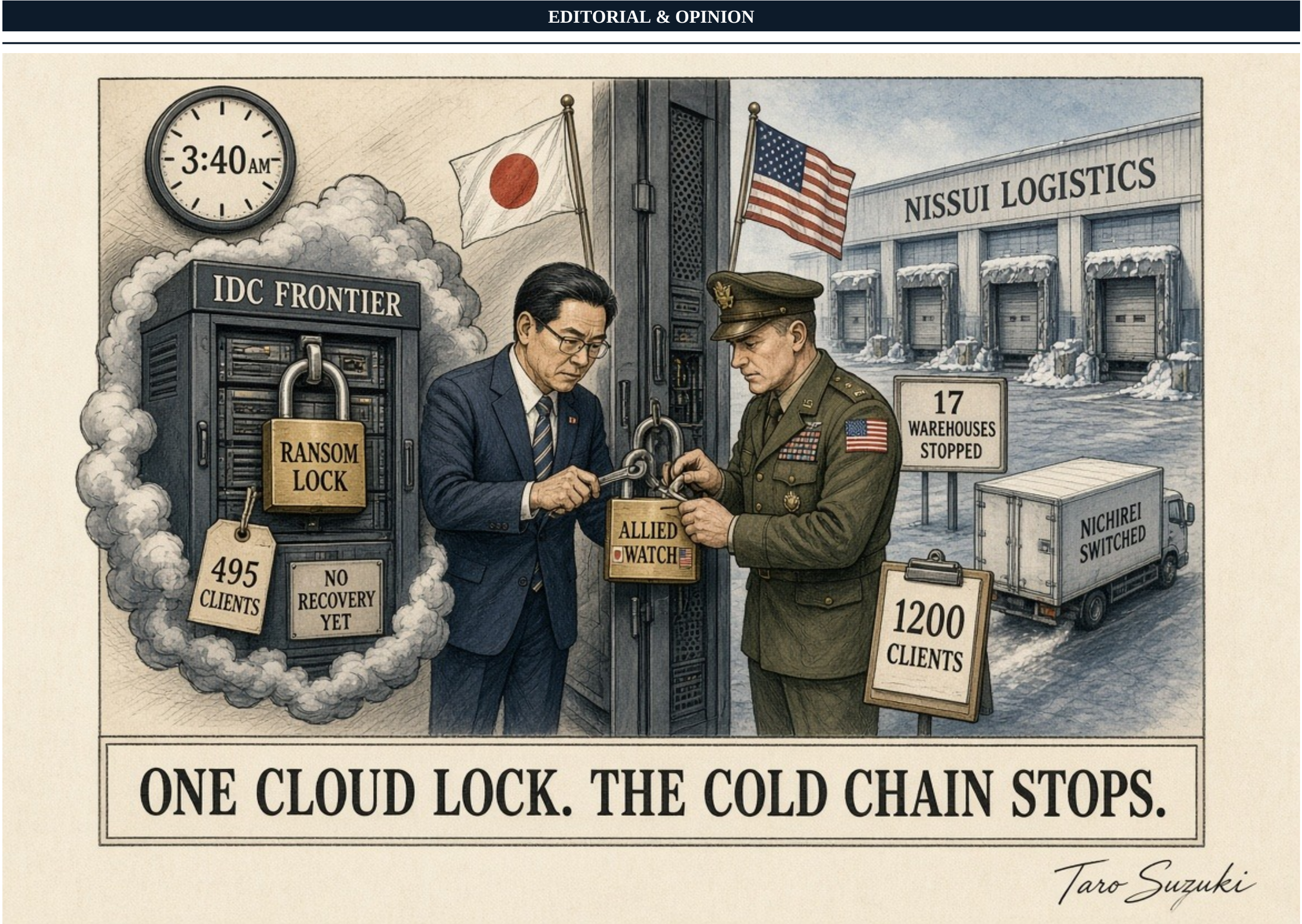
THE SCALE: The Saffir-Simpson scale used in the United States classifies hurricanes by wind speed alone.

MEASUREMENT: American forecasters use winds averaged over one minute; the Japan Meteorological Agency uses ten-minute averages, which give lower figures for the same storm.

IN METRES: 100 miles an hour is about 45 metres a second.

JAPAN'S CLASSES: Strong typhoon, 33 to 43 m/s; very strong, 44 to 53; violent, 54 or more.

CAUTION: Rain and storm surge often do more harm than wind, whatever the category.



Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki for The Japan Morning Post.

## EDITORIAL

### One Cloud Lock. The Cold Chain Stops.

*Two cyberattacks in a day have shown how much of the country's daily life now hangs on a few shared systems. Japan should treat their defence as national security, put the cold chain and the largest clouds on its list of core infrastructure, and hunt the attackers with its ally*

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki's cartoon today is divided by a door. On the left, under a clock that reads 3:40 a.m., a server cabinet marked IDC Frontier floats in a cloud. A heavy padlock labelled ransom lock hangs on it, with two tags: 495 clients, and no recovery yet.

On the right, beyond the door, stands a warehouse marked Nissui Logistics, its loading bays rimed with ice. A sign reads 17 warehouses stopped; a clipboard reads 1,200 clients; a refrigerated truck is marked Nichirei switched.

