

Takaichi's Second Cabinet Is Complete, and Hayashi Is Out of It

The core stays: Kihara, Motegi, Katayama, Koizumi, Jounai and Akazawa all keep their posts. The surprise is at Internal Affairs, where Yoshimasa Hayashi has resigned and left the government, and at Agriculture, where a lawmaker disciplined in the faction funding scandal has been given a portfolio

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy, with William | Senior Political Analyst



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. Her second reshuffled cabinet was completed on Friday. Photo: Japan Prime Minister's Office

The second Takaichi reshuffled cabinet is complete, with its economic and security core intact and its full lineup reported in Friday's morning papers. Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama, Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, Economy and Fiscal Policy Minister Jounai and Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Ryosei Akazawa all retain their positions, according to Asahi Shimbun and Sankei News.

The story of the reshuffle is not in that list. It is in two names that were not expected to move the way they did.

Yoshimasa Hayashi has resigned as Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications and is leaving the cabinet altogether, according to Asahi Shimbun. The reporting frames the departure around the question of how the Prime Minister handles figures regarded as candidates to succeed her, which is a delicate way of describing the removal of a rival from the front bench.

Hayashi stood in the front row of Thursday's cabinet photograph on the staircase at the Prime Minister's Office. By Friday morning the papers were reporting that he was no longer a minister. Local reporting cited by Asahi Shimbun indicates that Fujii will take the Internal Affairs portfolio.

The second name is Kazuo Yanagi, appointed Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Yanagi had been disciplined for his involvement in the former Abe faction's political funds scandal, and several newspapers reported the appointment as the first time a lawmaker implicated in that affair has been given a cabinet post, according to Asahi Shimbun.

That is a line the Prime Minister has chosen to cross deliberately. The funds scandal reshaped the party's factional structure and cost it heavily at the ballot box, and the convention since has been that those disciplined over it wait. Yanagi's appointment says the waiting is over, at least for the Agriculture portfolio.

The Japan Innovation Party's Nakatsuji was expected to enter the cabinet for the first time under the cooperation agreement reached this week, as reported before the reshuffle. Goshi Hosono has also been appointed, having reportedly expressed a wish to take the Reconstruction portfolio. Seki, from Hyogo Prefecture, becomes Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, according to Sankei News and Kobe Shimbun.

Asahi Shimbun's editorial page raised a concern that has less to do with any single appointment than with the machinery beneath them. With the personnel

responsible for parliamentary affairs changed, the editorial argued, the Diet risks losing deliberation itself even as the cabinet's core structure stays the same.

That concern lands on a specific week. The extraordinary session ahead will take up a consumption tax outline that cuts the food rate to 1% for two years from April 2027 at a cost of roughly five trillion yen a year, with no funding source yet named. The officials who manage how that debate is scheduled and conducted are new to their roles.

Markets read the economic appointments the way the government intended them to be read. Reuters' Japanese service and Sankei News reported that the retention of Katayama, Jounai and Akazawa is being interpreted as continuity of what the government calls responsible and proactive fiscal policy.

Whether responsible and proactive can coexist with an unfunded five trillion yen measure is the question the bond market has already begun to price, and it is the one the finance minister will be asked again today, when the Bank of Japan announces its decision and Governor Ueda holds his afternoon press conference.

The reshuffle therefore hands the new cabinet a second day of unusual density. A probable rate increase to 1.25%, the highest since April 1995, lands within a day of the appointments. The yen sits near 156 to the dollar after the Federal Reserve's own increase. A typhoon is bearing down on the Ogasawara Islands and may reach Kanto on Monday's holiday.

None of those things wait for a new minister to read into a brief, which is why the government kept its economic core in place and changed the periphery. The question the Hayashi departure raises is whether the periphery was where the party's next leader was standing.

Bank of Japan Decides Today, With 1.25% the Expected Answer and 1995 the Reference

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

The Bank of Japan announces the result of its two-day monetary policy meeting today, and the prevailing forecast in the morning papers is that the policy interest rate will be raised from 1.00% to 1.25%, according to Jiji Press, Nikkei and NHK. Governor Kazuo Ueda's press conference is scheduled for the afternoon.

A rate of 1.25% would be the highest in approximately 31 years, since April 1995. That comparison is the one the papers have reached for, and it deserves a moment, because it means the policy rate is returning to a level last seen when the asset price bubble's collapse was still working through the economy and the long deflation had not yet set in.

The reasons reported for the expected increase are three: high crude oil prices, a weak yen, and persistently high inter-company prices, which together pose a risk to consumer prices, according to NHK and NTV News.

The first two are external and the third is their consequence. Crude above \$100 a barrel priced in dollars, converted at a yen near 156, raises the cost of nearly everything Japanese firms buy, and producer prices running above consumer prices describe pressure that has been absorbed rather than passed on.

The board is also acting in company. The Federal Reserve raised its target range to 3.75% to 4.00% on Wednesday and the European Central Bank has also raised rates this month, which brings the major central banks into line for the first time in this cycle.

That alignment matters for the currency. A Japanese increase alone would narrow the differential with the

dollar; a Japanese increase after an American one leaves the gap roughly where it was, which is why the yen's overnight slide to 156 has not been reversed by anticipation of today's decision.

Markets have priced the move almost fully, and a fully priced decision changes what matters at the announcement. The interest shifts to the accompanying statement and to what Ueda says in the afternoon about the pace of what follows.

Ueda has consistently framed normalisation as conditional rather than programmatic, declining to commit to a sequence and emphasising that each decision rests on the data available at the time.

That framing will be tested by a week in which conditions moved sharply: the Federal Reserve's decision, the yen's fall, long-term yields at their highest since 1996 and a cabinet approving a five trillion yen tax measure without a funding source.

Wage growth remains the condition the bank has named at every stage, on the reasoning that inflation driven by import costs alone does not justify a normalised policy rate. Whether the board judges that condition sufficiently met will be visible in the statement's language.

For households the transmission runs through variable-rate mortgages, which reset on schedules that will bring the change to borrowers over the coming year, and through deposit rates that have risen more slowly than lending rates.

For banks and insurers the move improves margins that years of yield suppression compressed, which is why financials have led the market's rotation through the week.

Tokyo trading is expected to be cautious until the announcement, according to the morning market reports, with the Nikkei having closed at 64,136.25 on Thursday after a second consecutive gain.

Whatever the board decides, the finance minister will be asked to interpret it this afternoon in her first public statement as a reappointed minister, and the currency will be the first thing she is asked about.

Typhoon No. 25 Reaches Ogasawara at 980 hPa With Kanto Next on the Track

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Typhoon No. 25, named Dujan, was near the Ogasawara Islands at 3 a.m. on Friday with a central pressure of 980 hectopascals, a maximum sustained wind of 30 metres a second and maximum instantaneous gusts of 40 metres a second, according to Weathernews and Yahoo Weather. It is large in size and moving northwest at approximately 40 kilometres an hour.

The storm has strengthened considerably since Thursday morning, when it stood at 996 hectopascals near the Mariana Islands with sustained winds of 20 metres a second. A 16-hectopascal drop in a day describes a system intensifying as forecast.

For the Ogasawara Islands the impact will intensify from midday on Friday, with high waves accompanied by swells, strong winds and landslides all requiring vigilance, according to BSN and MBC. Rainfall of up to 150 millimetres in 24 hours is expected from Friday afternoon to Saturday afternoon, and wave heights of 7 metres have been reported.

On Saturday the storm is expected to pass near the southwest of Chichijima, which will be the peak of the storm and rough seas for the islands.

The Izu Islands face a risk of approach from Sunday night into Monday, with high waves, strong winds and heavy rain expected.

Kanto faces intermittent rain from Saturday, with the possibility of warning-level heavy rain mainly along

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WEATHER — TOKYO

23°C

Low 19°C · Partly cloudy

Sat
25°

Sun
24°

Mon
23°

Tue
25°

Typhoon No. 25 at Ogasawara, 980 hPa. Rain in Kanto from Saturday, warning-level Sunday-Monday. Full forecast, Page 10.

- TODAY IN BRIEF
- Second Takaichi cabinet completed; economic and security core retained. Hayashi resigns from Internal Affairs.
 - Yanagi, disciplined in the funds scandal, takes Agriculture; Nakatsuji, Hosono and Seki join the cabinet.
 - Bank of Japan decides today; a rise to 1.25%, the highest since 1995, is the expected outcome.
 - Fed raises to 3.75%-4.00% by unanimous vote; Trump protests. Yen briefly 156. Nikkei 64,136.25.
 - Typhoon No. 25 at 980 hPa near Ogasawara; may make closest approach to Kanto on Monday's holiday.

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PUBLISHING INFORMATION

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MARKETS	
Nikkei 225	64,136.25 ▲ 213.25
TOPIX	4,094.19 ▲ 0.80%
USD/JPY	around 156
Fed target	3.75–4.00%
BOJ rate	1.00% (1.25% expected)
Gasoline	¥169.90/litre

- SPORTS AT A GLANCE
- Sumo, day 5: Onosato 4-1 (yorikiri over Yoshinofuji). Kotozakura loses to Minoumi. Kirishima, Atamifuji 4 wins. Day 6 today.
 - NPB: SoftBank 7-1 Orix, ninth straight, magic number falling. Hanshin 7-2 Hiroshima. DeNA 2-1 Yakult. Nippon-Ham 4-2 Seibu.
 - MLB: Dodgers clinch a fifth straight division title.

- THE HOLIDAY WEEKEND
- Saturday: Asian Games opening ceremony, Aichi-Nagoya. Rugby Pacific Nations Cup final, Japan v Fiji. Rain reaches Kanto.
 - Sunday: Higan begins. U-21 football, Japan v Kyrgyzstan. Warning-level rain possible on the Kanto coast.
 - Monday: Respect for the Aged Day. Typhoon No. 25's possible closest approach to Kanto. Samurai Japan v China, Toyohashi.
 - Wednesday: Autumn Equinox Day. Improving weather expected.

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- ALMANAC
- Sunrise 5:26 a.m. Sunset 5:44 p.m. Day length 12h 18m. First quarter moon approaching. Autumn Equinox Day on the 23rd.

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- IN TOMORROW'S EDITION
- Full coverage of the Bank of Japan's decision and Governor Ueda's press conference.
 - The Asian Games opening ceremony from Aichi-Nagoya.
 - Typhoon No. 25 at Chichijima and the outlook for Kanto's holiday.
 - Aki Basho day six results.

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FROM PAGE 1

Typhoon No. 25 Reaches Ogasawara at 980 hPa With Kanto Next on the Track

Continued from Page 1

the coast on Sunday and Monday, and the storm's closest approach possible on Monday the 21st, Respect for the Aged Day, according to Weathernews.

Tohoku and Tokai face a moderate possibility of warning-level heavy rain around Monday as the storm stimulates the autumn rain front, the mechanism by which a typhoon can produce its heaviest falls hundreds of kilometres from its centre.

The rest of the country is largely outside the storm's direct reach. Hokkaido's clear autumn weather is expected to continue, and Okinawa's main island will see only limited wind and rain because of the storm's easterly course.

Honshu's weather deteriorates from the west on Friday, with the San'in region on the Sea of Japan side expected to experience minimal direct impact.

Farmers are already reporting damage, according to FNN, with the storm expected to exacerbate a rice harvest delay already caused by a month of prolonged rain. The risk of fires from abandoned boats has also been raised.

The name Dujuan is derived from the azalea and was proposed by China, according to Weathernews, following the regional naming convention under which Asian countries contribute names in rotation.

The first half of the Silver Week holiday, Sunday and Monday, carries the risk of severe weather in eastern Japan, with improvements expected in some areas during the second half.

Forecast confidence at three days is moderate and the track may shift. Households across Kanto are advised to check hazard maps and evacuation routes before the weekend rather than during it.

FROM PAGE 1

Hayashi's Exit Reads as a Decision About Succession

Continued from Page 1

Yoshimasa Hayashi's resignation as Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications, and his departure from the cabinet, is the reshuffle's most consequential move, and Asahi Shimbun's reporting places it squarely in the context of how the Prime Minister is handling the people regarded as her potential successors.

Hayashi has held several of the government's senior portfolios across his career, including foreign affairs and the chief cabinet secretaryship, and his presence in a cabinet has generally signalled the inclusion of the party's mainstream rather than any faction's triumph.

Removing a figure of that standing from the front bench is not an administrative decision. It is a statement about who the Prime Minister intends to have near her when the party next chooses a leader, and who she does not.

The Internal Affairs portfolio is not a minor one. It oversees local government finance, telecommunications regulation and the administrative machinery through which national policy reaches prefectures and municipalities, which gives its holder reach into every constituency in the country.

Local reporting cited by Asahi Shimbun indicates Fujii will succeed Hayashi in the post, a change that will be read for what it says about the direction of the ministry as well as for the personnel move itself.

Japanese prime ministers have periodically used reshuffles to distance rivals, and the manoeuvre carries a known risk: a senior figure outside government is free to organise in ways one inside it is not.

Hayashi's own reaction has not been reported in detail, and the manner of his departure, resignation rather than dismissal, preserves the forms even where the substance is plain.

For the party, the move arrives alongside the appointment of Kazuo Yanagi to Agriculture despite his discipline over the faction funding scandal, which together suggest a Prime Minister prepared to reshape the front bench around loyalty rather than around the conventions that have governed appointments since the scandal broke.

The extraordinary Diet session will give Hayashi a platform if he wants one, since a former minister of his experience can shape debate from the back benches in ways the government may find inconvenient.

The reshuffle's core, unchanged in its economic and security posts, was designed to survive that session. Its periphery has now been rearranged in a way that may make the session harder rather than easier.

Whether the calculation proves right depends on what the Prime Minister expects to need more in the coming year: a united front bench or a rival kept close.

POLITICS

Yanagi's Appointment Ends the Quarantine on Funds-Scandal Lawmakers

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

Kazuo Yanagi's appointment as Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries was reported across the morning papers as the first cabinet appointment of a lawmaker involved in the former Abe faction's political funds scandal, according to Asahi Shimbun.

Yanagi had been disciplined by the party over his involvement, which placed him among the group of members whose careers were expected to pause while the party rebuilt its standing.

The scandal, which concerned unreported income from fundraising events channelled through factional accounts, dismantled the party's formal factional structure and contributed to electoral losses that reshaped the government's parliamentary position.

The convention that followed was unwritten and observed: those disciplined would not receive cabinet posts until the matter had faded from public attention. Friday's appointment tests whether it has.

Agriculture is a portfolio with a specific constituency and a specific set of live problems. Rice farming has seen bankruptcies at record pace, prolonged rain has delayed the harvest across eastern Japan, and a typhoon now approaching is expected to compound the damage.

Japan Agricultural News, which follows the ministry more closely than any other outlet, will be an early measure of how the farming sector receives a minister whose appointment arrives under this particular shadow.

For the Prime Minister the calculation is presumably that the scandal has run its course with voters, and that the cost of continuing to exclude a cohort of experienced members exceeds the cost of the headlines their return produces.

Opposition parties will not agree, and the extraordinary session gives them the committee rooms in which to say so, with the Agriculture minister facing questions about his own record alongside those about rice and rain.

The appointment also signals to other disciplined members that the path back is open, which changes the internal politics of a party whose factions were formally dissolved but whose networks were not.

How Yanagi handles his first appearances, and whether the ministry's substantive agenda or his own history dominates them, will determine whether the Prime Minister's judgment about the scandal's half-life was correct.

POLITICS

Nakatsuji, Hosono and Seki Take Their Seats

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent, Tokyo Bureau

Three appointments fill out the reshuffled cabinet beyond its retained core, according to Sankei News and Kobe Shimbun: Nakatsuji of the Japan Innovation Party, Goshi Hosono, and Seki of Hyogo Prefecture.

Nakatsuji's appointment was reported before the reshuffle as the expected first cabinet entry for his party, which concluded a cooperation agreement with the Liberal Democrats this week. His arrival converts that agreement from a parliamentary arrangement into shared executive responsibility.

Goshi Hosono has also been appointed, having reportedly expressed a wish to take the Reconstruction portfolio. Hosono's career has crossed party lines, and his return to a cabinet marks a further stage in a political journey that has taken him from the Democratic Party of Japan's government to the Liberal Democratic front bench.

Reconstruction remains a live portfolio fifteen years after the 2011 disaster, with the decommissioning of the Fukushima Daiichi plant, the return of evacuated communities and the disposal of treated water all continuing to require ministerial attention.

Seki, from Hyogo Prefecture, takes Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, a ministry whose brief this month includes the Asian Games opening on Saturday, the Common University Entrance Examination application period now open, and the persistent question of Japan's declining research output.

Hyogo's representation in the cabinet carries local significance in a prefecture whose politics have been unusually turbulent in recent years, and Kobe Shimbun's coverage reflected that regional interest.

Each of the three enters a government whose first days will be dominated by matters outside their portfolios: a Bank of Japan decision, a bond market at three-decade yields and a consumption tax measure heading to the Diet without a funding source.

New ministers face committee questioning in the session ahead, where command of a brief is tested publicly and early impressions persist.

Vice-ministerial and parliamentary secretary appointments typically follow in the days after the cabinet itself, extending the reshuffle into the second tier of government.

The cabinet's composition is now settled, and its performance will be measured from Friday against a set of conditions that give it very little time to settle in.

POLITICS

The Machinery Changed, Even Where the Ministers Did Not

Asahi's editorial page worries that new hands on parliamentary affairs mean less deliberation in a session that needs more of it

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Asahi Shimbun's editorial on the reshuffle made an argument that has nothing to do with any individual minister. Even with the cabinet's core unchanged, it warned, the change in key personnel responsible for parliamentary affairs risks a loss of deliberation in the Diet.

The observation is worth taking seriously because it concerns the part of government that the public rarely sees and that determines whether the visible part functions.

Parliamentary affairs covers the scheduling, floor management and cross-party negotiation through which a government's legislative programme either proceeds or stalls. The officials who conduct it hold relationships built over years with their opposition counterparts.

The Liberal Democrats' secretary-general in the House of Councillors was replaced this week over a reported disagreement about exactly this work, and Hideki Murai was appointed to chair the party's Diet Affairs Committee in the executive reshuffle that preceded the cabinet one.

New holders of those posts must establish working relationships under time pressure, in a session that will take up a five trillion yen tax measure with no named funding source and a defence spending trajectory the bond market has already priced.

Deliberation is the word Asahi chose, and it is the right one. A session in which the government uses its numbers to pass measures with limited examination produces law that has not been tested, and the funding question attached to the tax outline is precisely the kind of test that examination exists to apply.

The opposition arrives at the session mid-reorganisation, with a provisionally named new vehicle, which further reduces the scrutiny the government's own members are unlikely to supply.