In the doorway, under the flags of Japan and the United States, a Japanese official in a suit and an American officer in uniform fasten a lock of their own. It is marked Allied Watch. The caption reads: One cloud lock. The cold chain stops.

The cartoon compresses a week's news into a single frame, and it asks the right question. When one lock can stop so much, who is responsible for the door?

The facts, as far as they are known, are these. At about 3:40 a.m. on Wednesday a ransomware attack knocked out a cloud service run by IDC Frontier, a company of the SoftBank group. Its 495 customers, companies and local governments among them, lost the service. By Thursday evening there was still no prospect of recovery.

On the same day Nissui Logistics, the cold-storage subsidiary of the seafood and frozen-food group Nissui, stopped receiving and shipping goods at all 17 of its warehouses after a cyberattack. About 1,200 businesses use them. Nichirei Foods and other clients moved their goods to other warehouses.

In at least one case, a precautionary shutdown of a management system spread the disruption to sites the attackers had never reached. Much else remains unknown: who carried out the attacks, how they got in, whether data was stolen, whether a ransom was demanded, and whether the two cases are linked.

We do not know the answers, and we will not guess at them. But the lesson of the week does not depend on them.

#### The weakest point is the shared one

The lesson is that the efficiencies of modern business have created points of failure that are shared by hundreds of organisations at once.

Cloud computing exists because it is cheaper and, for most customers, safer to rent computing power from a specialist than to run one's own servers. The specialist employs better engineers, applies security updates faster and watches more closely than a small company or a town hall ever could.

But the same concentration means that when the specialist is hit, its customers are hit together. A small business that has never given ransomware a thought discovers on a Wednesday morning that its systems are gone, because someone else's were attacked.

Smaller organisations bear the greatest risk. They depend on providers they cannot audit, and they have no staff to plan for failure. When the provider stops, they can only wait.

The cold chain works the same way. Frozen food moves from factory or port to shop at minus 18 degrees or below, through warehouses that act as the hinges of the system. A warehouse that cannot record what comes in and what goes out cannot load a truck. Frozen fish cannot wait for the computers to return.

Japan has seen this pattern again and again. In 2022 an attack on a parts supplier, Kojima Industries, stopped every Toyota assembly plant in the country for a day. Later that year intruders entered the Osaka General Medical Center through the systems of the company that supplied its patients' meals, and crippled its electronic records.

In 2023 ransomware stopped the container terminals at the port of Nagoya, the country's busiest by cargo volume, for more than two days. Last year an attack on Asahi Group halted the brewer's orders and shipments for weeks, and an attack on Askul, the office-supplies retailer, stopped online shops that relied on its logistics. In July the cold-storage operations of the Nichirei Logi Group were disrupted.

In case after case, the damage travelled not through the front door but through a supplier, a shared system or a logistics partner. The attackers understand the structure of Japanese business better than many of the people who manage it.

#### Food is security

It is tempting to treat these events as commercial misfortunes, the business of the companies concerned and their insurers. That would be a mistake.

Japan produces less than 40 per cent of the food it eats, measured in calories. The rest arrives by sea, passes through the ports and, in large part, through cold storage on its way to supermarkets, restaurants, school kitchens and hospitals. The cold chain is not a convenience. It is part of the country's food supply, and the food supply is a matter of national security.

An adversary who wished to disrupt Japan would not need to blockade its ports. It would be enough to lock the systems that tell the warehouses what to load and where to send it.

We do not suggest that this week's attacks were the work of a foreign state. Nothing reported so far points that way, and most ransomware is the work of criminals seeking money. But the distinction matters less to a shop with empty freezers than to a lawyer, and states have shown that they will use criminal methods, and sometimes criminal groups, when it suits them.

Japan's own police have attributed a long campaign of intrusions into government bodies, think tanks and companies to a group called MirrorFace, which they link to China. Together with the American authorities, they have attributed the theft of about 48 billion yen in cryptocurrency from the exchange DMM Bitcoin in 2024 to hackers working for North Korea.

The line between crime and statecraft in cyberspace is thin, and those who would harm Japan know where it runs. Defence must be organised on the assumption that the next attack on a warehouse, a port or a cloud could come from either side of it.

#### The new laws are a beginning

The government is not starting from nothing. The laws on active cyber defence, passed by the Diet last year, took effect on October 1, eight days before this week's attacks came to light.

They allow the police and the Self-Defense Forces, under strict conditions, to enter and disable servers used in serious attacks. From next autumn the government will be able to analyse communications data passing through Japan to detect attacks, under the supervision of an independent commission.

They also oblige the operators of core infrastructure, designated under the economic security law, to report cyber incidents to the government and to tell it about the computer equipment they use.

These powers were overdue. For years Japan lacked the legal means to act against attackers before an attack landed, and its allies urged it to catch up. The new laws bring its practice closer to that of the United States, Britain and Australia.

But the list of designated sectors shows the limits of the present approach. It covers electricity, gas, oil, water, railways, trucking, shipping, ports, aviation, airports, telecommunications, broadcasting, the post, finance and credit cards. Cloud computing and cold storage are not on it as sectors in their own right.

The list can be changed, and has been. Port transport was added after the attack on Nagoya. The government should now add the cold-chain logistics on which the food supply depends, and the largest cloud services, on which hundreds of companies and councils depend at once.

Designation is not a punishment. It brings obligations to report and to prepare, and it brings the attention of the state: its information about threats and, when needed, its help. Companies whose failure would stop part of the country should accept both.

Those who worry about privacy are right to watch the monitoring of communications closely. The independent commission must have the staff and the authority to do its job, and its reports should be published. But the alternative to a state that can see attacks coming is not a state that respects privacy more. It is a state that learns of attacks from the news, like everyone else.

#### The allied watch

The cartoonist's second lock deserves as much attention as the first. In the doorway, a Japanese official and an American officer fasten it together.

That is the right picture. Cyberspace has no borders, and many of the groups that attack Japanese

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companies operate from countries that will never hand them over. Defence depends on intelligence that no single country can gather alone, and on the ability to act against servers wherever they sit.

Japan and the United States agreed at a meeting of their foreign and defence ministers in 2019 that international law applies in cyberspace and that a cyberattack could, in certain circumstances, constitute an armed attack for the purposes of their security treaty. That commitment should be made real in the daily work of the two governments' cyber agencies, not reserved for a catastrophe.

The new laws make that easier. Japan can now share information with its ally on a footing closer to equality, and its security clearance system, in force since May last year, allows sensitive information from partners to be protected as they require.

Cooperation already works. A Russian believed to be a key member of the Qilin ransomware group, which claimed last year's attack on Asahi, was detained in Osaka in May and has been handed over to Germany, where investigators suspect him of an attack on a German logistics company. Japan is a member of the international Counter Ransomware Initiative led by the United States, and a party to the Budapest Convention on cybercrime.

There is a lesson here for the alliance itself. American forces in Japan depend on Japanese ports, power, telecommunications and supplies, much of which runs on the same civilian networks that were attacked this week. A supply chain that can be stopped by a ransom note is a weakness for the alliance as well as for the country.

Each arrest tells the attackers that their anonymity is not guaranteed. Each joint attribution, in which allies name a state or a group together, raises the cost of attacking any one of them. Japan should do more of both, and do it faster.

Putting the alliance first does not mean handing over the work. The United States will not defend a Japanese warehouse. It will share what it knows with a Japan that can use the information, and act alongside a Japan that is willing to act. The lock in the cartoon is fastened by two pairs of hands, and one of them must be ours.

What companies owe

Government cannot do everything, and should not try. Most of the work of defence falls on the companies that own the systems.

The measures are well known: software that is updated promptly; strong authentication, especially for remote access; networks divided into segments, so that a problem in one part can be isolated without stopping the rest; constant monitoring; and backups kept offline, beyond the reach of attackers, and tested.

The precautionary shutdown that spread this week's disruption to sites that had not been attacked is a lesson in design. Systems should be built so that they can be isolated in pieces. A company that can defend itself only by switching everything off has done part of the attackers' work for them.

Manual procedures matter as much as technology. A warehouse that can keep working on paper, slowly, while its systems are restored turns a catastrophe into an inconvenience. After the attack on Asahi, the brewer took orders by telephone and fax for weeks. It was not elegant, but it kept goods moving.

Boards must treat cyber risk as a matter for directors, not only for the information technology department. The question to ask is not whether the company will be attacked, but how long it can operate when it is, and whether anyone has ever tested the answer.

Customers of cloud services carry responsibilities too. Moving to the cloud transfers some risks but not all. Organisations whose work is essential should know how they would carry on if their provider failed, and should keep copies of critical data somewhere else.

Councils and the government cloud

Local governments are the most exposed. Their systems hold the registers of residents, taxes and welfare, and few councils have the staff to defend them.

The national programme to move their core systems onto a government cloud, approved and contracted by the Digital Agency, is partly an answer: fewer, larger and better-defended platforms. But councils also rely on many other systems supplied by private

companies outside the programme, and some of IDC Frontier's customers are local governments.

Concentration raises the stakes of every failure. The government should require that the services on which councils depend for essential work meet published standards of resilience, and it should pay for the smaller councils that cannot meet those standards alone.

Food on the table

For the cold chain, the immediate need is capacity. Nichirei Foods could move its goods because other warehouses had space. Cold storage is expensive and often full, and in a wider crisis there may be nowhere to go.

The government already plans for earthquakes and floods by mapping supplies and arranging mutual support among operators. It should do the same for cyberattacks on the cold chain: know where the capacity is, agree in advance how operators will help one another, and rehearse it.

For most households the effects of this week's attack may be small: a delayed delivery, a substitution on a supermarket shelf. That is not a reason for complacency. It is a measure of how much slack the system still has, and of how quickly that slack could disappear if attacks became more frequent or better coordinated.

The logistics industry has little slack. Since April 2024, limits on overtime for truck drivers have tightened capacity across the country, and every diversion of goods from one warehouse to another needs trucks and drivers that may not be available.

Do not pay

One more principle should be stated plainly. Victims should not pay ransoms. Payment funds the next attack, does not guarantee that data will be returned or deleted, and marks the payer as a target for the next gang.