The combination, new government managers and a disorganised opposition, is the condition under which legislatures pass things quickly and regret them slowly.

The government would presumably prefer a session that passes its measures without incident. Asahi's argument is that an incident-free session is not the same as a good one, and that the difference matters most when the measures are expensive.

Whether the concern proves justified will be visible in how the funding question is handled: answered in committee before the vote, or left open and passed regardless.

POLITICS

Markets Read the Retained Economic Team as Fiscal Continuity

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama, Economy and Fiscal Policy Minister Jounai and Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Ryosei Akazawa all retain their positions in the reshuffled cabinet, and the market is interpreting the continuity as a continuation of the government's stated responsible and proactive fiscal policy, according to Reuters' Japanese service and Sankei News.

Continuity in economic portfolios carries a specific value in a week like this one. The files do not restart with a reshuffle, and ministers who negotiated the tariff arrangement with Washington, signed off on the consumption tax outline and managed the bond market's reaction are better placed to defend them than successors briefed from a folder.

Responsible and proactive is the phrase the government uses, and it is doing considerable work. Proactive describes a food tax cut costing roughly five trillion yen a year. Responsible is the word the finance minister will need to give content to when asked where the money comes from.

Bond investors have already offered their reading. Long-term yields at levels not seen since 1996 reflect a judgment that a government intending to spend more and tax less will borrow the difference.

The Bank of Japan's decision today, widely expected to raise the policy rate to 1.25%, arrives in that context, and the finance minister's interpretation of it in the afternoon will be her first public statement as a reappointed minister.

Akazawa's role in the trade relationship with the United States was central to the arrangement now visible in August's collapsed surplus with the American market, and he will be the one answering for how that arrangement performs.

Jounai's continuation keeps the economic and fiscal policy brief in hands familiar with the growth strategy against which the tax package will be defended.

For the Prime Minister, keeping the three in place removes one variable from a week that has more than enough of them, and signals to markets that the reshuffle was not a change of economic direction.

Whether that reassurance holds depends on the funding question, which no reshuffle can answer and which the extraordinary session will now take up.

The yen's position near 156 to the dollar after the Federal Reserve's increase adds a currency dimension the economic team will also be asked about, since intervention is the finance ministry's decision rather than the central bank's.

POLITICS

What the Internal Affairs Ministry Actually Controls

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent, Tokyo Bureau

The portfolio Yoshimasa Hayashi has left, and Fujii is reported to be taking, is among the least understood and most far-reaching in the Japanese government.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications oversees local government finance, which means the grants and tax allocations through which prefectures and municipalities fund most of what they do.

It regulates telecommunications, which places the four carriers' 5G build-out, the mobile pricing pressure of recent years and the broadcasting framework within its remit.

It administers the national civil service system alongside the National Personnel Authority, the statistics bureau that produces the population and household data the rest of government depends on, and the fire and disaster management agency whose alert levels residents across Kanto will be watching this weekend.

POLITICS

That combination gives the minister reach into every constituency in the country through the local finance channel, and into every household through telecommunications and broadcasting.

It is also the ministry that manages the administrative relationship between Tokyo and the prefectures, which this week includes the resumption of dialogue with Okinawa's new governor.

The portfolio has historically been held by senior figures, which is part of why Hayashi's removal from it registers as a political statement rather than a routine change.

A new minister inherits a set of live files that includes the local finance implications of the consumption tax outline, since a cut in national tax revenue affects the allocations that flow to municipalities.

Disaster management sits at the front of the queue this weekend, with Typhoon No. 25 expected to bring warning-level rain to Kanto over the holiday and the underpass restrictions announced by the transport ministry following the fatalities in Chiba and Fukushima.

How quickly the new minister engages with that immediate agenda will be the first public measure of the appointment.

POLITICS

Reconstruction Remains a Ministry Fifteen Years On

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Goshi Hosono's reported wish to take the Reconstruction portfolio points to a ministry that was created as a temporary measure after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami and has instead become a fixture.

The Reconstruction Agency was established in 2012 with a ten-year mandate, and that mandate has been extended because the work it was created for has not finished.

Decommissioning of the Fukushima Daiichi plant is measured in decades rather than years, with the removal of melted fuel debris the central technical challenge and one whose timeline has slipped repeatedly.

The release of treated water from the site, begun after extended international consultation, continues on a schedule that will run for years and that remains contested by neighbouring countries and by fishing communities.

Evacuated communities in Fukushima have been progressively reopened, but return rates have remained low in many areas as residents who rebuilt lives elsewhere have chosen not to come back.

Coastal infrastructure across Iwate and Miyagi was rebuilt on a scale without precedent, and the question the ministry now faces is how to sustain communities whose populations were declining before the disaster and declined faster after it.

The agency also holds responsibility for recovery from subsequent disasters, including the Noto Peninsula earthquake, which has extended its geographic scope beyond the Tohoku coast.

Hosono's own political journey, from the Democratic Party of Japan's government during the 2011 response to the Liberal Democratic front bench now, gives him a personal connection to the portfolio that few ministers bring.

For communities still waiting on decisions about their futures, the identity of the minister matters less than whether the agency's mandate and funding are sustained.

The reshuffle keeps both in place, and the new minister's first task will be to demonstrate that reconstruction remains a priority rather than a legacy.

POLITICS

Ishin's First Minister Takes Office Under an Agreement Written for a Hard Session

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

Nakatsuji's expected appointment as the Japan Innovation Party's first cabinet minister was reported ahead of the reshuffle, and it converts the cooperation agreement concluded this week into shared executive responsibility.

A cooperation agreement is not a full coalition. It is an undertaking by the smaller party to support the government in the chamber on defined matters, in exchange for a cabinet seat and a voice in drafting,

The value to the government is reliability. Votes promised in advance can be counted on when a session becomes difficult, which is worth more than votes negotiated measure by measure.

The cost to Ishin is the one every junior partner pays. Policy it will be asked to defend must be consulted on, and decisions that once required agreement within one party now require agreement between two.

The consumption tax outline supplies an immediate test. Ishin approved it before it reached cabinet, and now shares responsibility for a funding gap of roughly five trillion yen a year that it did not create.

The party's identity was built on administrative reform, reduced public sector cost and a scepticism toward Tokyo-centred governance, positions harder to advance from inside a government than from outside it.

Komeito's long partnership with the Liberal Democrats is the reference case, a relationship that delivered durable influence at the cost of the distinctiveness the party held before entering government.

Ishin's Osaka base gives it a governing record its national positions are grounded in, which may make the differentiation problem easier to manage than it was for Komeito.

Which portfolio Nakatsuji holds determines how much practical scope the party has been given, and the first committee appearances will show whether the arrangement delivers influence or only visibility.

The extraordinary session opens with the agreement untested, and the first contested vote is the only measure of such arrangements that has ever meant anything.

POLITICS

The Post-Takaichi Question Has Arrived Early

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Asahi Shimbun's account of the Hayashi resignation placed it in the context of how the Prime Minister is handling post-Takaichi candidates, a phrase that acknowledges something Japanese politics usually leaves unsaid: that succession is being managed while the incumbent is still in office.

Every prime minister governs with an eye on who comes next, but the management of it is typically conducted through party posts and factional balance rather than through the removal of a senior minister from the cabinet.

The Liberal Democratic Party's leadership is decided by a vote of members and Diet representatives, and the candidates who contest it are generally figures who have held senior portfolios and built the networks those portfolios provide.

Keeping such figures inside the cabinet binds them to collective responsibility and limits their freedom to differentiate. Placing them outside it removes that constraint.

The conventional wisdom holds that rivals are safer inside the tent. The Prime Minister appears to have concluded otherwise, or to have judged that the cost of keeping Hayashi close exceeded the cost of his freedom.

The party's factional structure was formally dissolved after the funds scandal, which has made succession politics less legible than it was when factions openly counted their votes.

Deputy Prime Minister Aso's continuation in his post, reported earlier this week, keeps one of the party's most experienced figures in a position of influence over exactly these calculations.

For the public the question matters because it shapes how the government behaves. A prime minister managing succession governs differently from one who is not, and the difference shows in appointments before it shows in policy.

The extraordinary session will be the first test of whether a front bench arranged around loyalty can carry a difficult legislative programme through a chamber where the government's numbers depend on a cooperation agreement.

The Hayashi departure will be read for months as the moment the post-Takaichi contest became visible, whatever the Prime Minister intended it to signal.

POLITICS

The Funds Scandal That Yanagi's Appointment Declares Over

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Kazuo Yanagi's appointment as Agriculture minister is being reported as the first cabinet post for a lawmaker disciplined over the former Abe faction's political funds scandal, and the scandal itself deserves restating for what the appointment implies about its status.

The affair concerned income from fundraising events that was channelled through factional accounts without being reported as the law required, producing what were in effect off-the-books funds distributed to members.

When the scale became public, the party's largest faction was at the centre of it, and the disclosures forced the dissolution of the formal factional structure that had organised Liberal Democratic politics for decades.

Members implicated were disciplined on a graduated scale, from warnings to suspension of party membership, and the convention that followed was that those disciplined would not receive senior posts until the matter had faded.

The electoral cost was substantial, contributing to losses that reshaped the government's parliamentary position and that the current cooperation agreement with the Japan Innovation Party exists partly to address.

Friday's appointment tests whether the convention has expired. The Prime Minister has evidently judged that the scandal has run its course with voters, or that the cost of continuing to exclude experienced members exceeds the cost of the headlines.

The opposition will not accept that judgment, and the extraordinary session gives it the committee rooms in which to press the new minister on his own record alongside the ministry's agenda.

The appointment also signals to other disciplined members that the path back is open, which changes the internal politics of a party whose factions were formally dissolved but whose networks were not.

Political finance reform enacted after the scandal tightened reporting requirements without fundamentally altering the fundraising model, and critics have argued that the reforms addressed disclosure rather than the underlying practice.

Whether voters regard the matter as closed will be measured at the next election, and Yanagi's performance in the Agriculture portfolio, at a moment of rice bankruptcies, harvest delays and a typhoon, will shape that measurement.

POLITICS

How a Japanese Cabinet Is Made: The Sequence Behind Friday's Announcement

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent, Tokyo Bureau

The second Takaichi reshuffled cabinet was formed on Thursday, with the full lineup reported on Friday, through a sequence that Japanese governments have followed for decades, and the sequence explains why the reporting arrives in the order it does.

The party's executive posts are settled first, which happened earlier this week with the reappointment of Secretary-General Suzuki, Policy Research Council Chairman Kobayashi and Election Strategy Chairman Nishimura, and the appointment of Hiroshi Kajiyama to the General Council and Hideki Murai to Diet Affairs.

Cabinet appointments follow, with the prime minister informing each minister individually, a process conducted by telephone through the day and reported by the press as each call is confirmed.

The formal moment is the attestation ceremony at the Imperial Palace, at which the Emperor attests the appointments and the new ministers receive their seals of office.

The staircase photograph at the Prime Minister's Office follows the ceremony, which is why Thursday's photograph was taken before the full lineup, including Hayashi's departure, was reported on Friday.

Vice-ministerial and parliamentary secretary appointments typically follow in the days after, extending the reshuffle into the second tier of government.

A reshuffle retains most ministers and changes a minority, balancing continuity in established portfolios against the political benefits of refreshing the lineup, and Friday's kept the economic and security core intact.

Resignations, such as Yoshimasa Hayashi's from Internal Affairs, are announced by the departing minister rather than by the prime minister, which preserves the forms even where the substance is a removal.

New ministers face committee questioning in the Diet session that follows, where command of a brief is tested publicly.

What a reshuffle does not change is the government's parliamentary arithmetic or its policy commitments, which remain those of the coalition regardless of who holds each seal.

POLITICS

The Diet Affairs Chairman: The Post Asahi Is Worried About

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

Hideki Murai's appointment as chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party's Diet Affairs Committee, alongside the replacement of the party's upper house secretary-general, is the personnel change behind Asahi Shimbun's editorial concern about the loss of deliberation.

The Diet Affairs Committee chairman manages the government's legislative business in the chamber: the scheduling of bills, the allocation of committee time, and the negotiation with opposition counterparts over how and when contested measures are debated.

It is a post that operates through relationships, and the relationships take years to build. An incoming chairman inherits the counterparts, the conventions and the unwritten understandings that made the chamber workable, without the personal history that gave a predecessor leverage.

Opposition parties have their own Diet affairs chairmen, and the meetings among them are where the practical business of a session is arranged, out of public view.

A new chairman on the government side and a reorganising opposition on the other produce the condition in which sessions either stall over procedure or pass measures without the examination a settled relationship would have produced.

Asahi's worry is the second outcome, and the measure it has in mind is the consumption tax outline, whose five trillion yen annual cost has no named funding source and whose examination in committee is where that question would be pressed.

The upper house presents a separate difficulty, since the Liberal Democrats' secretary-general there was replaced this week over a reported disagreement about exactly this work, and the House of Councillors can delay legislation the lower house has passed.

The Prime Minister has denied intervening in that change, though the concern it produced is about consequence rather than cause.

Session length is set by the government and can be extended, and the density of this session's agenda makes extension more likely than not.

How the new chairman handles the first contested measure will indicate whether the deliberation Asahi is worried about survives the transition.

POLITICS

Aso Stays as Deputy Prime Minister, the Reshuffle's Fixed Point

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso remains in his position, according to reporting earlier this week that the cabinet formation confirmed, and his continuation is the reshuffle's fixed point around which the other moves were made.

Aso is among the most experienced figures in Japanese politics, a former prime minister whose faction was the last to survive the formal dissolution of the party's factional structure and whose networks remain intact.

His retention alongside the removal of Yoshimasa Hayashi says something about the Prime Minister's calculation regarding succession: a senior figure who is not a rival is kept close, while one who might be is not.

POLITICS

The deputy prime ministership carries no ministry of its own but confers standing in cabinet and a role in the party's internal arithmetic that a departmental post does not.

Aso's positions on fiscal policy have historically been closer to the responsible half of the government's stated formulation than to the proactive half, and his presence in a cabinet approving an unfunded tax measure is a matter of interest to those who follow such things.

The party's executive, reappointed this week with Secretary-General Suzuki, Policy Research Council Chairman Kobayashi and Election Strategy Chairman Nishimura all continuing, is the other fixed point, and the two together describe a leadership that changed the cabinet's periphery while holding its party structure steady.

For the extraordinary session, Aso's experience of managing the Diet through difficult periods is an asset the government will draw on as its new parliamentary managers find their footing.

His continuation also signals to the party that the Prime Minister's rearrangement of the front bench has limits, and that the most senior figure in her government is one she has chosen to keep.

Whether that choice reflects confidence or necessity is the question the succession politics now visible will eventually answer.

For the public Aso's presence is a marker of continuity in a reshuffle whose other moves were read as departures.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: A Reshuffle That Changed the Edges and Told Us About the Centre

By William | Senior Political Analyst

The second Takaichi cabinet kept its economic and security core and changed its periphery, and the changes at the periphery are what reveal the Prime Minister's calculation about the centre.

Yoshimasa Hayashi is out. Kazuo Yanagi, disciplined over the faction funds scandal, is in. A former Democratic Party minister, Goshi Hosono, returns to a cabinet. The Japan Innovation Party's Nakatsuji takes the party's first seat. A Hyogo lawmaker takes Education.

Read together, those moves describe a Prime Minister arranging a front bench around loyalty and coalition management rather than around the party's mainstream, and doing so at the moment the succession question has become visible.

Hayashi's removal is the move that will be studied longest. Asahi Shimbun's account framed it around the handling of post-Takaichi candidates, and there is no gentler reading available. A senior figure regarded as a potential successor has been moved from inside the government to outside it.

The conventional wisdom holds that rivals are safer inside the tent, bound by collective responsibility and denied the freedom to differentiate. The Prime Minister has concluded otherwise.

Yanagi's appointment says something different: that the funds scandal's quarantine is over, and that the cost of continuing to exclude a cohort of experienced members exceeds the cost of the headlines their return produces.

Whether voters agree will be tested at the next election rather than in the session ahead, but the opposition has been handed a line of attack that a cabinet built purely for parliamentary survival would not have offered.

The retained core, Kihara, Motegi, Katayama, Koizumi, Jounai and Akazawa, is the part of the cabinet markets and allies were watching, and its continuity was read exactly as intended: as fiscal and security policy proceeding unchanged.

The periphery is the part the party was watching, and it has been told that the Prime Minister intends to lead on her own terms, with her own people, through a session that will test whether that is enough.

The extraordinary session opens with a five trillion yen tax measure and no funding source, a defence spending trajectory the bond market has priced, and a set of parliamentary managers new to their roles. Asahi's editorial worry about the loss of deliberation is a worry about exactly this combination.

A cabinet built to survive a session may survive it. Whether it governs during it, and whether the funding

question is answered before the vote or after, is the measure that will matter by the time the session closes.

The Hayashi departure will be read for months as the moment the post-Takaichi contest became visible, whatever the Prime Minister intended it to signal.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: The Bank of Japan Is Being Asked to Fix a Problem It Did Not Make

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Today's expected increase to 1.25% will be described as a response to inflation, and it is. It will also be received as a response to the yen, and it is not, and the gap between those two readings is where the Bank of Japan's difficulty lies.

The reasons reported for the move are high crude prices, a weak currency and persistent inter-company price pressure. All three are real. None is something a quarter-point in the policy rate addresses directly.

Crude is set in the Gulf, where the East-West pipeline has lost three pumps and the conflict is in its seventh month. The currency is set by the differential with the dollar, which the Federal Reserve widened on Wednesday by the same amount the bank is expected to narrow it today. Inter-company prices are the consequence of the first two.

What the increase does is confirm a direction and signal a pace, and the signal is what markets will trade on this afternoon.

The bind is fiscal. The cabinet approved on Tuesday a consumption tax cut costing roughly five trillion yen a year with no funding source, and reports of a 3.5% of output defence spending target contributed to bond selling that pushed long-term yields to their highest since 1996.

A government spending more and taxing less produces a bond market that demands more compensation, and a currency that weakens on the expectation that the central bank will need to stay accommodative for longer than it otherwise would.

The bank is therefore being asked, implicitly, to offset with monetary policy a pressure that fiscal policy is creating, which is a position central banks recognise and dislike.

Governor Ueda's press conference this afternoon will be read for any acknowledgment of that environment, and the drafting problem his staff face is how to describe fiscal conditions without appearing to comment on fiscal policy.

The reshuffle's retention of the economic ministers was read as fiscal continuity, which means the pressure the bank is being asked to offset is a settled feature of the landscape rather than a passing one.