Japan joined the other members of the Counter Ransomware Initiative in 2023 in declaring that their governments should not pay ransoms. Companies, especially those whose services are essential, should follow the same rule, and insurers should not make it easier to break.

That is easy to write and hard to do when a company's survival seems to depend on a key held by criminals. It is why preparation matters. A company with good backups has the freedom to refuse.

Tell people what happened

Silence is the attacker's friend. In the first days after an attack, companies are tempted to say little, for fear of alarming customers or helping the criminals. Some caution is justified; details that would help the attackers should not be published.

But customers need to know what has happened to their data and their services, and the public needs to know whether the problem is spreading. A company that explains early, and corrects itself as it learns more, keeps the trust it will need when its systems return.

This week offered an example. Monogatari Corporation, whose Yakiniku King app leaked the data of about 10.79 million members, set out within days which data had been taken and which had not. That is the standard to which every victim should hold itself, whether the system attacked is a restaurant app or a cloud on which hundreds of organisations depend.

The government can help by publishing, without names, what it learns from the incident reports it now receives, so that other companies can see how attacks begin and how they are stopped. Information that stays in a ministry protects no one.

The 3:40 a.m. problem

The clock in the cartoon reads 3:40 a.m. for a reason. Attackers strike at night and at weekends, when fewer people are watching. Defence that works only in office hours is not defence.

Round-the-clock monitoring is expensive, and Japan is short of the engineers to provide it. The government and industry have spoken for years of the need to train more. Universities, vocational schools and companies should be given incentives to do so, and the Self-Defense Forces' cyber units, which are growing, should be seen as a source of skills that can later serve civilian life.

What Japan should do

The prescriptions follow from the facts.

First, the government should add cold-chain logistics and the largest cloud services to the list of core infrastructure, with obligations to report incidents quickly and to prepare for them.

Second, it should fund the cyber defences of local governments, beginning with the smallest, and set standards of resilience for the services on which they depend.

Third, it should draw up a contingency plan for the cold chain, as it has for natural disasters, and test it.

Fourth, it should deepen its cooperation with the United States and its other partners: sharing intelligence, naming attackers together, pursuing extraditions and imposing costs on the states that shelter them.

Fifth, it should train and pay for the engineers the country needs, in government and in industry.

Sixth, companies should do their part: divide their networks, keep offline backups, practise working without their systems and refuse to pay ransoms.

The other end of the line

One hundred and fifty years ago today, Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Watson held the first two-way telephone conversation over outdoor wires, between Boston and Cambridgeport. Every network built since has had to answer the question that conversation posed: who is at the other end of the line?

For most of that century and a half the answer was a friend, a customer or a colleague. This week, for 495 customers of a cloud service and 1,200 users of a chain of cold stores, the answer was a criminal who had locked the line.

The country cannot unplug from the networks on which its economy and its food supply now run. It can decide who watches them, and how closely.

The lock on the cloud this week was theirs. The lock on the door must be ours, fastened with our ally, and checked every night at 3:40 a.m.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: Keeping Yana Is the Prime Minister's Call. Repaying With Work Must Include Answering the Questions

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has decided to keep her agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, and has told him to repay the public with his work. It is a defensible decision. It is not yet a sufficient one.

The case against Mr Yana rests on a recording of remarks at a party gathering in May, in which a speaker he has acknowledged was himself said that road budgets for two towns whose mayors had not supported him had been cut drastically.

He has withdrawn the remarks and apologised, and he denies ever approaching the land ministry about either town. But reports this week said he had made an inquiry to the ministry about road budgets in February, and on Wednesday he said there was no record of any meeting.

A boast is not a crime, and a politician who claims credit for things he did not do is not unusual. If Mr Yana exaggerated his influence to impress an audience, the offence is against good taste and good sense.

If public money was directed to punish towns whose mayors did not support a politician, the offence is of a different order. It would strike at the fairness of the state itself.

The difference between the two is a question of fact, and facts can be established. That is why the prime minister's refusal to allow an inquiry within the government is the weaker half of her decision.

An inquiry need not be a show trial. The land ministry could publish the allocations to the two towns over several years, explain how they were set and confirm whether any contact with the minister's office affected them. If nothing improper happened, the figures will show it.

Ms Takaichi's caution is understandable. Ministers who fall early in a session invite the opposition to hunt for the next one, and her majority is not comfortable. A government that dismisses ministers at the first allegation becomes hostage to every recording.

But a government that declines to look invites the suspicion that it fears what it would find. The budget committees, where Mr Yana will face questions one by one and on television, will test that suspicion.

He should go into them with the documents in hand. Repaying the public with work means farm policy delivered well. It also means answering, fully and promptly, the questions the public is entitled to ask.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: Twenty Years After the First Test, North Korea's Bomb Is a Fact. Japan's Answer Must Be Deterrence, Defence and the Alliance

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Twenty years ago today, on October 9, 2006, North Korea exploded its first nuclear device. The world condemned it, the United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions, and diplomats spoke of reversing the programme.

Five more tests followed, the last and largest in September 2017. Missiles of growing range followed too, including intercontinental missiles that can reach the United States, and missiles fired over or into the seas around Japan.

The Sankei Shimbun now puts the arsenal at 112 weapons. Outside estimates are lower and vary widely, because no inspector has seen it. But the direction is not in doubt. Two decades of talks, sanctions and summits have not stopped the programme. It has grown.

Japan must plan for the North Korea that exists, not the one diplomats once hoped to create.

The first element of that planning is deterrence. North Korea's leaders must be certain that any attack on Japan would bring a response they cannot survive. That certainty rests on the American nuclear umbrella, and on the credibility of the alliance that extends it.

Tokyo should keep strengthening the consultations through which the two governments discuss extended deterrence, so that Japanese officials understand how American forces would respond and have a voice in planning.

The second element is defence. Japan's missile defences, at sea and on land, must keep pace with missiles that fly faster, lower and less predictably. The decision in 2022 to acquire the capability to strike missile bases in an enemy's territory if an attack is under way, including American Tomahawk cruise missiles, was a recognition that interception alone cannot protect the country.

The third element is cooperation with South Korea and the United States. The three countries now share warning data on North Korean missiles in real time, an arrangement that should survive changes of government in all three capitals.

Sanctions still matter. The Sankei's report that North Korean smuggling continues from a building in Shimbashi, in the heart of Tokyo, is a reminder that enforcement begins at home. The networks that supply the regime and earn it money must be closed wherever they operate, including here.

None of this rules out diplomacy. Japan still seeks a full accounting of the citizens abducted by North Korea, and a door should be kept open. But diplomacy succeeds only from strength. Twenty years on, that is the lesson the anniversary teaches.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: Moscow's Request for Judge Akane's Extradition Is Theatre. Tokyo Should Answer It With Plain Support for the Court

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

Russia's Prosecutor General's Office has asked for the extradition of Tomoko Akane, the Japanese president of the International Criminal Court, and other officials of the court. The request will go nowhere.

The court sits in The Hague. The Netherlands, which hosts it and is a member, is bound by its agreement with the court to protect its officials, and it is expected to refuse.

The request is theatre, the latest act in a drama that began in March 2023, when the court issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin on suspicion of the unlawful deportation of children from occupied parts of Ukraine.

ANALYSIS

Moscow responded by opening criminal cases against the court's prosecutor and several of its judges, Ms Akane among them, and putting them on its wanted lists. The extradition request adds a new scene without changing the plot.

Theatre can still do harm. Its purpose is to brand the court's officials as criminals, to limit where they can travel safely and to discourage others from serving the court. It is an attempt to intimidate judges for doing their work.

Japan should answer it plainly. Ms Akane, a former Japanese prosecutor, is the first Japanese to lead the court. Japan is its largest financial contributor and one of its strongest supporters. The government should say, clearly and soon, that it stands behind her and behind the court's independence.

That support should not depend on whom the court is investigating. The court has also faced pressure from the United States, which is not a member and has sanctioned several of its officials over investigations involving Israel and Afghanistan. Japan values its alliance with Washington above almost everything, but it can disagree with an ally about the court while standing with it on the things that matter most.

The case for supporting the court is not sentimental. A world in which powerful countries can deport children from occupied territory without consequence is a more dangerous world for Japan, a country that depends on rules rather than force.

The court is imperfect, slow and often frustrated by states that refuse to cooperate. It is also one of the few institutions that try to hold the powerful to account for the worst crimes.

Moscow's request is a measure of the court's importance. Tokyo's response should be a measure of its resolve.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: Germany Would Strengthen the Fighter Programme. Japan Should Welcome It, on Terms That Protect the Timetable

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Germany's interest in the Global Combat Air Programme, the fighter that Japan is developing with Britain and Italy, is a compliment to the project and a test of Japan's priorities.

Berlin has held exploratory talks about joining, according to reports, after walking away in June from its own project with France and Spain, which foundered on disputes between Airbus and Dassault Aviation.

The benefits of German membership are obvious. Germany is Europe's largest economy, it is spending heavily on defence, and its industry has deep experience of combat aircraft, from the Tornado to the Eurofighter. Its money would ease the burden on the existing partners, and its orders would lengthen the production run and lower the cost of every aircraft.

Politically, a German presence would bind Europe's largest power more closely to a programme led by a Pacific democracy. That matters for a Japan that wants European partners to understand the threats it faces.

The risks are equally clear. Japan needs a replacement for its F-2 fighters by the mid-2030s. Every new partner brings requirements, industrial demands and political reviews, and each can cost time that Japan does not have while China's air power grows.

Germany's own documents, as reported, express caution about how a newcomer would be treated. That is a reasonable concern, and it cuts both ways. A partner that arrives worried about its share may bargain hard over work that is already allocated.

Japan has been the most reluctant of the three partners to add members, and it was right to resist pressure to admit Saudi Arabia earlier. Its caution has protected the programme's coherence.

The answer is not to refuse Germany, but to set the terms before the door opens. A new partner should accept the existing design, the existing division of the core work and the existing timetable, and contribute money and production capacity on that basis.

Japan should also ensure that the rules on exports, which it has relaxed for this programme, are understood by any new partner, so that a dispute about selling the aircraft abroad does not arise after

the fact.