For households the sequence arrives as import prices at 156, mortgage resets over the coming year and a gasoline subsidy at a record 51 yen a litre paid from the same budget that has not found five trillion yen for the tax cut.

The comparison to April 1995 that the papers have reached for is apt in one respect the papers have not drawn out: that was the last time the policy rate and the fiscal position pulled in opposite directions this visibly, and the resolution then was a decade of rates falling to zero.

Today's decision will not resolve the bind. It will describe it, in the language the bank chooses, and the choice of language is the news.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: A Five-Day Holiday, a 156 Yen Dollar and a Typhoon Walk Into the Economy

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

The first five-day Silver Week in eleven years should have been a windfall for domestic tourism. Sankei News' survey finding that eight in ten households plan to stay close to home, and a typhoon forecast to reach Kanto on the holiday's second day, describe why it will not be.

The currency is the first constraint. At 156 to the dollar, overseas travel priced in foreign currency has become expensive in yen terms, and the households that would once have flown abroad for a five-day break are looking at domestic alternatives instead.

Domestic prices are the second. Imported costs have reached restaurants, hotels and transport, and a domestic holiday costs more than it did when the yen

was stronger, which pushes the preference further toward the nearby entertainment the survey describes.

The typhoon is the third, and it arrives with the timing of a plot device. Warning-level rain across Kanto on Sunday and Monday, the first two days of the holiday, converts plans for day trips into plans for staying in.

The economic effect is redistribution rather than loss. Spending that would have gone to hotels in Hakone goes to restaurants in Shinjuku; spending that would have gone to airlines goes to cinemas.

Hot spring regions retain appeal in poor weather in a way outdoor destinations do not, and the western half of the country, under the Pacific high and outside the storm's reach, may capture holiday traffic that the east loses.

Inbound visitors are the group for whom the currency runs the other way, and they will be present in the same destinations, spending yen that are cheap for them and expensive for their hosts.

The Kyushu Shinkansen's full resumption today, restoring the fastest link across a region forecast to stay clear, is a small piece of good timing in a week that has offered few.

For the Bank of Japan, watching consumption for evidence that wage growth is sustaining demand, a holiday spent close to home is not a signal of confidence.

The second half of the holiday is forecast to improve, and the households that postpone their plans to Tuesday and Wednesday will find the equinox observance of higan waiting, which proceeds in any weather because its purpose is not recreational.

A five-day holiday is a calendar accident that will not recur for years, and this one has arrived at a moment when the economy is least able to enjoy it.

INTERNATIONAL

Wang Yi and Rubio Meet as Both Sides Call Summit Diplomacy the Key

By Rachel Kim | Japan-U.S. Coverage, Washington-Tokyo Liaison

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio have held talks, with summit diplomacy described as the key to US-China relations, according to Asahi Shimbun. The Middle East situation was also discussed.

The meeting follows Treasury Secretary Bessent's engagement with Vice Premier He Lifeng and Wang's own meeting with the Iranian foreign minister earlier this week, a sequence that describes both capitals clearing the ground before a leaders' summit later this month.

Summit diplomacy as the key is a formulation that concedes something on both sides: that the working-level channels have not resolved the disputes between the two countries, and that only the principals can.

For Japan the substance matters more than the choreography. Tariff arrangements, export controls on advanced semiconductors and rare earth supply all bear on Japanese manufacturers regardless of who agrees them, and Japan sits outside the room.

The Middle East's inclusion on the agenda reflects the Gulf conflict's seventh month and China's role as a major purchaser of Iranian crude, which gives Beijing both leverage and exposure.

Wang's call for restraint in his meeting with the Iranian foreign minister, reported on Wednesday, was made with the American summit in view, and its repetition to Rubio suggests Beijing intends to present itself as a stabilising presence.

Japanese officials monitor the channel closely without participating, since outcomes reach Japanese companies through supply chains and export controls regardless.

Tokyo maintains its own channel to Beijing, and the detention of Japanese nationals raised by parliamentary league members earlier this month runs on its own track.

Markets across the region will read the summit for signals about a trade environment that has been among the variables shaping equity valuations, and the Nikkei's two days of gains reflect some relief that the preparatory meetings have occurred without incident.

Akihisa Nagashima's remarks, reported by Yomiuri Shimbun and Kyodo, framing the US-China artificial

intelligence race as a new Cold War and asking what Japan's role in it should be, describe the strategic context in which Japan reads every such meeting.

A summit later this month would be the first of the current cycle, and preparatory meetings exist to ensure the principals announce rather than negotiate.

INTERNATIONAL

Nagashima Frames the US-China AI Race as a New Cold War and Asks Where Japan Stands

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

Akihisa Nagashima of the Liberal Democratic Party has said he wants to discuss Japan's role in positioning the US-China artificial intelligence development race as a new Cold War, according to Yomiuri Shimbun and Kyodo.

Nagashima has been among the party's most consistent voices on security policy, with a background that includes defence portfolios and a long engagement with the alliance relationship.

The Cold War framing is contestable and deliberately provocative. It implies a bipolar contest in which third countries must choose sides, and it places technology rather than ideology or territory at the centre of the rivalry.

Japan's actual position in the AI race is upstream. The country does not compete at the capability frontier, but its semiconductor equipment and materials are inputs on which frontier training runs depend, which confers leverage over the physical foundations of the contest rather than over the software.

Export controls on advanced equipment sales to China, coordinated among allies, are the instrument through which that leverage has already been exercised, and any shift agreed at the US-China summit reaches Japanese suppliers without Japan participating.

Nagashima's question about Japan's role therefore has a practical answer that predates his framing: Japan is already a participant through its supply chain position, whether or not it describes the contest as a Cold War.

The framing also carries risk for a country whose largest trading partner is one side of the contest and whose security guarantor is the other, which is the structural position that has defined Japanese diplomacy for two decades.

Domestic AI policy has favoured guidance over statute, positioning Tokyo between the European Union's regulatory framework and Washington's reluctance, and a Cold War framing would push that posture toward alignment.

The remarks arrive in a week when AI-sector shares have been repriced sharply in Tokyo and when warnings about the technology's risks have come from figures inside the industry, which complicates any framing that treats faster development as unambiguously in the national interest.

Whether the party takes up the discussion Nagashima proposes will depend on how the government's new lineup, with its economic security brief retained under Jounai, chooses to position itself after the summit.

INTERNATIONAL

Sweden's Opposition Wins Narrowly and the Prime Minister Resigns

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The opposition has won a narrow victory in Sweden's general election and the prime minister has resigned, according to Asahi Shimbun.

A narrow result in a proportional system produces a government only after coalition negotiation, which means the resignation begins a process rather than ending one.

Sweden's politics have been reshaped over the past decade by the rise of a nationalist party whose support has forced the traditional blocs to reconsider their arrangements, and any narrow result raises the question of where that party sits in the new arithmetic.

For Japan the result registers through Sweden's position in European security. The country joined NATO in 2024 after two centuries of non-alignment, and its governments since have been shaped by the Russian threat that prompted the change.

INTERNATIONAL

Sweden is also a significant defence industrial partner, with Japanese and Swedish companies cooperating on systems, and continuity in that relationship depends on the incoming government's priorities.

Nordic politics have moved toward the right in several countries in recent elections, and the Swedish result will be read alongside those for what it says about the direction of European opinion.

Coalition formation in Sweden can take weeks, and the outgoing government continues in a caretaker role until a successor commands a majority.

The election's narrowness means the result is a shift of seats rather than a landslide, and the policy consequences will depend on which combination of parties eventually forms a government.

European Union positions on trade and on the Gulf conflict, both of which affect Japan, are shaped by member state governments, and a change in Stockholm adds one more variable.

Further reporting will follow the coalition talks.

INTERNATIONAL

Seven Months In, the Gulf Conflict Has Found the Pipeline

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

Damage to three pumps on Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline, with repairs expected to take several weeks according to Kyodo News, extends a conflict now in its seventh month into the infrastructure that had been the Gulf's principal alternative to the contested Strait of Hormuz.

The pipeline runs roughly 1,200 kilometres across the Arabian peninsula from the eastern oil fields to Red Sea terminals, and its strategic function is to give Saudi exports a route to market that does not pass through the strait.

With the strait contested since the conflict began, the pipeline has carried a larger share of Saudi export volume, and damage to its pumps concentrates more of the Gulf's crude through exactly the chokepoint the conflict has made most dangerous.

Oil markets price expected supply rather than current supply, which is why a repair window measured in weeks translates immediately into the forward curve, and crude has held above \$100 a barrel through the disruption.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's call for restraint in his meeting with his Iranian counterpart this week, repeated in his talks with Secretary of State Rubio, reflects Beijing's own exposure as a major purchaser of Iranian crude.

The congressional estimate reported this week, putting American spending on the Iran conflict at roughly 5.9 trillion yen in the Japanese-language reporting, describes the cost to the country whose navy is the principal guarantor of the strait.

For Japan the consequences arrive through the import bill, through the producer prices the Bank of Japan cited in its expected decision, and through a gasoline subsidy at a record 51 yen a litre.

War-risk insurance premiums for vessels transiting the region respond to incidents rather than to capability analysis, and damage to the pipeline is the kind of incident that resets them.

Japan maintains strategic petroleum reserves sufficient for a period of supply interruption, though reserves address availability rather than price.

The conflict's seventh month has produced a diplomatic channel in Oman, a preparatory sequence before a US-China summit, and a pipeline with three damaged pumps, which is not the combination that ends wars.

INTERNATIONAL

What Japan Is Watching For in a Summit It Will Not Attend

By Rachel Kim | Japan-U.S. Coverage, Washington-Tokyo Liaison

The sequence of preparatory meetings this week, Bessent with He Lifeng, Wang Yi with Rubio, Wang with the Iranian foreign minister, describes both capitals clearing the ground for a US-China summit later this month, and Japan sits outside the room with more at stake than most participants.

Semiconductor export controls are the first item. Japanese equipment makers operate under coordinated restrictions on advanced tools to China, and any easing or tightening agreed between Washington and Beijing reshapes their market

without Japanese participation.

Rare earths are the second. Chinese export controls on materials essential to magnets, motors and electronics affect Japanese manufacturers regardless of the state of Japan-China relations, and Japan learned that lesson directly in 2010.

Tariffs are the third. The arrangement between the two largest economies determines the environment Japanese exporters operate in, particularly for goods that pass through Chinese assembly before reaching American consumers.

The Middle East, discussed by Wang and Rubio, is the fourth, since the Gulf conflict sets the price of everything Japan imports and China's role as a purchaser of Iranian crude gives it leverage Japan lacks.

Akihisa Nagashima's framing of the US-China AI race as a new Cold War, and his question about Japan's role, describes the strategic context in which Tokyo reads every such meeting.

Japan's actual position is upstream, in the equipment and materials on which the AI contest depends, which confers influence over the physical inputs rather than over the software or the diplomacy.

The economic security brief, retained under Jounai in this week's reshuffle, is where the government's response to whatever the summit produces will be managed.

Markets across the region will read the summit for signals about a trade environment that has been among the variables shaping equity valuations, and the Nikkei's two days of gains reflect some relief that the preparatory meetings have occurred without incident.

For Japan the practical response has been to deepen alternative relationships while retaining the supply chain positions that give Tokyo something to trade with, and the summit will test whether those positions are respected.

ECONOMY

Fed Raises Rates for the First Time Under the Second Trump Administration, and the President Objects

By Rachel Kim | Japan-U.S. Coverage, Washington-Tokyo Liaison

The Federal Reserve's quarter-point increase to a target range of 3.75% to 4.00%, the first rise since July 2023, is also the first under the second Trump administration, and the President has called for cuts and is protesting the decision, according to Asahi Shimbun.

The tension between a president who wants lower rates and a central bank raising them is not new in American politics, but it arrives at a moment when the Federal Reserve's independence has been contested more openly than at any point in decades.

The committee's decision was unanimous, which is worth noting in this context. A unanimous vote to raise rates against the President's stated preference is a statement about institutional independence as much as about inflation.

The Fed has also hinted at a further increase this year, according to Asahi Shimbun, which sets up a continuing argument rather than a single disagreement.

For Japan the American decision matters through the currency first. The yen fell to around 156 to the dollar after the increase, according to Nikkei, and the interest-rate differential between the two countries is once again the market's focus.

That differential is the subject of today's cartoon and the editorial page's argument, and it is the mechanism through which American monetary policy reaches Japanese import prices regardless of what the Bank of Japan decides.

Nikkei's reporting characterised the yen's fall as roughly half of the correction made to the currency's appreciation in the first half of September, which places the current level in the context of a month that has seen the yen move in both directions.

Trump's protest introduces a political variable that markets have learned to price: the possibility that pressure on the central bank produces either a change in its behaviour or a change in its leadership.

Chairman Warsh's statement on Wednesday that inflation is too high and has lasted too long was the committee's answer, and it was delivered in language

that leaves little room for the President's preferred reading.

Japanese officials will watch the argument with particular attention, since the Bank of Japan's own independence rests on a framework that Japanese politicians have periodically tested and that the current government's fiscal posture places under strain.

Where the Federal Reserve goes next depends on data the President cannot control and on a committee that has just demonstrated it will vote against his wishes without dissent.

ECONOMY

Nikkei Adds 213 Points to Close at 64,136.25 Ahead of the Decision

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

The Nikkei average rose for a second consecutive session on Thursday, closing at 64,136.25 yen, up 213.25 points, according to the market reports. The TOPIX gained 0.80% to 4,094.19.

Two days of gains following three days of losses describe a market that has absorbed the Federal Reserve's decision and the yen's fall without the reaction that a sharper surprise would have produced.

The TOPIX outpacing the Nikkei in percentage terms indicates a broad advance rather than one carried by a handful of high-priced technology names, which is the healthier of the two patterns.

A weaker yen supports exporters' translated earnings, and the currency's move to 156 after the American increase gave the automotive and machinery sectors a reason to rise even as it raised costs for importers.

Banks and insurers have led the rotation through the week, benefiting from a rate outlook that widens lending margins and improves returns on the government bonds that dominate their portfolios.

Friday's session is expected to be cautious, according to the morning market reports, with investors waiting on the Bank of Japan's announcement and Governor Ueda's afternoon press conference.

A move to 1.25% has been almost fully priced, which means the reaction will turn on the statement's language about the pace of subsequent increases rather than on the decision itself.

Foreign investors have been substantial net participants in Japanese equities through this year's rally, and their positioning through a week of two central bank decisions is among the variables strategists are watching.

The reshuffled cabinet's retention of its economic ministers was read by markets as fiscal continuity, according to Reuters' Japanese service, which removed one source of uncertainty from a week that had several.

Long-term yields remain at levels not seen since 1996, and the interaction between a rising policy rate and a bond market already pricing fiscal expansion is the backdrop against which equities are trading.

The index sits roughly 12% below its June high of 72,831.73, a gap that reflects the AI-sector repricing of recent weeks more than any change in the broader economic picture.

ECONOMY

The Yen at 156: Half the Month's Gains Given Back in a Night

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

The yen briefly fell to around 156 to the dollar after the Federal Reserve's increase, according to Nikkei, a move the paper characterised as roughly half of the correction made to the currency's appreciation in the first half of September.

That framing places the current level in a month that has seen the yen strengthen and then weaken, and it identifies the interest-rate differential with the United States as the variable once again in focus.

The mechanism is direct. Capital moves toward higher yields, and a Federal Reserve raising rates draws money into dollar assets from currencies whose central banks are not, or are not yet, matching the move.

The Bank of Japan's expected increase to 1.25% today would narrow the gap by a quarter point at the same time the Fed widened it by a quarter point, which leaves the differential roughly where it stood before either decision.

That is why anticipation of the Japanese decision has not reversed the yen's overnight fall. A move the market has already priced does not change the arithmetic that produced the currency's level.

For households the differential arrives as import prices. Energy priced in dollars and converted at 156 costs more in yen than the same energy converted at 153, and food follows with a lag.

For exporters the effect runs the other way in translated earnings, which is why the Nikkei rose on the same news that raised costs for everyone buying from abroad.

Intervention is the finance ministry's decision rather than the central bank's, and earlier intervention this year was conducted in coordination with Washington. Intervention addresses volatility rather than level, a distinction today's cartoon draws with some force.

The finance minister will be asked about the currency this afternoon, and the answer that has become customary, that authorities are watching the market with a high sense of urgency, will be read for any change in emphasis.

Inbound tourism is the one sector that wants the yen exactly where it is, and its preference is not shared by the households whose electricity bills the currency helps to set.

Whether 156 marks a level the market settles at or a waypoint depends on what the two central banks say about the paths ahead, and both have now spoken within 48 hours.

ECONOMY

Household Stocks and Investment Trusts Overtake Insurance for the First Time

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Japanese households' holdings of stocks and investment trusts have surpassed their holdings of insurance for the first time, according to the Bank of Japan's flow of funds statistics reported by Nikkei.

The milestone describes a shift in how Japanese households hold wealth that has been developing for years and that policy has actively encouraged.

Japanese household assets have historically been concentrated in cash and deposits to a degree unusual among wealthy countries, with insurance products the principal vehicle for long-term saving and equities a comparatively small share.

That pattern was formed by the experience of the asset price collapse of the early 1990s, which taught a generation that equities and property could fall for a long time, and by decades of deflation in which cash lost nothing by sitting still.

The expansion of the tax-advantaged investment account system was designed to move savings toward productive assets, and the flow of funds data now records that the shift has reached a threshold.

A stock market that has risen substantially over recent years has contributed, both by increasing the value of holdings and by drawing in savers who had watched others benefit.

The timing of the milestone carries a note of caution. Households have increased their exposure to equities during a rally, and the AI-sector repricing of recent weeks has demonstrated that the exposure runs in both directions.

Insurance holdings have not shrunk so much as grown more slowly, and the products remain central to retirement provision for households whose employment did not include corporate pensions.

For the financial industry the shift redistributes assets from insurers toward securities firms and asset managers, a change in business mix that the sector has been preparing for.

For policy the milestone is a partial success, since the objective was to move household wealth toward investment, and a partial risk, since a household sector more exposed to markets is more exposed to their corrections.

The Bank of Japan's own decision today, with its implications for deposit rates, will shape whether the shift continues or whether higher returns on cash draw some savings back.

ECONOMY

ECONOMY

Gasoline Subsidy Reaches a Record 51 Yen a Litre

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

The government's gasoline subsidy has reached a record 51 yen a litre, according to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry as reported by NNN, with the nationwide average retail price for regular gasoline holding around 169.90 yen, slightly lower than the previous week.

The two figures belong together. A retail price near 170 yen with a 51 yen subsidy underneath it describes a market in which the unsubsidised price would sit above 220 yen, a level no Japanese government has been prepared to let drivers pay.

The subsidy is paid to wholesalers rather than at the pump, which holds the retail price below where crude and the currency would otherwise put it while transferring the cost to the general budget.

Crude above \$100 a barrel and a yen near 156 are the two pressures the subsidy is absorbing, and both have moved against the government this week.

A record subsidy is therefore a record fiscal cost, arriving in the same week the cabinet approved a food consumption tax cut of roughly five trillion yen a year with no funding source named.

The subsidy programme was introduced as a temporary measure and has been extended repeatedly, which is the pattern such measures follow when the conditions they address do not resolve.

Rural and island areas pay substantially more than the national average because of transport costs, which means the subsidy's benefit is distributed unevenly across the country even at a uniform rate.

For the transport and logistics sectors, which run on diesel and pass fuel costs through to freight rates, the subsidy functions as a brake on the inflation that would otherwise reach every delivered product.

The Bank of Japan's board is weighing exactly this category of imported cost pressure in its decision today, and a subsidy that holds down one visible price does not change the underlying inflation the board is assessing.

Whether the subsidy is extended, raised or allowed to lapse will be a decision for the reappointed economic ministers, and the answer will say something about how the government reconciles responsible with proactive.

ECONOMY

Chiba Heavy Rain Insurance Payouts Estimated at ¥35.4 Billion

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

Insurance payouts for the heavy rains in Chiba are estimated at approximately 35.4 billion yen as of August 28, according to figures the General Insurance Association of Japan announced on Thursday and Japan Agricultural News reported.

The estimate covers claims under fire insurance policies, which in Japan carry the flood cover that pays out for water damage to homes and their contents.

That cover is optional, and the association's figure arrives in the same week as reporting that households are increasingly dropping flood cover from their fire insurance to hold down premiums.

The two developments describe the same risk from opposite sides. Flood cover is priced on location, so households in the areas hazard maps identify as exposed pay the most for it, and they are the households for whom dropping it is most tempting and most dangerous.

Three people died when their cars were submerged in the heavy rains in Chiba and Fukushima, according to Asahi Shimbun, and the transport ministry has added fifteen underpasses to the list subject to traffic restrictions in response.

The payout estimate will rise as claims are assessed, since the August 28 date precedes the completion of loss adjustment for many properties.

Typhoon No. 25, now near the Ogasawara Islands and forecast to bring warning-level rain to Kanto over the holiday weekend, arrives on ground that Chiba's August rains left saturated.

For the insurance industry the sequence of events raises the premium pricing question that the flood-cover reporting describes, since more frequent payouts mean higher premiums, which mean more households opting out.

Government reinsurance arrangements backstop the private market for earthquake but not for flood, which leaves the pricing of flood risk to insurers and the decision about carrying it to households.

The figure is a reminder that a weather event registers on the economy for months after it registers on the news, through claims, repairs and the slow adjustment of what protection costs.

ECONOMY

Markets, Rates and Prices at a Glance

Compiled by the Economics Desk

NIKKEI 225 (Sept. 17 close): 64,136.25 yen, up 213.25 points, a second consecutive gain.

TOPIX (Sept. 17 close): 4,094.19, up 0.80%.

CURRENCY: yen briefly around 156 to the dollar after the Federal Reserve's increase, described as roughly half the correction of the currency's first-half-of-September appreciation.

FEDERAL RESERVE: target range raised 0.25 points to 3.75%-4.00% on Sept. 16, the first increase since July 2023 and the first under the second Trump administration. Unanimous. A further increase this year hinted. The President has called for cuts.

BANK OF JAPAN: decision due today. Prevailing forecast: policy rate raised from 1.00% to 1.25%, the highest since April 1995. Governor Ueda's press conference this afternoon.

REASONS CITED FOR A JAPANESE INCREASE: high crude oil prices, a weak yen and persistently high inter-company prices. The Fed and the European Central Bank both raised rates this month.

GASOLINE: nationwide average regular retail price around 169.90 yen a litre, slightly lower than the previous week. Government subsidy at a record 51 yen a litre.

HOUSEHOLD ASSETS: stock and investment trust holdings surpassed insurance holdings for the first time, per Bank of Japan flow of funds statistics.

INSURANCE: Chiba heavy rain payouts estimated at approximately 35.4 billion yen as of Aug. 28.

CORPORATE: Nissan targets one million units of domestic production as an export base. Hitachi Energy's approximately 82 billion yen Mississippi transformer plant, with AI-driven demand cited.

TODAY: Bank of Japan statement, Ueda press conference. Tokyo trading expected to be cautious until the announcement.

ECONOMY

April 1995: What Japan Looked Like the Last Time Rates Were Here

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

A policy rate of 1.25% would be Japan's highest since April 1995, according to Jiji Press and Nikkei, and the comparison rewards examination because the country it points back to was in the middle of a transition it did not yet understand.

In the spring of 1995 the asset price bubble had burst four years earlier, and the consequences were still being denied as often as they were confronted. Banks carried bad loans whose scale had not been acknowledged, and the financial crisis that would force consolidation was still two years away.

The Bank of Japan was cutting rates that spring in response to a yen that had strengthened sharply, an economy that was not recovering as expected, and the aftermath of the Kobe earthquake in January.

Deflation had not yet set in as the persistent condition it became. Prices were flat rather than falling, and the assumption that they would resume rising was still general.

The rate cuts of 1995 were the beginning of a descent that would reach zero by 1999 and go below it, through quantitative easing, negative rates and yield curve control, each introduced as the previous measure proved insufficient.

A policy rate returning to 1.25% therefore reverses thirty-one years of a single direction, and it does so for reasons that would have seemed foreign in 1995: imported inflation driven by energy prices and a weak currency.

The economy it returns to is structurally different. The population is smaller and older, household wealth has begun shifting toward equities, and the government's debt is far larger relative to output.

That last point is the one the bond market has been pricing. A rate of 1.25% in 1995 sat on a debt stock the country could service without strain; the same rate in 2026 compounds across borrowing that has grown for three decades.

For households the comparison is direct only for those old enough to remember. A generation of borrowers has taken mortgages in an environment where rates only fell, and the resets ahead will be their first experience of the other direction.

Governor Ueda's press conference this afternoon will be read for whether the board regards 1.25% as a resting point or a waypoint, which is the question the 1995 comparison cannot answer.

ECONOMY

Three Central Banks, One Direction: What Alignment Changes

By Rachel Kim | Japan-U.S. Coverage, Washington-Tokyo Liaison

The Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank have both raised rates this month, and a Bank of Japan increase today would bring the major central banks into line, according to NHK and NTV News.

Alignment among the major central banks is unusual enough to be worth noting, since for most of the past three years the Bank of Japan has been moving in the opposite direction from its counterparts or not moving at all.

When central banks move together the effect on exchange rates is muted, since currency values respond to differentials rather than to levels. A Japanese increase after an American one leaves the yen roughly where the American move put it.

That is the arithmetic behind the yen's position near 156 despite near-certainty about today's decision, and it is why intervention rather than policy rates has been the instrument the finance ministry reaches for when the currency moves too fast.

The reasons for the three increases differ. The Federal Reserve is responding to inflation it describes as too high for too long; the European Central Bank to its own price picture; the Bank of Japan to imported costs from energy and the currency.

What they share is an energy shock originating in the Gulf that has raised crude above \$100 a barrel and fed into producer prices across every importing economy at once.

Alignment carries a risk that economists describe as synchronised tightening: when every major central bank raises rates together, the combined effect on global demand can exceed what any of them intended individually.

For emerging economies the effect is sharper still, since capital moves toward higher yields and a coordinated rise in developed-market rates draws money out of markets that cannot match it.

The Asian Development Bank's president warned this week of uncertainty in the global economy, and synchronised tightening against an energy shock is the kind of environment such warnings describe.

For Japan the immediate consequence is that today's decision, however expected, will not by itself strengthen the currency, and the households paying import prices at 156 will be waiting on something other than the policy rate.

ECONOMY

How 1.25% Reaches a Household Mortgage

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

A policy rate of 1.25%, if the Bank of Japan delivers it today, reaches Japanese households principally through variable-rate mortgages, which are the predominant form of housing loan in the country.

Variable-rate mortgages typically reset their interest rate twice yearly while adjusting the monthly payment only every five years, a structure that delays the visible effect of a rate rise.

Between adjustments, a higher rate changes the composition of the payment rather than its size, with more going to interest and less to principal, which extends the loan's effective life without the borrower noticing.

When the payment adjustment comes, a convention limits the increase to 125% of the previous amount, which spreads a sharp rate move across multiple adjustment cycles rather than delivering it at once.

That cushioning means the cumulative increases of the past year will reach household budgets gradually over the coming years rather than immediately, which is both a relief and a deferral.

Fixed-rate borrowing exists and has historically carried a premium that most borrowers declined to pay during decades when rates only fell. The calculation has changed, and borrowers taking out new mortgages now face a genuine choice.

Existing borrowers face a different question about whether to refinance into fixed rates, and doing so after rates have risen locks in the higher level rather than avoiding it.

Metropolitan property prices compound the exposure. Tokyo land values have risen for fourteen consecutive years, which means recent buyers borrowed larger sums against higher valuations.

Deposit rates have risen more slowly than lending rates through the normalisation, which means savers have seen less of the benefit than borrowers have felt of the cost.

The practical advice from financial advisers has been consistent through the cycle: know which type of mortgage you hold and when it next resets.

ECONOMY

Inter-Company Prices: The Pressure the Bank of Japan Named

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Among the reasons reported for the Bank of Japan's expected increase is the persistence of high inter-company prices, according to NHK, a reference to the producer price series that measures what firms pay each other for goods and services before they reach consumers.

Producer prices have run above consumer prices for an extended period, and the gap between the two describes cost pressure that companies have absorbed rather than passed on.

That absorption has limits. Margin given up is margin no longer available, and the longer the pressure persists the more of it eventually reaches the register.

Energy is the largest single component, with crude above \$100 a barrel priced in dollars and converted at a yen near 156 raising the cost of every input that requires fuel or power to produce or move.

Japanese firms have historically been reluctant to raise prices, a caution formed during decades of deflation when increases cost market share and were rarely recovered.

That reluctance has eroded in recent years as input costs became impossible to absorb, and price increases that would have been unthinkable a decade ago have become routine.

Shrinkflation, reducing package size while holding price, was the intermediate step many manufacturers took, and consumer awareness of the practice has grown.

For the Bank of Japan the producer price gap indicates how much consumer inflation may yet arrive independently of any policy decision, which is why it features among the reasons for acting now.

The food consumption tax cut approved this week would reduce one component of consumer prices from April 2027, though it does nothing about the input costs producers face.

Wage growth determines whether households can absorb what does get passed through, which returns the question to the condition the bank has named at every stage of its normalisation.

ECONOMY

The European Central Bank's Own Increase Completes the Picture

By Rachel Kim | Japan-U.S. Coverage, Washington-Tokyo Liaison

The reporting on the Bank of Japan's expected decision notes that the Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank have both raised rates this month, according to NHK and NTV News, which places today's decision in a context of coordinated tightening rather than Japanese exception.

The European Central Bank's move reflects an inflation picture shaped by the same energy shock that has reached Japan, with crude above \$100 a

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barrel feeding into producer prices across every importing economy.

Europe's exposure to Gulf energy is substantial, and the conflict's seventh month has kept the continent's gas and oil costs elevated in a way that has reversed the easing cycle European policy had begun.

For Japan the European decision matters less through the yen-euro rate than through what it says about the global environment: three major central banks raising rates together against a supply shock is the definition of synchronised tightening.

Synchronised tightening carries a risk economists have described at length, since the combined effect on global demand can exceed what any single central bank intended, and the Asian Development Bank's president warned this week of uncertainty in the global economy.

Japanese exporters sell into both markets, and a slowdown produced by coordinated tightening would reach them through demand at the same time the currency was helping them through prices.

The alignment also removes an argument the Bank of Japan has previously had available, that it was the outlier whose caution was justified by domestic conditions. With the others moving, the bank's move today is the completion of a pattern rather than a departure from one.

European politics adds its own variable, with Sweden's election producing a narrow opposition win and a prime ministerial resignation, one more government in transition on a continent whose positions on trade and the Gulf conflict affect Japan.

Currency effects among the three are muted when all three move, since exchange rates respond to differentials rather than levels, which is why the yen's position reflects the Federal Reserve's move more than Europe's.

Governor Ueda will be asked this afternoon whether the alignment changes the bank's own path, and the answer will indicate whether Japan intends to keep pace with its counterparts or to continue at its own.

ECONOMY

The ADB President's Warning Is About the Countries That Did Not Vote for Wednesday's Decision

By Rachel Kim | Japan-U.S. Coverage, Washington-Tokyo Liaison

Asian Development Bank President Kanda's warning this week of uncertainty in the global economy, reported by Yomiuri Shimbun, was made in the context of a Federal Reserve decision whose consequences fall hardest on economies that had no part in it.

Kanda is a former Japanese vice-minister of finance for international affairs, a career that included direct responsibility for currency policy, and his assessment carries the weight of that background.

The bank's own lending is concentrated in the developing economies of the region, which are exposed to the same combination of American tightening, elevated energy prices and trade disruption that Japan faces from a stronger position.

Capital tends to leave emerging markets when American rates rise, and a Federal Reserve that has just increased its target range with a further move hinted is the environment in which such warnings are usually delivered.

Currencies across the region have weakened alongside the yen, and economies that borrow in dollars face rising servicing costs on debt they cannot repay in their own currency.

Synchronised tightening by the Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank and, if today's forecast holds, the Bank of Japan compounds the effect, since the combined drag on global demand can exceed what any single central bank intended.

Energy prices above \$100 a barrel hit importing developing economies harder than they hit Japan, since a larger share of their household budgets goes to fuel and food.

The bank's lending programmes are the principal buffer available to the region's smaller economies, and its president's warning is partly a signal that those programmes will be called on.

For Japan the warning matters because the region's economies are the markets Japanese exporters sell into and the sources of the components Japanese manufacturers assemble.

Uncertainty is the word Kanda chose, and it is the word central bankers use when the honest forecast is that they do not know.

ECONOMY

A President Who Wants Cuts, a Fed That Raised: The Argument Behind Wednesday's Vote

By Rachel Kim | Japan-U.S. Coverage, Washington-Tokyo Liaison

The Federal Reserve's unanimous decision to raise its target range to 3.75% to 4.00% against the stated wishes of a president who has called for cuts, and who is now protesting, according to Asahi Shimbun, revives an argument about central bank independence that American politics has conducted before.

The Federal Reserve was designed to be insulated from the executive, with governors serving fourteen-year terms and a chairman whose four-year term does not align with the presidential cycle, precisely so that monetary policy would not track the political calendar.

Presidents have tested that insulation before. Richard Nixon pressed Arthur Burns to keep rates low ahead of the 1972 election, and the inflation that followed is the case economists cite when they explain why independence matters.

The first Trump administration criticised the Fed publicly and repeatedly, and the second has done so again, with the difference that the committee has now raised rates rather than cut them, which converts the criticism from complaint to confrontation.

A unanimous vote is the committee's answer. Dissents at the Federal Reserve are common enough that their absence indicates a committee that has stopped arguing about direction, and a committee that has stopped arguing is one that cannot be divided by outside pressure.

Chairman Warsh's statement that inflation is too high and has lasted too long was delivered in language that leaves little room for the President's preferred reading, and the hint of a further increase this year sets up a continuing disagreement rather than a single one.

For Japan the episode carries a lesson its own central bank will read carefully. The Bank of Japan's independence rests on a framework that Japanese politicians have periodically tested, and a government approving unfunded fiscal measures while expecting the bank to manage the consequences is applying pressure of a quieter kind.

Markets price political pressure on central banks as a risk, since the possibility that pressure produces either a change in behaviour or a change in leadership affects expectations about the path of rates.

The dollar's strength after the decision, and the yen's fall to 156, reflect a market that believed the committee rather than the President, which is the outcome independence is meant to produce.

Whether that belief survives depends on what happens if the President's protest becomes something more than words, and that is the variable no forecast can price.

ECONOMY

How the Rope in the Cartoon Actually Works

Currency intervention is the finance ministry's decision, executed by the central bank, and it has a short reach by design

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Taro Suzuki's cartoon draws the Bank of Japan governor and finance officials hauling on a rope labelled intervention, and the mechanics behind the image are worth setting out because they explain the cartoon's caption.

In Japan the decision to intervene in the currency market belongs to the Ministry of Finance, not the central bank. The Bank of Japan executes the operation as the ministry's agent, buying or selling yen against dollars from the foreign exchange reserves the ministry holds.

Yen-buying intervention, the kind used to defend the currency against weakness, sells dollars from the reserves and buys yen, which is why the cartoon's scale labels one pan reserve sales.

The reserves are large but finite, and every operation reduces them, which is one reason intervention is used sparingly and announced only after the fact, if at all.

Verbal defence, the cartoon's other rope tag, is the practice of officials warning that they are watching

the market with a high sense of urgency and will act against disorderly moves. It costs nothing and works for as long as the market believes it might be followed by action.

Neither instrument changes the interest-rate differential that determines where the currency settles, which is the cartoon's point. Intervention moves the price for a period; the differential moves it back.

Coordinated intervention, conducted with the participation of the United States Treasury, is more effective because it removes the possibility that the two governments are working against each other, and this month's joint operation is the trough drawn in the cartoon's chart.

Even coordinated intervention works best when it is timed to a market already overextended and followed by a policy change that gives the move somewhere to settle. The first two conditions were met; the yen at 156 again suggests the third was not.

Officials never name a level, because naming a level invites the market to test it, and the cartoon's joke about an orderly but disobedient market is aimed at exactly that vocabulary.

The finance minister will be asked about intervention this afternoon, and the customary answer will be read for any change in emphasis that suggests the rope is about to be pulled again.

ECONOMY

Responsible and Proactive: The Phrase the Retained Ministers Carry Into the Session

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Reuters' Japanese service and Sankei News reported that markets are reading the retention of Finance Minister Katayama, Economy and Fiscal Policy Minister Jounai and METI Minister Akazawa as a continuation of responsible and proactive fiscal policy, and the phrase repays examination because its two halves point in different directions.

Proactive is the half the government has demonstrated. A food consumption tax cut of roughly five trillion yen a year, a record gasoline subsidy of 51 yen a litre and a reported defence spending target of 3.5% of output are proactive by any definition.

Responsible is the half the bond market has been asking about. Long-term yields at their highest since 1996 reflect a judgment that a government spending more and taxing less will borrow the difference, and the tax outline heads to the Diet with no funding source named.