On those terms, Germany would be an asset. The decision requires the agreement of all three governments, and Japan's view will be decisive. Tokyo should use that leverage to secure a bigger programme without a later aircraft.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: A Prohibition Order Should Mean Protection. The Ginowan Case Shows the Gap Between Paper and Safety

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The young woman killed in Ginowan on September 30 did everything the system asks of a victim of stalking. She went to the police in December. In February, a prohibition order was issued against her former boyfriend. When she found a tracking device on her car on September 20, she reported it.

On September 29 the police received information linking the device to the man. They contacted her, but did not tell her what they had learned, saying it needed further investigation. The next day she was dead. On Wednesday the man was arrested on suspicion of murder; he has admitted the allegation, according to NTV.

Every case is different, and the full facts will emerge only in court. But the sequence raises questions that the Okinawa prefectural police must answer in public.

What did officers know, and when? Did anyone assess the risk to her after the tracking device was found, and if so, what did the assessment say? Why was she not told of the link? Could the man have been questioned or detained sooner?

The Anti-Stalking Act has been strengthened repeatedly, most recently to cover tracking devices of exactly the kind found on her car. In 2025 prohibition orders reached a record 3,037, and arrests in stalking cases a record 3,717. The law is being used more than ever.

But a prohibition order is a piece of paper. It deters many stalkers, and breaking it is a crime. For the most dangerous, the ones whose obsession has turned to rage, it is not enough.

The task for the police is to identify those cases and to act on them with the urgency they demand. A tracking device on the car of a woman already protected by an order is a sign that the order has failed.

Victims also need information. A woman who knows that the police suspect her stalker of tracking her can change her movements, stay with family or ask for protection. A woman who is not told cannot.

Japan has made progress in taking stalking seriously since the murder in Okegawa that led to the law in 2000. The Ginowan case shows how far there is still to go.

The prefectural police owe her family, and the public, a full account. The National Police Agency should ensure that its lessons reach every force in the country.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: An 11-Million-Yen Fee Tells the World's Best Students to Go Elsewhere. Japan Should Be Ready to Welcome Them

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

The American administration's decision to raise the fee for foreign graduates who want to work in the United States after their studies, to about 11 million yen, some 140 times the present level, is America's business. Its consequences will be felt far beyond America.

The programme concerned, Optional Practical Training, lets international students work for up to a year after graduating, and for longer in science and technology. For many, it is the bridge between an American degree and an American career.

Washington's case is that the programme lets companies hire foreign graduates instead of Americans. That concern is not frivolous, and every country is entitled to decide whom it admits to its labour market.

But a fee of this size will deter far more than abuse. It will put the programme beyond the reach of most graduates unless their employers pay, and many will not.

The students most affected are those the United States has spent years training, many of them in engineering, computing and science. Some will go home. Others will go to countries that make them welcome.

Japan should be one of those countries. It has set ambitious targets for international students and is short of engineers, researchers and skilled workers in almost every field.

Japan's universities teach more courses in English than they did, and its visa rules for highly skilled professionals have been eased. But the country still loses many of the international students it attracts, who find it hard to get jobs in Japanese companies.

Companies should recruit them actively, including those who studied in the United States and now face a closed door. Universities should make it easier for graduates of foreign institutions to join their research teams.

Nothing in this argument weakens the alliance. The United States remains Japan's closest partner, and talent that moves between the two countries strengthens both. Washington may yet soften the measure, and legal challenges are likely.

Meanwhile, Japan has an opportunity it should not waste. The best young minds in the world are looking for somewhere to build their careers. Some of them could build them here.

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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](mailto:corrections@japanmorningpost.com), giving the date, page and headline of the article concerned.

The notes supplied for today's edition again give the chemistry laureate's name as Kenzo Sugoi and Kenzo Sugaki, and in one place as Sogo; he is Kenso Soai. They spell the physics laureate Harzen; he is Francis Halzen. They give the medicine laureate as Deisseros; he is Karl Deisseroth. They give the American AI developer as Anthropic; it is Anthropic. They again date the completion of IceCube to 2011 and the founding of NASA's Space Task Group to October 8, 1958; as corrected yesterday, IceCube's last cable was lowered into the ice in December 2010, and NASA's histories date the group's formation to November 5, 1958.

The notes again give the first stage of the Pacific League Climax Series as Seibu against SoftBank; it is Seibu against Nippon-Ham, and SoftBank, the champions, wait in the final stage. They spell the judoka Haruka Kajo; she is Haruka Kaju. They say that Shiho Tanaka lost in overtime in the third round; her opponent was Giovanna Scoccimarro of Germany, and the title went to Ai Tsunoda of Spain. They describe key members of the Qilin ransomware group as detained in Osaka and handed to Germany; reports concern one man, a 28-year-old Russian, detained in May.

The notes give Typhoon No. 29 at midnight as 980 hPa with winds of 35 m/s, moving north-west, and place it near the Ogasawara Islands on Monday, October 12, and east of Japan on Tuesday. The Japan Meteorological Agency's bulletins of 6:45 to 7:05 a.m. on Friday, shown on the supplied map, give 970 hPa and 40 m/s, moving west-north-west, and forecast the storm to pass near the islands on Monday and Tuesday and to be east of Japan by early Wednesday; this edition follows the later bulletins. The notes name the retiring Yakult pitcher as Masaki Ishikawa; he is Masanori Ishikawa, whose farewell game was last week. The notes also list results from the Asian Games, the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, Japan's match against New Zealand and earlier baseball reported in previous editions; they are not repeated as news.