The phrase's function is to hold the two halves together in a formulation that can be repeated without resolving the tension, and the finance minister will be repeating it this afternoon after the Bank of Japan's decision.

Japanese governments have used similar formulations before, and the bond market's reaction has historically depended less on the words than on whether a funding source eventually appears.

The extraordinary Diet session is where that source would have to be named, in committee amendments rather than in the final vote, and the opposition's disorganisation reduces the pressure to name one.

The Bank of Japan's expected increase to 1.25% adds a cost to the responsible half that the proactive half must now account for, since every quarter-point compounds across a debt stock three decades in the making.

For markets the continuity of the economic team removes one variable while leaving the fiscal question unchanged, which is why the reshuffle was read as reassuring without being read as an answer.

Households experience the two halves separately: the tax cut arrives in April 2027, the subsidy is at the pump now, and the higher yields reach mortgage resets over the coming year.

Whether the phrase survives contact with the session depends on the funding question, and the reshuffle that kept the three ministers in place was designed to ensure the same people answer it who created it.

ECONOMY

For Savers, 1.25% Arrives More Slowly Than It Does for Borrowers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

A policy rate of 1.25%, if the Bank of Japan delivers it today, reaches Japanese savers through deposit rates that have risen more slowly through the normalisation than the lending rates borrowers face.

Banks set deposit rates competitively, and Japan's largest institutions hold deposit bases so large that they have felt little pressure to raise what they pay, which is why the benefit of higher rates has flowed to bank margins before it has flowed to savers.

Ordinary deposit rates have moved from effectively zero to fractions of a percent, an increase that is large in proportion and small in yen terms for most households.

Time deposits offer more, and some regional banks and online institutions have competed for funds with rates above the majors, but the gap between the policy rate and what a household earns on savings remains wide.

That gap is one reason the flow of funds data reported this week shows household stocks and investment trusts overtaking insurance for the first time: savers who found nothing in deposits went looking elsewhere.

A higher policy rate may draw some of that money back, since a deposit that pays something is a different proposition from one that pays nothing, and the Bank of Japan's decision will shape how far banks feel obliged to follow.

For older households, whose savings were accumulated during decades of zero rates and whose income depends partly on what those savings earn, the normalisation has been slow to register as a benefit.

Borrowers feel the other side promptly, through variable-rate mortgages that reset twice yearly and corporate loans that reprice on their own schedules.

The asymmetry is a feature of the transition rather than a permanent condition, and competition among banks for deposits is expected to narrow it as the normalisation proceeds.

Governor Ueda's press conference this afternoon will be read for whether the bank regards the pace of transmission to savers as a concern or as a matter for the banks.

ECONOMY

What the Bond Market Will Read in Today's Statement

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

The Bank of Japan's statement this morning will be read by the bond market for something other than the decision, since a rise to 1.25% has been almost fully priced and the market's question is what comes after it.

Long-term yields reached their highest since 1996 this week on two pressures at once: expectations of an accelerated pace of increases, and fiscal concerns arising from an unfunded five trillion yen tax measure and a reported 3.5% of output defence target.

A statement that confirms the accelerated pace would push yields further; one that signals caution would risk a reversal, and the drafting problem the bank's staff face is how to acknowledge the environment without being read as either.

The bank's language on the currency will be examined closely, since a weak yen is among the reasons reported for the increase and the currency has fallen to 156 despite anticipation of it.

Any reference to fiscal conditions would be unusual and would be read as a comment on the government's tax outline, which is a line the bank has historically been careful not to cross.

Governor Ueda's press conference in the afternoon is where the statement's language gets tested, and his answers on the pace of subsequent increases will move the market more than the decision itself.

Life insurers and pension funds, holding substantial domestic bond portfolios, benefit from higher yields and will be watching for confirmation that the direction holds.

Banks benefit through margins and will be watching for the same, while the government, servicing a debt stock three decades in the making, watches yields rise

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with an interest that runs the other way.

The Federal Reserve's decision on Wednesday, with a further increase hinted, sets the external context, and a Japanese statement that appears to lag the American path will be read as one that leaves the differential in place.

By the close of trading the market will have decided whether today's decision was the confirmation of a direction or the beginning of a faster one, and the yield on the ten-year bond will record the verdict.

ECONOMY

What the Flow of Funds Statistics Measure, and Why This Week's Milestone Matters

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

The Bank of Japan's flow of funds statistics, from which Nikkei reported this week that household stock and investment trust holdings have overtaken insurance for the first time, are among the least read and most informative data the central bank publishes.

The statistics track the financial assets and liabilities of every sector of the economy, households, corporations, government and financial institutions, and how funds move among them.

For households the series records the composition of wealth: cash and deposits, insurance and pensions, securities, and the loans that offset them.

Japanese household wealth has historically been concentrated in cash and deposits to a degree unusual among wealthy countries, with equities a small share and insurance the principal vehicle for long-term saving.

The milestone reported this week describes the end point of a shift that policy pursued for two decades through tax-advantaged investment accounts, and that a rising market eventually delivered.

The statistics also record the other side of the ledger: household mortgage debt, which has grown with metropolitan property prices and which the Bank of Japan's rate increases now reprice.

For the central bank the series is a measure of how monetary policy transmits, since a household sector holding equities responds to rate changes differently from one holding deposits.

For the government the statistics record who holds its debt, which is predominantly domestic institutions, a fact that has cushioned the bond market's reaction to fiscal expansion for decades and that the current yields suggest is cushioning it less.

The quarterly release attracts attention only when a threshold is crossed, and this week's crossing is one policy has waited a long time for.

Whether the shift continues or reverses depends partly on today's decision, since a deposit rate that pays something changes the comparison households make.

BUSINESS

Nissan Targets a Million Units of Domestic Production as an Export Base

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Nissan's president has said in an interview that the company aims for domestic production of one million units and regards Japan as an important export base, according to Asahi Shimbun.

The statement reverses the direction of travel that Japanese automakers followed for most of the past two decades, when production moved toward the markets where vehicles were sold and domestic output declined.

A yen near 156 to the dollar is the immediate reason the arithmetic has changed. Vehicles built in Japan and sold abroad earn considerably more in yen terms than they did when the currency was stronger, which makes domestic capacity an asset rather than a cost.

The tariff arrangement with the United States, under which most Japanese exports face a 15% rate, sits on the other side of that calculation, and a domestic export base must earn enough from the currency to absorb the tariff.

Nissan has spent recent years restructuring, reducing capacity and rebuilding its model range after a period of financial and governance difficulty, and a domestic production target of this scale signals that the restructuring phase is giving way to an investment one.

Japanese domestic automotive production supports a supplier base spread across the industrial regions from Aichi to Kyushu, and a target of one million units at one company carries employment consequences well beyond Nissan itself.

The government's economic ministers, all retained in this week's reshuffle, have made domestic industrial capacity a stated priority, and a manufacturer aligning its plans with that priority will find the ministry receptive.

Currency is the variable that could unwind the plan. A yen that strengthened materially, whether through Bank of Japan tightening or through intervention, would change the arithmetic that makes domestic export production attractive.

Energy costs are the other, since automotive manufacturing is electricity-intensive and the nuclear restart programme's setbacks extend the period during which imported fuel sets the price of power.

The interview was published at four in the morning, which is the hour at which Japanese newspapers release the material they intend to set the day's business agenda.

BUSINESS

Rengo Survey Links Discretionary Work Systems to Long Hours

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

An emergency survey by Rengo, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, has found that discretionary work systems tend to lead to long working hours, according to Asahi Shimbun.

Discretionary work arrangements pay employees for a deemed number of hours rather than for hours actually worked, on the reasoning that certain professional and creative roles cannot be measured by the clock.

The arrangement's critics have argued since its introduction that it functions in practice as a mechanism for extracting unpaid overtime, since an employee paid for a deemed eight hours who works twelve receives nothing for the difference.

Rengo's survey supplies evidence for that argument at a moment when the government has periodically considered expanding the categories of work eligible for the system.

Japan's work-hours legislation was reformed after a series of overwork deaths drew sustained public attention, introducing caps on overtime and penalties for exceeding them, and discretionary arrangements sit partly outside those caps.

The federation's decision to describe the survey as an emergency one signals that it regards the findings as material to a live policy question rather than as background.

Labour shortages across the economy have strengthened workers' bargaining position in some sectors, and unions have used that leverage to press on working conditions alongside pay.

The spring wage negotiations that the Bank of Japan watches as evidence of sustainable wage growth are conducted by the same federation, which gives Rengo a standing in economic policy that its survey findings will draw on.

For employers the survey lands as the labour ministry considers how to apply existing rules to a workforce increasingly engaged in the professional and creative roles the discretionary system was designed for.

Whether the findings produce regulatory change or another round of the argument that has surrounded the system since its introduction will depend on the ministry's response and on the political attention the extraordinary session leaves for labour questions.

BUSINESS

Hitachi Energy's Mississippi Plant Is Built for a Demand Curve Set by AI

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Hitachi Energy's investment of approximately 82 billion yen in a transformer plant in Mississippi, reported earlier this week and carried again in Friday's business coverage, is being explained by reference to demand from artificial intelligence.

That explanation deserves unpacking, because transformers are among the least glamorous components in the electrical grid and among the most constraining.

Data centres built for AI training draw power at densities that earlier generations of computing did not approach, and each requires grid connection equipment sized for loads that the surrounding network was not built to serve.

Large power transformers are built to order from grain-oriented electrical steel produced by a limited number of mills, and lead times have stretched to years as replacement of ageing grids, connection of renewable generation and data centre construction converged on the same product.

Hitachi Energy's position derives from the acquisition of ABB's power grids business, which gave the Japanese group a global footprint in precisely the equipment the current cycle requires.

Locating capacity in the United States serves both the largest market for this demand and the policy environment, with American industrial programmes favouring domestic manufacturing.

The investment continues Hitachi's long shift away from the diversified conglomerate structure toward infrastructure and digital systems.

For Japan's own grid the same shortage applies, with semiconductor fabrication projects in Kumamoto and Hokkaido and offshore wind development all requiring the same heavy electrical equipment.

The demand cycle the plant is built for has been questioned this month by the AI-sector repricing in equity markets, though the order books for grid equipment operate on timescales considerably longer than a fortnight of sentiment.

Construction and commissioning will take several years, placing the plant's output into a demand environment that forecasters expect to persist regardless of how the current market argument resolves.

BUSINESS

Three Pumps Damaged on Saudi East-West Pipeline, Repairs to Take Weeks

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

Three pumps on Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline have been damaged and repairs are expected to take several weeks, according to Kyodo News, extending the disruption to the principal route by which Saudi crude reaches market without transiting the Strait of Hormuz.

The pipeline runs roughly 1,200 kilometres across the Arabian peninsula from the eastern oil fields to Red Sea terminals, and its function is strategic rather than merely logistical.

With the Gulf conflict in its seventh month and the strait contested, the pipeline has been the alternative that reduced the concentration of export volume through the chokepoint. Damage to its pumps removes that alternative for as long as the repair takes.

Pump stations are the pipeline's mechanical heart, maintaining the pressure that moves crude across the peninsula, and damage to three of them constrains throughput even if the pipe itself is intact.

Oil markets price expected supply rather than current supply, which is why a repair window measured in weeks translates immediately into the forward curve rather than waiting for the physical restoration.

Crude has held above \$100 a barrel through the conflict, and the pipeline damage is among the reasons the Bank of Japan cited high oil prices as a factor in today's expected decision.

For Japan, which imports the overwhelming majority of its crude from the Gulf, the pipeline's status bears on utility fuel costs, on the producer price data the central bank weighs, and on household energy bills with a lag.

Japan maintains strategic petroleum reserves sufficient for a period of supply interruption, though reserves address availability rather than price.

The record gasoline subsidy of 51 yen a litre reported this week is the domestic expression of the same pressure, holding the retail price near 170 yen while the underlying cost sits far above it.

Whether the repair proceeds on schedule depends on conditions in the region, and any further damage would extend a disruption that has already shaped market behaviour for weeks.

BUSINESS

Why Japanese Manufacturers Are Building at Home Again

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Nissan's target of one million units of domestic production, described by its president as making Japan an important export base, reverses a direction that Japanese manufacturing followed for most of two decades.

Through the 2000s and 2010s, production moved toward the markets where vehicles were sold, driven by a strong yen that made domestic output expensive, by trade friction that rewarded local assembly, and by the logic of building near customers.

A yen near 156 to the dollar changes the arithmetic. Vehicles built in Japan and sold abroad earn considerably more in yen terms than they did when the currency was stronger, which makes domestic capacity an asset rather than a cost.

The tariff arrangement with the United States sits on the other side of that calculation, and a domestic export base must earn enough from the currency to absorb a 15% rate on most exports to the American market.

August's trade figures showed the surplus with the United States down roughly 80%, which is the arrangement's visible cost, and a manufacturer committing to export from Japan is betting that the currency effect outweighs it.

Energy costs are the constraint. Automotive manufacturing is electricity-intensive, and the nuclear restart programme's setbacks extend the period during which imported fuel sets the price of power.

Domestic production supports a supplier base spread across the industrial regions, and a target of one million units at one company carries employment consequences well beyond the assembler.

The government's economic ministers, all retained in this week's reshuffle, have made domestic industrial capacity a stated priority, and the ministry will be receptive to a manufacturer aligning its plans with that priority.

Hitachi Energy's Mississippi investment shows the other direction still operating, with capacity added abroad to serve demand and policy environments that favour local manufacturing.

Whether the domestic shift persists depends on the currency, and a Bank of Japan that eventually narrows the differential enough to strengthen the yen would change the arithmetic that makes it attractive.

BUSINESS

From Deposits to Equities: How Japanese Households Changed Their Minds

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

The Bank of Japan's flow of funds data showing household stock and investment trust holdings overtaking insurance for the first time describes the end point of a shift that policy has pursued for two decades and that households resisted for most of them.

Japanese household wealth was historically concentrated in cash and deposits to a degree unusual among wealthy countries, with equities a small share and insurance the principal vehicle for long-term saving.

The pattern was formed by experience. The asset price collapse of the early 1990s taught a generation that equities and property could fall for a long time, and decades of deflation meant cash lost nothing by sitting still.

Policy tried repeatedly to move savings toward investment, on the reasoning that a household sector holding cash was a household sector earning nothing and an economy starved of the capital its companies needed.

The tax-advantaged investment account system, expanded substantially in recent years, was the instrument that eventually worked, combining a tax incentive with a simplified product and a rising market that made the incentive visible.

A stock market that has risen substantially contributed both by increasing the value of holdings and by drawing in savers who had watched others benefit.

The milestone carries a caution. Households have increased their exposure during a rally, and the

BUSINESS

AI-sector repricing of recent weeks demonstrated that the exposure runs in both directions.

Insurance holdings have not shrunk so much as grown more slowly, and the products remain central to retirement provision for households whose employment did not include corporate pensions.

For the financial industry the shift redistributes assets from insurers toward securities firms and asset managers, a change in business mix the sector has been preparing for.

The Bank of Japan's decision today, with its implications for deposit rates, will shape whether the shift continues or whether higher returns on cash draw some savings back toward the deposits they left.

BUSINESS

The Arithmetic Nissan Is Betting On: A 15% Tariff Against a 156 Yen Dollar

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Nissan's president's stated aim of one million units of domestic production as an export base rests on a calculation that the currency will continue to outweigh the tariff, and the calculation is worth setting out.

Under the arrangement Japan accepted last year, most Japanese exports to the United States face a 15% tariff, negotiated down from a proposed 25% in exchange for predictability and an investment commitment.

A vehicle built in Japan and sold in America therefore arrives 15% more expensive than it would have without the tariff, which is the cost side of the equation.

The benefit side is the currency. A yen at 156 to the dollar means each dollar of American revenue converts to considerably more yen than it did when the currency was at 130, and the difference has more than covered the tariff for manufacturers whose costs are in yen.

August's trade figures showed the surplus with the United States down roughly 80%, which describes the tariff's effect on the aggregate, and a manufacturer committing to export from Japan is betting that its own margin arithmetic differs from the aggregate's.

The bet has a known risk. A yen that strengthened materially, whether through Bank of Japan tightening or through intervention, would shrink the currency benefit while the tariff remained, and the arithmetic would reverse.

Today's expected increase to 1.25% does not threaten that arithmetic on its own, since the Federal Reserve widened the differential by the same amount on Wednesday, but a faster Japanese path would.

Energy costs are the other variable, since automotive manufacturing is electricity-intensive and imported fuel sets the price of Japanese power for as long as the nuclear restart programme remains set back.

For the supplier base spread across the industrial regions from Aichi to Kyushu, a domestic export strategy at one assembler carries employment consequences that the assembler's own figures do not capture.

The economic ministers retained in this week's reshuffle have made domestic industrial capacity a stated priority, and a manufacturer aligning its plans with that priority is also aligning them with the currency the ministers' policies have produced.

COURTS

Four Japanese Arrested After Fraud Base in Thailand Is Raided

Rent of about ¥4.2 million and a fake police uniform were found at the site

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

Four Japanese nationals have been arrested in connection with the bust of a special fraud base in Thailand, according to NTV News. Rent for the site was approximately 4.2 million yen, and a fake police uniform was among the items found.

Special fraud is the Japanese term for the family of telephone and online scams that target victims, frequently elderly, by impersonating officials, relatives or institutions, and the operations have increasingly been run from abroad to complicate investigation.

Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines have hosted such bases repeatedly, with Japanese operators

recruiting callers through social media, housing them in rented properties and directing calls into Japan from outside the reach of Japanese police.

A fake police uniform points to a specific variant in which callers or visitors impersonate officers to persuade victims that their accounts are under investigation and their money must be moved.

Rent of around 4.2 million yen indicates a substantial property, which is consistent with operations that house a dozen or more people for extended periods.

Cross-border cooperation between Japanese and Thai police has improved, with several bases raided in recent years after joint investigation, though the operators' mobility means each raid displaces rather than ends the activity.

The four arrested will face prosecution in Japan, with the evidence gathered in Thailand forming the basis of charges that typically include fraud and, where the structure of the operation is established, membership of an organised crime group.

The callers recruited to staff such bases are frequently young Japanese drawn by advertised earnings, and some have been treated as victims of trafficking rather than as perpetrators when their circumstances were examined.

Losses from special fraud in Japan run to tens of billions of yen annually, a figure that has proved resistant to awareness campaigns because the operators adapt their scripts faster than the public learns them.

The raid removes one base. The National Police Agency's assessment has consistently been that the overseas model will persist for as long as it remains cheaper to run than to prosecute.

COURTS

Group Leader Re-Arrested Over App Fraud Targeting Visually Impaired; Three Held for Noda Robbery

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

A group leader has been re-arrested on suspicion of defrauding visually impaired people of cash using an app, and three suspects have been arrested for robbery and assault in Noda, Chiba Prefecture, according to NTV News.

Re-arrest is a feature of Japanese criminal procedure that allows investigators to hold a suspect on a new charge as the detention period for a previous one expires, and it typically indicates that the investigation has widened.

Targeting visually impaired people through an app describes a specific and deliberate selection of victims whose disability limits their ability to verify what they are agreeing to on a screen.

Accessibility features that read screen content aloud can be exploited by applications designed to misrepresent what they are asking for, which is the mechanism such a scheme would rely on.

Fraud against people with disabilities carries the same statutory penalties as fraud against anyone else, though courts have treated the deliberate targeting of vulnerable victims as an aggravating factor in sentencing.

The Noda arrests concern a separate case in which three suspects are held for robbery and assault, with the available reporting not connecting it to the fraud investigation.

Noda sits in northwestern Chiba on the border with Saitama, and robbery cases in the outer metropolitan area have drawn attention following a series of home invasions connected to criminal groups recruiting through social media.

That recruitment model, in which participants are hired for individual crimes through anonymous channels and rarely know the organisers, has complicated prosecution because those arrested frequently cannot identify who directed them.

Whether the Noda case follows that pattern will emerge as the investigation establishes the relationship among the three arrested and any parties above them.

Both cases will proceed through the ordinary criminal process, with prosecutors deciding on indictment within the detention periods that apply.

COURTS

Yamato Rino Suspected of Cocaine Possession After Search of Home

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

Yamato Rino is suspected of cocaine possession after a straw containing white powder was seized from his home, according to NTV News.

Drug cases involving public figures receive attention in Japan out of proportion to the quantities involved, and the reporting convention places the individual's name in the headline before any charge has been laid.

Possession of cocaine is an offence under the Narcotics Control Act, which carries penalties considerably heavier than those for cannabis and reflects the legal system's classification of the substance.

A straw with residue is the kind of evidence that indicates use rather than dealing, and cases of this type typically proceed as possession charges unless further evidence establishes distribution.

The seizure from a home indicates a search conducted under warrant, which means investigators had established grounds before the visit rather than discovering the item incidentally.

Japanese entertainment and sports industries have historically responded to drug allegations against their members with immediate suspension of activity, with contracts and appearances withdrawn before any court proceeding.

That response reflects sponsor and broadcaster sensitivity rather than legal requirement, and it has been criticised for imposing consequences before guilt is established.

The individual's representatives had not been reported as commenting, and the case stands at the stage of suspicion and investigation rather than charge.

Laboratory analysis of the seized residue will determine what the substance is, and the result will govern whether the matter proceeds.

Further reporting will follow the investigation's progress through the detention and indictment decisions that apply.

COURTS

High School Teacher Arrested for Advising Students on Disposing of Stolen Goods

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

A high school teacher has been arrested on suspicion of advising students on how to dispose of stolen goods, according to NTV News.

The allegation is unusual in its specificity. It describes not a teacher committing theft but a teacher instructing pupils in the aftermath of theft, which places the adult in the position of facilitating rather than committing the offence.

Japanese law treats assistance in disposing of stolen property as a distinct offence, and an adult in a position of authority providing such assistance to minors would face consequences beyond the statutory penalty.

Teachers in Japan hold a status that carries expectations well beyond instruction, and criminal cases involving them draw scrutiny of the school, the board of education and the licensing system.

Arrest at this stage means prosecutors will decide whether to indict, and the content of the advice given, and whether it was acted upon, will determine the charge.

The school and the prefectural board of education will conduct their own examination independent of the criminal process, with suspension the customary interim measure.

Cases involving teachers and students in criminal matters have periodically prompted review of how schools handle disclosures by pupils, since a student who has stolen something and confides in a teacher expects guidance toward the right course rather than the wrong one.

The identity of the school and the location were not specified in the available reporting, which follows the convention of limiting identification where minors are involved.

Teacher licensing in Japan can be revoked following criminal conviction, and the education ministry, under a new minister following this week's reshuffle, oversees the framework within which that decision is

made.

Further reporting will follow the prosecutors' decision.

COURTS

When a Teacher Is Arrested, Three Processes Begin at Once

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The arrest of a high school teacher on suspicion of advising students on the disposal of stolen goods, reported by NTV News, sets in motion three separate processes that run on different timelines and answer to different authorities.

The criminal process comes first. Arrest means prosecutors will decide within the detention period whether to indict, and the content of the advice given, and whether it was acted upon, will determine the charge.

The school and the prefectural board of education conduct their own examination independent of the criminal one, with suspension the customary interim measure and dismissal the usual consequence of conviction.

Teacher licensing is the third. Licences in Japan can be revoked following criminal conviction, and the education ministry, under a new minister this week, oversees the framework within which that decision is made.

Teachers in Japan hold a status that carries expectations beyond instruction, and criminal cases involving them draw scrutiny of the school, the board and the licensing system in a way that cases involving other professions do not.

The allegation's specificity, a teacher instructing pupils in the aftermath of theft rather than committing one, places the adult in the position of facilitating rather than committing, which the law treats as a distinct offence.

Cases of this kind have periodically prompted review of how schools handle disclosures by pupils, since a student who confides a theft to a teacher expects guidance toward the right course.

The identity of the school and the location were not specified in the available reporting, following the convention of limiting identification where minors are involved.

For the pupils involved, the board's examination will also consider what they were advised and what consequences, if any, they face.

Further reporting will follow the prosecutors' decision, which is the first of the three processes to reach a conclusion.

SOCIETY

Fifteen More Underpasses Restricted After Three Die in Submerged Cars

The transport ministry expands the list following deaths in Chiba and Fukushima, days before a typhoon that may bring warning-level rain to Kanto

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism has added fifteen underpasses to the list of those subject to traffic restrictions during flooding, following deaths caused by the recent heavy rains, according to Asahi Shimbun. Three people died when their cars were submerged in Chiba and Fukushima.

Underpasses are the most dangerous places on a road network during heavy rain, and the danger is not intuitive. A road that dips beneath a railway or another road collects water from both approaches, and the depth rises far faster than the visible surface suggests.

A car entering water that appears shallow can be floating within seconds, at which point the doors cannot be opened against the pressure and the electric windows may fail.

The ministry's restriction list identifies underpasses to be closed or monitored when rainfall reaches defined thresholds, with barriers, warning signs and in some cases automatic gates that close when sensors detect rising water.

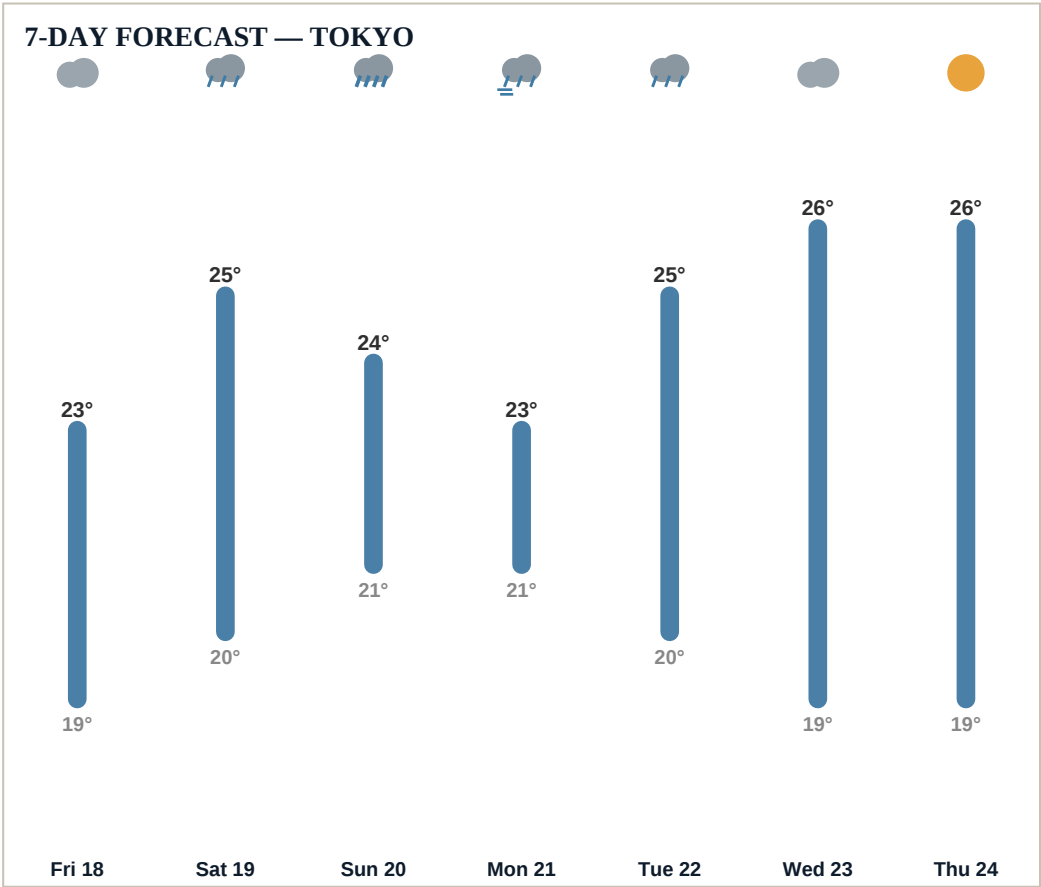
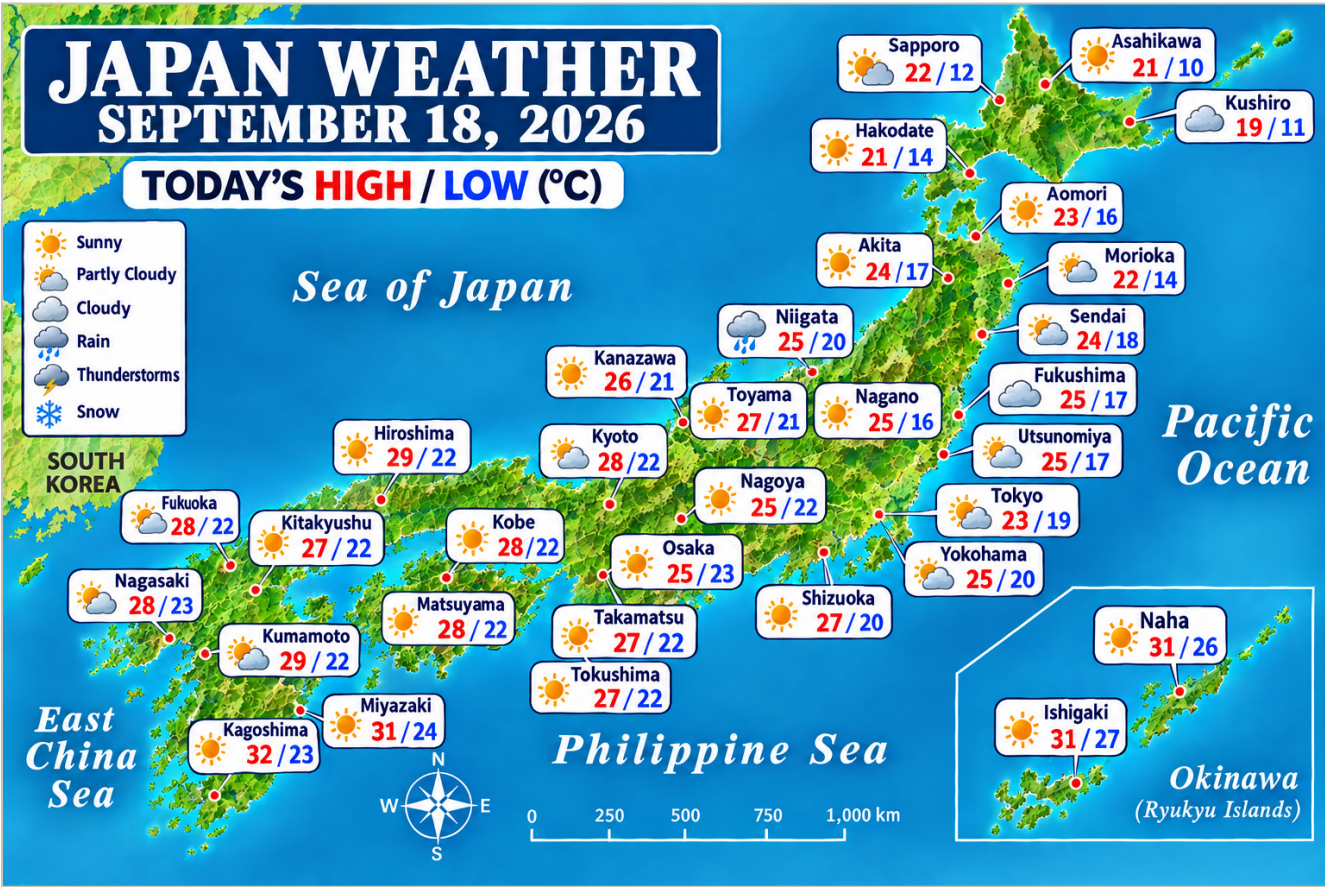
Adding fifteen sites after three deaths is the reactive pattern that road safety measures have followed for decades, and it raises the question of how many other underpasses share the characteristics of the ones now restricted.

The timing is pointed. Typhoon No. 25 is forecast to bring warning-level rain to Kanto over the holiday

WEATHER & SOCIETY

23°C

Tokyo — Partly cloudy, high 23°C; Typhoon No. 25 brings rain from Saturday, closest approach Monday



TOKYO METROPOLITAN AREA — Friday, September 18, 2026

Morning: Partly cloudy after the front's departure, with brighter intervals than the region has seen for some days. Around 20°C at 7 a.m. Sunrise 5:26 a.m.

Afternoon: Partly cloudy, high 23°C, still several degrees below the seasonal average with the region close to the departing front.

Evening: Cloud increasing from the south, around 21°C by 9 p.m. Sunset 5:44 p.m.

Overnight: Cloudy, low 19°C. The last settled night before the holiday weekend.

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

The autumn rain front moves away from Honshu on Friday and the country divides into three. From Hokkaido through northern Tohoku, high pressure brings clear autumn weather. Kanto stays mostly cloudy even after the rain stops, with temperatures held down by the front's proximity. West of Tokai there are many sunny spells, with the caution that sudden showers are possible. Summer-like temperatures of 30°C and above return across a wide area from Kyushu to Okinawa.

Honshu's weather deteriorates from the west through the day. The San'in region on the Sea of Japan side is expected to see minimal direct impact from the typhoon. Osaka and Kinki are mostly sunny with the chance of a shower.

TYPHOON NO. 25 (DUJUAN)

At 3 a.m. Friday Typhoon No. 25 was near the Ogasawara Islands with a central pressure of 980 hectopascals, a maximum sustained wind of 30 metres a second and maximum instantaneous gusts of 40 metres a second. It is large in size and moving northwest at approximately 40 kilometres an hour. The name Dajuan is derived from the azalea and was proposed by China.

OGASAWARA, FRIDAY: Impact intensifies from midday. Vigilance for high waves accompanied by swells, strong winds and landslides. Rainfall of up to 150 millimetres in 24 hours is expected from Friday afternoon to Saturday afternoon. Wave heights of 7 metres have been reported.

SATURDAY: The storm is expected to pass near the southwest of Chichijima, the peak of the storm and rough seas for the islands.

IZU ISLANDS: Risk of approach from Sunday night into Monday, with high waves, strong winds and heavy rain. Heavy rain with thunder is possible on Friday.

KANTO: Intermittent rain from Saturday. Possibility of warning-level heavy rain mainly along the coast on Sunday and Monday. The storm may make its closest approach on Monday the 21st, Respect for the Aged Day.

TOHOKU AND TOKAI: Moderate possibility of warning-level heavy rain around Monday as the storm stimulates the autumn rain front.

HOKKAIDO: The typhoon's direct impact is expected to be small. Clear autumn weather is likely to continue.

OKINAWA: Strong winds and rain on the main island will be limited because of the storm's easterly course.

LONG WEEKEND: The first half of Silver Week, Sunday and Monday, carries a risk of severe weather in eastern Japan. Improvements are expected in some areas during the second half.

WARNINGS AND ADVISORIES

The Japan Meteorological Agency continues to warn that the lack of sunshine since early September will persist across southern Tohoku and the Pacific coast of eastern Japan, with effects on agricultural crops now being reported. Farmers report damage from the typhoon, which is expected to exacerbate the rice harvest delay. The risk of fires from abandoned boats has also been pointed out.

The transport ministry has added fifteen underpasses to the list subject to traffic restrictions during flooding following three deaths in submerged vehicles in Chiba and Fukushima. Drivers are advised to treat any underpass during heavy rain as closed.

UV INDEX & AIR QUALITY

UV Index: 4 (Moderate) in Tokyo under partly cloudy skies, 8 (Very High) in Okinawa and southern Kyushu under clear skies. Air Quality Index: Good nationwide. Pollen: Negligible, with autumn ragweed present in places inland.

TODAY'S HIGH / LOW BY REGION (°C)

Hokkaido — Sapporo 22/12 partly cloudy, Asahikawa 21/10 sunny, Kushiro 19/11 cloudy, Hakodate 21/14 sunny: clear autumn weather under high pressure, the coolest nights in the country.

Tohoku — Aomori 23/16 sunny, Akita 24/17 sunny, Morioka 22/14 partly cloudy, Sendai 24/18 partly cloudy, Fukushima 25/17 cloudy: fine in the north, more cloud in the south where the sunshine deficit persists.

Chubu & Hokuriku — Niigata 25/20 rain, Toyama 27/21 sunny, Kanazawa 26/21 sunny, Nagano 25/16 sunny, Nagoya 25/22 sunny: sunny intervals across most of the region, with Niigata the one station under rain.

Kanto — Utsunomiya 25/17 partly cloudy, Tokyo 23/19 partly cloudy, Yokohama 25/20 partly cloudy, Shizuoka 27/20 sunny: cloud lingering after the front's departure, with temperatures below the seasonal average.

Kansai — Kyoto 28/22 partly cloudy, Kobe 28/22 sunny, Osaka 25/23 sunny: mostly sunny with the chance of a shower.

Shikoku — Takamatsu 27/22 sunny, Tokushima 27/22 sunny, Matsuyama 28/22 sunny: sunny across the island.