THE WEEK AHEAD

FRIDAY, OCT. 9: Nobel Peace Prize, about 6 p.m. Japan time. The American forces' curfew in Okinawa takes effect, for 30 days. World judo: men's 100 kg, women's 78 kg. Takayama autumn festival, to Saturday. World Post Day. J1: Kashiwa v Kobe, 7 p.m. SATURDAY, OCT. 10: Climax Series first stages: Giants v DeNA at Tokyo Dome, Seibu v Nippon-Ham in Tokorozawa. Typhoon No. 28 passes about 630 km north-east of Chichijima.

SUNDAY, OCT. 11: World judo championships end with the mixed team event. New moon. Typhoon No. 29 forecast very strong. MONDAY, OCT. 12: Sports Day; Izumo university relay; Nobel prize in economic sciences; Typhoon No. 29 near the Ogasawara Islands. TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY, OCT. 13 AND 14: rain from a front on the main islands; Central League final stage at Koshien from Wednesday. OCT. 18: Frozen Food Day; Yokohama mayoral election; Asian Para Games open. OCT. 19 TO 29: Exercise Keen Sword. OCT. 29 AND 30: Bank of Japan policy meeting. NOV. 3: American midterm elections. DEC. 1: Major League Baseball's labour agreement expires.

TYPHOON AND MARINE ADVISORIES

6 a.m. Friday. No. 29 (Koguma): strong typhoon near Minamitorishima; 18.2 degrees north, 157.1 degrees east; about 1,820 km east-south-east of Chichijima; moving west-north-west at 25 km/h; 970 hPa; winds 40 m/s, gusts 55; storm-force winds 85 km all round, gales 390 km north and 280 km south. Forecast: 960 hPa, 6 a.m. Saturday; very strong, 955 hPa and 45 m/s, 3 a.m. Sunday; 950 hPa, 3 a.m. Monday; about 450 km east-north-east of Chichijima, 965 hPa, 3 a.m. Tuesday; about 890 km east of Tokyo, 975 hPa, 3 a.m. Wednesday. No. 28 (Nolo): severe tropical storm near Minamitorishima; 28.1 north, 150.4 east; about 820 km east of Chichijima; moving north-west at 25 km/h; 990 hPa; winds 30 m/s, gusts 40; forecast about 630 km north-east of Chichijima on Saturday morning, about 800 km east-south-east of Tokyo at 3 a.m. Sunday, extratropical by 3 a.m. Monday.

Ogasawara Islands: high waves with swell from

EDITORIAL & OPINION

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Sunday to Tuesday; strong winds and rough seas depending on Koguma's path. Chichijima: just outside the western edge of the area that could have storm winds during the forecast period. Pacific coast: swell through the weekend. Island ferries: sailings may change at short notice. Chiba and Kanagawa: ground still loose after Typhoon No. 25. No landfall on the main islands is forecast.

MARKET REFERENCE

Tokyo, Thursday's close: Nikkei 225 at 69,042.11, down 993.60, a second day of losses and back below 70,000. TOPIX 4,091.46, down 62.65. Yen: 157.83 to 157.93 to the dollar in New York, 157.78 to 157.89 in Tokyo on Thursday morning; upper 176-yen range against the euro. New York: the Dow rose 51 points after falling 341 the day before; crude oil rebounded to the 91-dollar range. Ten-year government bond coupon: 3.1 per cent; long-term rate on Tuesday, October 6: 3.105 per cent. Bank of Japan policy rate: 1.25 per cent; next meeting October 29 and 30.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS IN THIS EDITION

Front page: a cold-storage warehouse of Nissui Logistics, image supplied for this edition. Economy and Business: the head office of the Nichirei group beside the Kachidoki Bridge in Tokyo, image supplied for this edition. International: a B-1B Lancer bomber of the United States Air Force (photo: U.S. Air Force). Politics: Prime Minister Takaichi at the rostrum of the House of Representatives, file (WPM Productions). Typhoon page: map of the two typhoons supplied for this edition, from Japan Meteorological Agency bulletins issued between 6:45 and 7:05 a.m. on October 9. Weather: the Japan and United States maps supplied for this edition. Editorial page: cartoon by Taro Suzuki.

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THE RECORD BOOK

IDC Frontier: 495 customers affected, the outage beginning at about 3:40 a.m. on Wednesday. Nissui Logistics: all 17 warehouses stopped; about 1,200 clients. Yakiniiku King app: 10,788,963 member records leaked of 10,808,784 registered. Data leak incidents this year: 506, a record, the Yomiuri Shimbun reports. Stalking in 2025: a record 3,717 arrests and 3,037 prohibition orders. Typhoons this year: 29, against an annual average of about 25; the record is 39, in 1967. Women among literature laureates: 19 with Anne Carson. First two-way telephone conversation over outdoor wires: 150 years ago today.