Chugoku & Kyushu — Hiroshima 29/22 sunny, Kitakyushu 27/22 sunny, Fukuoka 28/22 partly cloudy, Nagasaki 28/23 partly cloudy, Kumamoto 29/22 partly cloudy, Miyazaki 31/24 sunny, Kagoshima 32/23 sunny: summer-like warmth, with Kagoshima the warmest reading in the country.

weekend, with the closest approach possible on Monday, and the ground across eastern Japan is

Okinawa — Naha 31/26 sunny, Ishigaki 31/27 sunny: mostly sunny under high pressure, with occasional showers possible. The typhoon's easterly course keeps the main island outside its reach.

SEVEN-DAY OUTLOOK FOR TOKYO

Saturday, Sept. 19: High 25°C, low 20°C. Intermittent rain as the storm's outer bands arrive. Asian Games opening ceremony in Aichi-Nagoya. Pacific Nations Cup final.

Sunday, Sept. 20: High 24°C, low 21°C. Rain, heavy at times, mainly along the coast. Warning-level rainfall possible. Higan begins.

Monday, Sept. 21: High 23°C, low 21°C. Rain and strong wind as Typhoon No. 25 makes its possible closest approach. Respect for the Aged Day.

Tuesday, Sept. 22: High 25°C, low 20°C. Rain easing to cloud as the storm moves away.

Wednesday, Sept. 23: High 26°C, low 19°C. Cloud with sunny intervals. Autumn Equinox Day.

Thursday, Sept. 24: High 26°C, low 19°C. Mostly fine.

Friday, Sept. 25: High 27°C, low 19°C. Mostly fine.

EXTENDED OUTLOOK (September 19-25): The holiday weekend carries the greatest uncertainty in this forecast. A shift of 100 kilometres in the typhoon's track changes both the rainfall totals and the wind strength over Kanto materially, and the figures for Sunday and Monday should be treated as provisional. The second half of the week is expected to improve as the storm moves away and high pressure returns.

already saturated by a month of rain.

Chiba's August rains produced an estimated 35.4 billion yen in insurance payouts, according to figures announced this week, and the deaths now prompting the ministry's action occurred in the same pattern of weather.

Advice to drivers is consistent across every advisory: do not enter water of unknown depth, turn around rather than attempt to cross, and treat an underpass during heavy rain as closed whether or not a barrier is in place.

Municipal disaster offices publish the locations of restricted underpasses, and drivers in areas under a warning can check them before setting out.

The Internal Affairs ministry's fire and disaster management agency, now under a new minister following this week's reshuffle, coordinates the alert system through which such warnings reach the public.

Three deaths in vehicles is a toll that the restriction system exists to prevent, and the expansion of the list is an acknowledgment that it did not.

SOCIETY

Thirteen Injured After Student Discharges Bear Spray at Iwate Junior High

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Thirteen people were injured when a student sprayed bear repellent at Ezuriko Junior High School in Kitakami City, Iwate Prefecture, according to Japan Agricultural News.

Bear spray is a capsaicin-based aerosol designed to stop a charging animal at close range, and its effect on people in an enclosed space is immediate: burning of the eyes, skin and airways that requires ventilation and, for those most exposed, medical attention.

That a student had the spray at school is the detail that will draw attention, and it reflects the changed circumstances of rural Japan, where bear sightings have risen sharply and carrying repellent has become routine for people who walk or work outdoors.

Iwate is among the prefectures where bear encounters have increased most, with sightings near schools, homes and farms producing a level of public concern that would have been unusual a decade ago.

Hachioji's announcement this week of a bear sighting on Mount Takao, within the Tokyo metropolitan area, illustrates how far the pattern has spread beyond the mountain prefectures.

Schools in bear-affected areas have adjusted routines, with escorted walks, altered timetables and guidance to families, but a canister brought into a classroom is a scenario the guidance did not anticipate.

Whether the discharge was deliberate, accidental or a prank has not been reported, and the distinction determines how the school and the police respond.

Thirteen injuries in a single incident is a large number for a school, and the prefectural board of education is expected to examine the circumstances, which is the standard sequence following any incident involving pupils.

The episode also raises a question about the products themselves, since bear spray sold for outdoor use carries warnings about enclosed spaces that a teenager may not have read.

Japan Agricultural News, which covers rural Japan closely, framed the incident within the broader story of a countryside adapting to wildlife it once rarely encountered.

SOCIETY

Red Feather Community Chest Finds a Further ¥70 Million Unaccounted For

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

An additional 70 million yen in unaccounted-for funds has been discovered at the Red Feather Community Chest, and a third-party committee has been established to investigate, according to NNN.

The Red Feather campaign is among the most recognisable charitable institutions in Japan, its autumn fundraising drive marked by the small feather

SOCIETY

pins that volunteers hand out at stations and shopping streets across the country.

That visibility is what makes a funds discrepancy consequential. The campaign's model depends on small donations from a very large number of people, and its standing rests on the assumption that the money reaches the local welfare organisations it is collected for.

The word additional indicates that this is not the first discovery, and that an earlier discrepancy prompted an examination that has now found more.

Third-party committees have become the standard response of Japanese institutions to financial irregularity, and their credibility depends on genuine independence and on whether findings are published in full.

The timing is awkward. The autumn campaign traditionally begins on October 1, which means the organisation will be asking the public for money within weeks of confirming it cannot account for some of what it already received.

Community chest organisations operate at prefectural level under a national federation, and where in that structure the missing funds sit will determine whether the problem is local or systemic.

Charitable governance in Japan has drawn periodic scrutiny, with several well-known organisations facing questions about oversight of funds collected through public appeals.

Donors who have given through the campaign for decades are the constituency most affected, and the organisation's response to them will matter more than its response to the press.

The committee's findings, when published, will indicate whether the discrepancy reflects misappropriation, mismanagement or accounting failure, and each carries different consequences for those responsible.

SOCIETY

Explosion at Nara Gas Container Plant Prompts Evacuation Call

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

An explosion has occurred at a factory handling high-pressure gas containers in Nara City, and residents in the surrounding area were urged to evacuate, according to NTV News in continuing coverage from Thursday.

High-pressure gas containers, the cylinders used for industrial gases, welding supplies and liquefied petroleum gas, are among the more hazardous items a factory can handle, since a single cylinder failure can propagate to others.

An evacuation call for the surrounding area indicates that authorities judged the risk of further explosions or of toxic release sufficient to move people rather than simply to cordon the site.

Nara City's fire service leads the response, with the prefecture's disaster management arrangements engaged if the incident extends beyond a single facility.

High-pressure gas is regulated under dedicated legislation that governs storage, handling and inspection, and an explosion at a licensed facility will trigger examination of whether those requirements were met.

Industrial accidents of this kind typically produce an investigation combining fire authorities, the prefectural body responsible for high-pressure gas oversight and, where injuries occur, the police.

Details of injuries and the extent of damage were not confirmed in the available reporting, and the situation was described as continuing.

Nara's industrial areas sit close to residential districts in a pattern common to Japanese cities, which is why an evacuation radius around a factory can encompass a substantial number of homes.

The explosion arrives in a week when the Tokyo metropolitan government's collection of more than 10,000 lithium-ion batteries drew attention to a different category of the same problem: energy stored in containers that fail dangerously.

Further reporting on cause and casualties is expected as the response progresses.

SOCIETY

New Footage Released in Search for Missing Six-Year-Old in Sakata

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

A six-year-old boy remains missing in Sakata City, Yamagata Prefecture, and new footage from the day of his disappearance has been released, according to NNN.

Releasing footage is a step authorities take when the initial search has not produced the child and public assistance in establishing movements becomes the most promising line of inquiry.

Sakata is a port city on the Sea of Japan coast, and its geography of coastline, river and farmland presents the search with the range of terrain that makes a missing child case difficult to bound.

Searches of this kind draw on police, fire services, volunteer fire brigades and community volunteers, and the scale of community participation in rural Japan is frequently substantial.

Weather bears directly on the effort. The Sea of Japan side has been comparatively clear this week, which favours ground search, but Typhoon No. 25's approach over the weekend could affect conditions across northern Japan.

The release of footage typically accompanies an appeal for anyone who saw the child, or a vehicle, or anything unusual on the day, and it indicates that the search has moved from the immediate area toward the question of where he went.

Missing child cases in Japan receive sustained local media attention, and NNN's regional affiliates in Yamagata are carrying the appeal alongside the national broadcaster.

For the family the passage of days is the measure that matters, and the police have not indicated any change in how they are treating the case.

Yamagata Prefecture's police are leading the investigation, with the prefectural government's support arrangements engaged for the family.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Sakata police, and the footage has been circulated to encourage recognition of the child or of the circumstances around his disappearance.

SOCIETY

Eight in Ten Plan to Stay Close to Home for the First Five-Day Holiday in Eleven Years

A weak yen and high prices are keeping Silver Week local, and a typhoon may keep it indoors

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Eighty percent of people plan entertainment nearby during the coming holiday, the first five-day break of its kind in eleven years, according to survey findings reported by Sankei News. Yen depreciation and high prices are leading to a preference for nearby destinations.

A five-day Silver Week is a calendar event rather than a policy one. It occurs only when Respect for the Aged Day and the Autumn Equinox fall close enough to produce a bridging weekday, and this year's arrangement is the first to deliver it since 2015.

The survey's finding that most households will stay close to home describes the effect of a currency near 156 to the dollar on the household budget. Overseas travel priced in foreign currency has become expensive in yen terms, and domestic prices have risen with imported costs.

That preference was formed before the weather forecast developed, and the forecast has since given it a further push. Typhoon No. 25 may bring warning-level rain to Kanto on Sunday and Monday, with Monday's Respect for the Aged Day the possible closest approach.

Nearby entertainment in the survey's sense covers restaurants, cinemas, shopping and day trips, the categories that absorb holiday spending when travel is off the table.

For the domestic tourism industry the combination is unwelcome. A rare five-day holiday would ordinarily fill accommodation in destinations across the country, and a forecast that keeps eastern Japan indoors changes the season's arithmetic.

Weather has an asymmetric effect, redirecting trips toward urban and indoor destinations rather than cancelling them, and hot spring regions retain appeal in poor weather in a way outdoor destinations do not.

A substantial share of Silver Week journeys are grave visits during higan, the equinox observance, which proceed in most conditions because their purpose is not recreational.

The forecast for the second half of the holiday is better, with improvements expected in some areas after the typhoon passes, which may shift plans toward the later days.

Inbound visitors, for whom the weak yen is an attraction rather than a constraint, will be present in the same destinations, and the holiday's economics will be shaped by the two groups' opposite responses to the same exchange rate.

SOCIETY

Henoko Capsizing Report Finds a Culture of Leaving Safety to Others

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent, Tokyo Bureau

The investigation report into the boat capsizing off Henoko, running to 218 pages, identifies a culture of leaving safety management to others, according to NTV News.

The capsizing claimed the life of a student, and the family's response earlier this week, that everyone should share the weight of what happened, was notable for declining to assign blame to any single party. The report's finding suggests the institution being examined had done the same, in the wrong direction.

A culture of leaving safety to others is a specific diagnosis. It describes an organisation in which each participant assumes that someone else is responsible for the checks, the equipment and the decision to proceed, with the result that no one is.

That pattern has appeared in investigation reports across sectors, and it is the reason safety frameworks assign named responsibility rather than relying on shared awareness.

Two hundred and eighteen pages indicates a thorough examination rather than a summary, and the report's length suggests findings about specific decisions alongside the cultural conclusion.

School-organised marine activities operate under guidelines covering supervision ratios, equipment and weather criteria, and the report will establish whether those guidelines were followed and whether they were adequate.

The waters off Henoko carry their own associations given the long-running base relocation dispute, though the report concerns the capsizing itself rather than that context.

For the family, an institutional finding of this kind provides the account they asked for, and the recommendations that follow will determine whether their request that the weight be shared produces changed practice.

Prefectural education boards typically revise guidance following such reports, with the revised guidance applying across schools under their jurisdiction.

The report's publication this week places it alongside the earlier finding of a culture convinced it was right at Chubu Electric Power, two institutional failures of very different scale that share a diagnosis about how organisations stop noticing risk.

SOCIETY

Kyushu Shinkansen Resumes Full Service After the Kumamoto Earthquake

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The Kyushu Shinkansen is scheduled to resume full service today, with speed restrictions remaining in place near Shin-Yatsushiro, according to Yomiuri Shimbun's reporting on the day of the announcement.

The resumption marks a milestone in the recovery from the Kumamoto earthquake, whose effects on the region's infrastructure have been reported through successive weeks of coverage.

High-speed rail is among the most earthquake-sensitive infrastructure in the country, since track alignment tolerances are measured in millimetres and a shift in the roadbed that a conventional line could absorb requires realignment before trains can run at full speed.

Speed restrictions near Shin-Yatsushiro indicate that inspection has confirmed the line is safe to operate while realignment or monitoring continues in a section where the earthquake's effects were

concentrated.

The Kyushu Shinkansen connects Hakata with Kagoshima-Chuo through Kumamoto, and its full operation restores the fastest link between northern and southern Kyushu for both passengers and the regional economy.

Kumamoto's prefectural economy has been shaped in recent years by semiconductor investment, and the reliable movement of people and freight through the prefecture bears on that investment as well as on the tourism the line supports.

Rail operators in Japan conduct earthquake inspection under protocols developed after the 2004 Niigata earthquake derailed a Shinkansen train, and the sequence of suspension, inspection, restricted operation and full resumption follows those protocols.

The timing places full service in operation for the Silver Week holiday, when the line would ordinarily carry heavy traffic, though the typhoon forecast for eastern Japan may shift travel patterns toward Kyushu.

Residents of the affected area have lived with disrupted service through the recovery, and the resumption returns a routine that the earthquake had removed.

Speed restrictions will be lifted as the remaining work near Shin-Yatsushiro is completed, with the operator expected to announce the timeline.

SOCIETY

Why Fraud Operations Moved Abroad, and Why Raids Do Not End Them

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The arrest of four Japanese nationals following a raid on a fraud base in Thailand illustrates a model that has become the dominant structure of special fraud against Japanese victims.

The logic is jurisdictional. Calls placed from outside Japan into Japan are difficult to trace, the operators are beyond the reach of Japanese police without foreign cooperation, and the callers can be recruited, housed and directed at a distance from the money.

Southeast Asian countries have hosted such operations because rents are low, communications are reliable and the legal environment has, until recently, made investigation slow.

Recruitment runs through social media, with advertised earnings drawing young Japanese abroad on the promise of well-paid work whose nature becomes clear only on arrival.

Once there, recruits have frequently found themselves unable to leave, with passports held and debts asserted, which is why some have been treated as trafficking victims when their cases were examined.

The scripts have evolved from the original relative-in-trouble call through impersonation of police, prosecutors, bank officials and government agencies, and the fake police uniform found in the Thai raid indicates the impersonation has extended to physical presence.

Money is moved through cash collectors, bank transfers and increasingly through cryptocurrency, each layer adding distance between the victim and whoever ultimately receives the funds.

Cooperation between Japanese and Southeast Asian police has improved, with joint investigations producing raids that would not have been possible a decade ago, though each raid displaces an operation that reforms elsewhere.

Losses in Japan run to tens of billions of yen a year, concentrated among older victims whose savings represent the accumulation of a working life.

Awareness campaigns have had limited effect because the operators adapt faster than the public learns, which is why the police assessment has shifted toward disrupting the infrastructure rather than educating the targets.

SOCIETY

Why a Flooded Underpass Kills So Quickly

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The three deaths in submerged vehicles in Chiba and Fukushima that prompted the transport ministry to restrict fifteen more underpasses follow a pattern that road safety authorities have documented for decades.

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An underpass is a section of road that dips beneath a railway or another road, and it collects water from both approaches during heavy rain, with drainage that is frequently inadequate for the volumes a stalled front or a typhoon delivers.

The depth rises faster than the surface suggests because the road slopes down into the dip, so water that appears to be a few centimetres at the edge can be a metre or more at the centre.

A car entering water at that depth begins to float almost immediately, and once it floats the driver loses steering and braking. Water pressure against the doors makes them impossible to open from inside, and electrical systems fail as water reaches them.

The sequence from entering the water to being trapped is measured in seconds, which is why advisories emphasise not entering rather than escaping.

The ministry's restriction list identifies underpasses to be closed when rainfall reaches defined thresholds, with barriers, warning signs and in some locations automatic gates that respond to water-level sensors.

Adding sites after deaths is the reactive pattern such lists have followed, and the number of underpasses nationwide that share the characteristics of the restricted ones is larger than the list.

Drivers can reduce their own risk by treating any underpass during heavy rain as closed regardless of barriers, by turning around rather than attempting to judge depth, and by knowing the alternative routes before setting out.

If a vehicle does enter water and begins to float, the advice is to open windows immediately while electrical systems still function, since the windows are the exit once the doors will not open.

With Typhoon No. 25 forecast to bring warning-level rain to Kanto over the holiday weekend, the ministry's expanded list is a document worth consulting before travelling.

SOCIETY

A Countryside Adapting to Bears It Once Rarely Saw

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

That a junior high school student in Iwate had bear spray at school, with thirteen people injured when it was discharged, is a detail that would have made no sense a decade ago and makes sense now.

Bear sightings across Honshu have risen sharply in recent years, and the northern prefectures of Tohoku have recorded the largest increases, with encounters near homes, schools and farms becoming routine rather than exceptional.

The causes combine population recovery, as bear numbers rebounded from the lows of the postwar period, with rural depopulation, which reduced the human presence that once kept animals at a distance from settlements.

Poor mast years, when the mountain crop of acorns and beech nuts fails, send bears further afield in search of food, and autumn is when they feed most intensively before winter.

Carrying repellent has become routine for people who walk or work outdoors in affected areas, and the products are sold in outdoor shops and, increasingly, in ordinary hardware stores.

Schools in bear-affected districts have adjusted routines, with escorted walks to and from school, altered timetables when sightings are reported and guidance to families about routes.

Hachioji's announcement this week of a bear sighting on Mount Takao, within the Tokyo metropolitan area and among the most visited mountains in the world, illustrates how far the pattern has spread.

National policy has shifted toward managed culling in areas where encounters threaten residents, a change that has drawn objection from conservation groups and support from municipalities facing the problem directly.

The Kitakami incident, whatever its cause, is a reminder that the adaptation has introduced hazards of its own, and that a product designed for a charging animal is dangerous in a classroom.

Japan Agricultural News, which covers rural life more closely than the national papers, has documented the change across years of reporting that the metropolitan press is only now catching up with.

SOCIETY

What Kanto Should Expect Between Now and Monday

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Kanto's weather over the coming four days follows a sequence the forecasters have laid out with unusual specificity, and it is worth setting out in order.

Friday is the calm before it. Tokyo is partly cloudy with a high of 23°C and a low of 19°C, several degrees below the seasonal average because the region remains close to the departing front, and the day is the last of settled weather before the holiday.