NOBEL WEEK

Monday, October 5: Physiology or Medicine, to Karl Deisseroth, Peter Hegemann and Georg Nagel, for optogenetics. Tuesday, October 6: Physics, to Francis Halzen, for the detection of high-energy neutrinos from space with IceCube. Wednesday, October 7: Chemistry, to Henri Kagan and Kenso Soai, for the discovery of non-linear effects and autocatalysis in asymmetric organic synthesis. Thursday, October 8: Literature, to Anne Carson, for her bold and inventive oeuvre that, in playful dialogue with the classical tradition, has created new forms for contemporary literature. Today: Peace, announced in Oslo, about 6 p.m. Monday, October 12: the prize in economic sciences. Each prize is worth 12 million Swedish kronor; the prizes are presented on December 10.

PLAY-OFF CALENDAR

CENTRAL LEAGUE: first stage, Giants v DeNA at Tokyo Dome from Saturday, October 10, best of three, the Giants advancing if the series is level. Final stage, Hanshin v the first-stage winner at Koshien from Wednesday, October 14, up to six games, first to four wins; Hanshin start one win up. PACIFIC LEAGUE: first stage, Seibu v Nippon-Ham in Tokorozawa from Saturday, October 10, best of three, Seibu advancing if level. Final stage, SoftBank v the first-stage winner in Fukuoka; SoftBank start two wins up under this season's rule. Weekend games are played in the daytime. The final-stage winners meet in the Japan Series.

FESTIVALS AND SKIES THIS WEEK

Takayama autumn festival: Sakurayama Hachiman Shrine and the old town, today and Saturday, with eleven floats. Izumo All-Japan University Ekiden: Monday, from Izumo Taisha to the Izumo Dome. New moon: early on Sunday, leaving dark skies over a fine weekend on the main islands. Frozen Food Day: October 18. Reading Week: October 27 to November 9.

CYBER TERMS USED TODAY

Ransomware: malicious software that encrypts a victim's files and systems and demands payment for a key. Double extortion: stealing data before encrypting it and threatening to publish it. Ransomware as a service: a model in which a core group supplies software to affiliates who carry out attacks for a share of the ransom. Segmentation: dividing a network so that a problem in one part can be isolated. Offline backup: a copy kept beyond the reach of attackers. Active cyber defence: the powers, in force since October 1, that allow the authorities to act against servers used in serious attacks. Core infrastructure: the sectors designated under the economic security law whose operators must report cyber incidents.

THE SYMBOLS ON THE WEATHER MAP

A sun: sunny. A cloud: cloudy. A cloud with strokes beneath it: rain. Two symbols joined by an arrow: the first sky gives way to the second during the day. Two symbols separated by a slanting stroke: the first sky, with the second at times. The figure in red is the forecast high and the figure in blue the low observed this morning, in degrees Celsius. On the United States map the figures are in degrees Fahrenheit.

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. Times are Japan Standard Time unless another place is named; Japan is at present nine hours ahead of Greenwich and of Reykjavik, eight ahead of London, 13 ahead of New York, 14 ahead of the Gulf Coast, 16 ahead of Los Angeles, seven ahead of Stockholm, Oslo and Berlin and five ahead of Baku. Japanese names are given with the family name last. A person arrested is a suspect and is presumed innocent, and a company under investigation has not been found to have broken the law.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Police: 110. Fire and ambulance: 119. Coast guard, for emergencies at sea: 118. Disaster message dial: 171. Police consultation, not an emergency, including stalking: #9110. Consumer hotline: 188. Anyone who receives a message about a data leak, a refund or an account suspension should not follow its links, and should contact the company through its official site or a number found independently. Typhoon bulletins are published by the Japan Meteorological Agency at [www.jma.go.jp](http://www.jma.go.jp).

ABOUT THE OPINION PAGES

The editorial states the view of the editorial page and is written by its editor; it takes its subject from the day's cartoon. Articles headed Analysis are the judgment of the writer whose name they carry. The news pages report; the opinion pages argue, and say that they are doing so. Letters in reply are welcome at [letters@japanmorningpost.com](mailto:letters@japanmorningpost.com).

SOURCES FOR THIS EDITION

Reports in this edition draw on the Friday morning papers and Thursday night's wires: Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Sankei News, Asahi Shimbun, Yomiuri Shimbun, Kyodo News, Jiji Press, NHK, NTV, the Ryukyu Shimpo, the Kobe Shimbun, Reuters and the Associated Press; on the announcements of SoftBank and IDC Frontier and of Monogatari Corporation; on the Swedish Academy's announcement and Al Jazeera's report for the literature prize; on Daily Sports for the judo; on the National Police Agency for stalking figures; on Weathernews and the Japan Weather Association for pollen; on [tenki.jp](http://tenki.jp) and the Japan Meteorological Agency for weather; and on the United States National Weather Service and National Hurricane Center for the map of American cities. Where accounts differ the difference is stated.

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TOMORROW'S EDITION

Saturday's edition carries the Nobel Peace Prize; the latest on the IDC Frontier and Nissui Logistics outages; Typhoon No. 29 as it strengthens towards the Ogasawara Islands; the last days of the world judo championships in Baku; and the start of the Climax Series.

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