Saturday brings intermittent rain as the storm's outer bands begin reaching the region from the south, according to Weathernews, with the Asian Games opening ceremony in Aichi, well to the west, expected to proceed under better conditions.

Sunday carries the possibility of warning-level heavy rain, mainly along the coast, as the typhoon approaches the Izu Islands overnight and the autumn rain front is stimulated by the moist air drawn north ahead of it.

Monday, Respect for the Aged Day, is the possible closest approach, with warning-level rain, strong winds and the storm's centre potentially nearest to the region. Tohoku and Tokai face a moderate possibility of warning-level rain the same day.

The second half of the holiday is expected to improve in some areas as the storm moves away, though the ground it leaves behind will be saturated by a month of rain and three days of typhoon-fed falls.

Landslide risk accumulates rather than arriving suddenly. Ground already carrying water absorbs less of what follows, and the soil water index that municipalities use to assess slope failure will already be elevated before the storm's rain begins.

The transport ministry's expanded list of restricted underpasses, published this week after three deaths in submerged vehicles, is the document drivers across the region should consult before travelling.

Municipal alert levels run on a five-step scale, and disaster officials consistently advise acting on Level 3 for those who need time and Level 4 regardless, since Level 5 frequently arrives after safe movement has become impossible.

Rail operators and airlines typically announce planned suspensions a day ahead when a typhoon's track is established, and the holiday travel that eight in ten households have already decided to keep local may be curtailed further.

The track may shift. A change of 100 kilometres in the storm's path changes both the rainfall totals and the wind strength over Kanto materially, and the figures for Sunday and Monday should be treated as provisional.

SOCIETY

A Typhoon Lands on a Harvest Already a Month Behind

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Farmers are reporting damage from Typhoon No. 25, and the storm is expected to exacerbate the delay in the rice harvest already caused by prolonged rain, according to FNN. The risk of fires from abandoned boats has also been pointed out.

Rice approaches harvest across most of the country in September, and the sequence of a stalled front for most of the month followed by a typhoon at its end is the combination growers fear most.

Prolonged rain delays cutting because machinery cannot operate in saturated fields, and the sunshine deficit the Japan Meteorological Agency has flagged across southern Tohoku and the Pacific coast affects grain filling in the weeks before harvest.

A typhoon adds wind to water. Rice standing in the field is flattened by strong wind, and flattened rice is harder to cut, slower to dry and lower in the quality grading that determines the price.

Quality grading matters commercially, since the difference between grades translates into a meaningful price difference across a whole harvest, and a season that combines delayed cutting with wind damage falls in both yield and grade.

Japanese agriculture has faced compounding pressure from input costs, an ageing farming population and rice bankruptcies at record pace, and weather events land on that accumulated difficulty rather than on a sector with reserves to absorb them.

The reshuffle's appointment of Kazuo Yanagi as Agriculture minister places a new holder in the portfolio at the moment the sector needs the ministry's attention most, and his first decisions will concern exactly this damage.

Abandoned boats present a hazard that coastal municipalities have raised for years. Vessels left in harbours by owners who have stopped fishing break their moorings in a storm, and fuel or batteries aboard them create a fire risk when they are thrown ashore.

Crop insurance covers defined categories of loss, with participation varying and claims processes that take time to resolve, and regional agricultural cooperatives will be the channel through which support reaches individual farms.

Whether this season's harvest is materially reduced will become clear as cutting proceeds through the coming weeks, and the storm's actual track over the weekend will determine how much of the damage now feared arrives.

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Why the Storm Is Called Dujuan

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Typhoon No. 25 carries the name Dujuan, derived from the azalea and proposed by China, according to Weathernews, and the convention behind that name is worth explaining.

Typhoons in the western Pacific are named from a list of 140 names contributed by the fourteen members of the regional typhoon committee, with each member submitting ten names in rotation.

The names are drawn in sequence rather than assigned to a season, which is why a storm's name says nothing about when it formed and why the same name recurs every few years unless it is retired.

Names are retired when a storm causes exceptional damage, at the request of the affected member, and replaced by a new name from the same contributor.

Japan's contributions are drawn from constellations, which is why storms with names such as Koinu and Yagi carry the Japanese words for the Little Dog and the Goat.

China's contributions include flowers, of which Dujuan is one, alongside mythological and natural names.

In Japan the storms are referred to primarily by number within the season, with No. 25 indicating this is the twenty-fifth typhoon of the year, and the international name appears alongside it in weather reporting.

Twenty-five typhoons by mid-September is within the normal range for a Pacific season, which typically produces between twenty and thirty by year's end.

The season's later storms, forming in September and October, are the ones that most often affect Honshu, since the tracks curve north as the Pacific high retreats.

Dujuan's own track, approaching the Ogasawara Islands and then curving toward Kanto, follows that seasonal pattern.

SOCIETY

Warning-Level Rain: What the Phrase Commits the Forecasters To

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The forecasts for Sunday and Monday use the phrase warning-level heavy rain for Kanto's coast, and the phrase is a technical one that commits the forecasters to a specific expectation.

Warning-level rainfall is the threshold at which the Japan Meteorological Agency expects damage rather than inconvenience, and its use several days ahead is itself a signal of confidence in the pattern.

The mechanism described is the stimulation of the autumn rain front by the typhoon's approach. Warm, moist air drawn north ahead of the storm feeds into the stationary boundary that has sat near Honshu for most of the month, and the front produces sustained heavy rain over the same areas.

That is why the heaviest falls from a typhoon frequently occur hundreds of kilometres from its centre, and why the forecasts name Tohoku and Tokai alongside Kanto even though the storm's track runs to the east.

A storm does not need to make landfall to cause flooding, and several of Japan's most damaging recent rain events were produced by exactly this configuration.

The ground across eastern Japan is already saturated by the month's rain, and the soil water index that municipalities use to assess landslide risk will be elevated before the storm's rain begins.

Rivers respond with a lag, and the risk of flooding persists for hours after the rain stops as water from upstream arrives.

The transport ministry's expanded list of restricted underpasses addresses the specific hazard that killed three people in Chiba and Fukushima this month.

Municipal alert levels run on a five-step scale, and disaster officials consistently advise acting on Level 3 for those who need time and Level 4 regardless.

The advice is the same as for any warning-level event: know which alert level applies to your area, check the hazard map, and act on the earlier tiers rather than the final one.

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A Country in Three Weathers: Clear North, Cloudy Kanto, Summer in the South

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Friday's weather map divides Japan into three distinct conditions, and the division describes where the departing front, the approaching typhoon and the Pacific high are each in control.

From Hokkaido through northern Tohoku, high pressure brings clear autumn weather. Sapporo is partly cloudy at 22°C, Asahikawa sunny at 21°C, Hakodate sunny at 21°C, Aomori sunny at 23°C and Akita sunny at 24°C, with the coolest nights in the country at 10°C in Asahikawa.

Kanto sits under cloud behind the front, with Tokyo at 23°C and 19°C, Utsunomiya at 25°C and Yokohama at 25°C, all partly cloudy and all several degrees below the seasonal average because the region remains close to the boundary.

West of Tokai the Pacific high is in control and summer has returned. Nagoya is sunny at 25°C, Osaka sunny at 25°C, Hiroshima sunny at 29°C, Kagoshima sunny at 32°C and Miyazaki sunny at 31°C, with Naha at 31°C and Ishigaki at 31°C under clear skies.

The Sea of Japan side is mixed, with Niigata the one station showing rain at 25°C, while Kanazawa and Toyama are sunny at 26°C and 27°C.

Honshu's weather deteriorates from the west through Friday, according to Nihonkai Television, though the San'in region is expected to see minimal direct impact from the typhoon.

The Izu Islands may see heavy rain with thunder on Friday, and the Ogasawara Islands face the storm's impact intensifying from midday.

Okinawa's clear conditions reflect the storm's easterly course, which keeps the main island outside its reach and leaves the prefecture under the same high pressure that has returned summer to Kyushu.

By Saturday the picture begins to change for the east. Kanto's cloud gives way to intermittent rain, and by Sunday the coast faces warning-level falls.

The map is a snapshot of a day between two weather systems, and it will look considerably different by Monday.

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The ¥35.4 Billion Payout and the Households Dropping the Cover That Paid It

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

The General Insurance Association of Japan's estimate of approximately 35.4 billion yen in payouts for Chiba's August rains arrives alongside reporting that households are increasingly dropping flood cover from their fire insurance to hold down premiums.

The two facts describe the same risk from opposite ends. Flood cover is what paid out in Chiba, and it is what households elsewhere are choosing to go without.

Flood cover in Japan is an optional component of fire insurance, priced on location, which means households in the areas hazard maps identify as exposed pay the most for it.

Those are precisely the households for whom dropping it is most tempting, since their premiums are highest, and most dangerous, since their exposure is greatest.

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Premiums have risen as payouts have, and the industry's own arithmetic runs in a direction that makes the problem worse: more frequent flooding means higher premiums, which means more households opting out, which concentrates the remaining risk pool.

Government reinsurance backstops the private market for earthquake but not for flood, which leaves the pricing of flood risk to insurers and the decision about carrying it to households.

Typhoon No. 25, forecast to bring warning-level rain to Kanto over the holiday, arrives on ground that Chiba's August rains left saturated and among households some of whom have just removed the cover that would pay for the damage.

The three deaths in submerged vehicles that prompted the transport ministry's underpass restrictions are a different category of loss, but they occurred in the same weather.

Hazard maps published by municipalities are the document that determines both the premium a household pays and the risk it faces, and consulting one before the weekend is the practical advice from both insurers and disaster officials.

The payout estimate will rise as claims are assessed, and the season's remaining storms will add to it.

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A September Without Sunshine, and What It Has Cost

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The Japan Meteorological Agency continues to warn that the lack of sunshine since early September will persist across southern Tohoku and the Pacific coast of eastern Japan, according to Japan Agricultural News, and the effects on agriculture are now being reported.

A stalled autumn front has sat near Honshu for most of the month, holding the same areas under cloud and intermittent rain in a pattern that delivers more cumulative rainfall than a fast-moving system and considerably less light.

Rice approaching harvest needs sunshine for grain filling in the final weeks, and a month without it affects the quality grading that determines the price farmers receive.

Vegetables have been affected too, with growth slowed and supply tightening in categories that depend on the late-summer sun.

For households the deficit registers as prices at the greengrocer and as a season that has felt cool and grey rather than the warm early autumn the calendar promised.

The front's departure on Friday brought Kanto its first partly cloudy day in some time, with Tokyo at 23°C, though the typhoon approaching over the weekend is expected to stimulate the front again and return the rain.

Solar generation, a growing share of Japan's electricity supply, has produced less than forecast through the month, which has kept thermal plants running on imported fuel at a time when that fuel is expensive.

Foliage forecasts have been complicated, since colour change responds to a combination of falling temperatures and bright days, and the bright days have been absent.

The deficit's persistence into a typhoon week means the season's weather has moved from unusual to damaging, with farmers reporting losses that the storm will compound.

The Agriculture ministry, under a new minister this week, will be asked for support measures once the extent of the damage is clear.

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Respect for the Aged Day Arrives With 107,677 Centenarians and a Storm

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Respect for the Aged Day falls on Monday, the day Typhoon No. 25 may make its closest approach to Kanto, and it arrives in a year when the centenarian count has passed 100,000 for the first time.

The figure of 107,677, announced this week by the health ministry, marks a 56th consecutive annual increase, with women accounting for roughly 90% and the oldest resident aged 114.

The holiday originated in a Hyogo village in 1947 as a local observance and was designated nationally in 1966, and its date was moved to the third Monday of September under legislation creating long weekends.

The government marks the occasion by presenting silver cups to those reaching 100, a custom that has itself been scaled back as the numbers grew beyond what the original gesture anticipated.

Municipalities hold their own observances, with ceremonies, gifts and visits organised through local welfare structures, and many of those planned for Monday across Kanto will be affected by the weather.

For those in care facilities the day is frequently marked by staff-organised events, which places its observance in professional rather than family hands.

The care sector's staffing shortage is the practical question behind the milestone, with facility capacity expanded but waiting lists persisting in metropolitan areas and pay trailing the national average.

Long-term care insurance, introduced in 2000 for exactly this demographic trajectory, has been adjusted repeatedly as the covered population expanded faster than the contributing one.

A record centenarian count is an achievement worth marking, and the holiday's meaning has shifted as longevity became ordinary, from celebrating rarity toward acknowledging a stage of life a large proportion of the population now reaches.

Whether Monday's observances proceed as planned depends on a storm whose track may still shift.

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Who the Fraud Bases Call, and Why the Scripts Keep Working

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The fraud base raided in Thailand and the app scheme targeting visually impaired people, both reported this week, share a method: the deliberate selection of victims whose circumstances limit their ability to verify what they are being told.

Special fraud in Japan targets older people disproportionately, since they hold the savings of a working life, are more likely to be at home to answer the telephone, and grew up in a period when a caller claiming to be an official was usually one.

The original script, the relative-in-trouble call, has evolved through impersonation of police, prosecutors, bank officials and government agencies, and the fake police uniform found in the Thai base indicates the impersonation has extended to physical presence at the victim's door.

Visually impaired victims present a variation on the same principle. Accessibility features that read screen content aloud can be exploited by applications designed to misrepresent what they are asking for.

Awareness campaigns have had limited effect because the operators adapt their scripts faster than the public learns them, and because the emotional pressure the calls apply is designed to prevent the pause in which verification would occur.

Banks have introduced withdrawal limits and staff training to intercept victims at the counter, and those interventions have prevented losses that the awareness campaigns did not.

Losses nonetheless run to tens of billions of yen a year, concentrated among victims for whom the sum represents the accumulation of decades.

The overseas base model exists because it separates the callers from the money and both from the reach of Japanese police, and each raid displaces an operation that reforms elsewhere.

Courts have treated the deliberate targeting of vulnerable victims as an aggravating factor in sentencing, though the operators who direct the schemes are rarely the ones who appear in court.

The National Police Agency's assessment has shifted toward disrupting the infrastructure, the recruitment channels, the money movement and the overseas bases, rather than toward educating targets who cannot be expected to out-think a script written to defeat them.

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Mount Takao's Bear Warning Ahead of a Holiday That Will Keep Hikers Close to Tokyo

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Hachioji City's announcement that a black bear was sighted on Mount Takao in August, with caution advised before Silver Week, arrives as a holiday that surveys suggest will keep eight in ten households near home directs an unusual share of hikers toward the mountain.

Mount Takao draws several million visitors a year, among the most of any mountain in the world, and its proximity to central Tokyo means most arrive with no expectation of encountering wildlife larger than a monkey.

Bear sightings in the Tokyo area have been rare historically, and the announcement reflects a precautionary judgment about a period when visitor numbers peak.

The typhoon forecast complicates the picture, since warning-level rain across Kanto on Sunday and Monday will keep hikers off the mountain on the holiday's first days and may concentrate them into its improving second half.

Bears feed intensively in autumn to build reserves for winter, and the season is when encounters with people increase across Honshu.

The pattern that has brought bears into the Tokyo area's mountains combines population recovery with rural depopulation, which reduced the human presence that once kept animals at a distance from settlements.

Advice for hikers is consistent: make noise, carry a bell, avoid dawn and dusk, and never approach a cub, since the mother is invariably nearby.

The Kitakami incident this week, in which thirteen people were injured when a student discharged bear spray at a school, is a reminder that the products sold for outdoor use are dangerous in enclosed spaces.

Hachioji's cable car and the mountain's popular routes will operate through the holiday subject to weather, with the city's caution posted at trailheads.

For Tokyo residents the announcement is a small marker of a change that the northern prefectures have lived with for years, and that the capital is now encountering on its own doorstep.

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Two Incidents, One Pattern: Industrial Hazard in Residential Japan

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The explosion at a high-pressure gas container factory in Nara City, with residents urged to evacuate the surrounding area, illustrates a pattern that Japanese urban planning has produced and that incidents periodically expose.

Industrial facilities in Japanese cities frequently sit close to residential districts, a consequence of cities that grew around factories rather than zoning factories away from homes.

High-pressure gas containers, the cylinders used for industrial gases, welding supplies and liquefied petroleum gas, are among the more hazardous items a factory can handle, since a single cylinder failure can propagate to others.

An evacuation call for the surrounding area indicates that authorities judged the risk of further explosions or of toxic release sufficient to move people rather than simply to cordon the site.

High-pressure gas is regulated under dedicated legislation governing storage, handling and inspection, and an explosion at a licensed facility will trigger examination of whether those requirements were met.

The Tokyo metropolitan government's collection of more than 10,000 lithium-ion batteries this month drew attention to a different category of the same problem: energy stored in containers that fail dangerously when mishandled.

Fire and disaster management in Japan falls under the Internal Affairs ministry, whose minister changed this week, and the agency coordinates the alert systems through which evacuation calls reach residents.

Industrial accidents typically produce an investigation combining fire authorities, the prefectural body responsible for high-pressure gas oversight and, where injuries occur, the police.

Details of injuries and the extent of damage in Nara were not confirmed in the available reporting, and the situation was described as continuing.

For residents near such facilities the incident is a reminder that the evacuation route posted on the municipal hazard map applies to more than floods.

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The Islands in the Storm's Path Are a Thousand Kilometres From Tokyo and Reached Only by Sea

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The Ogasawara Islands, where Typhoon No. 25's impact intensifies from midday on Friday, are administratively part of Tokyo and geographically about a thousand kilometres south of it, which shapes everything about how a storm affects them.

There is no airport. The islands are reached by a ferry from Tokyo that takes roughly twenty-four hours and sails about once a week, which means that when a typhoon approaches, no one leaves and nothing arrives until it passes.

Chichijima, the main island, and Hahajima to its south hold the resident population, a few thousand people whose economy rests on fishing, tourism and the administrative presence that Tokyo maintains.

The forecast for the islands is severe: rainfall of up to 150 millimetres in 24 hours from Friday afternoon to Saturday afternoon, wave heights of 7 metres already reported, and sustained winds of 30 metres a second with gusts to 40.

On Saturday the storm is expected to pass near the southwest of Chichijima, which places the island's harbour and settlement on the side of the storm where winds and seas are strongest.

Landslides are the hazard the advisories name alongside waves and wind, since the islands' steep volcanic terrain sheds water quickly onto the roads and settlements below.

The islands were inscribed as a UNESCO natural World Heritage site in 2011 for an ecology that developed in isolation, and storms are part of the natural regime that shaped it, though the settlements are more exposed than the forests.

Communications with the mainland are maintained by satellite and undersea cable, and the islands' isolation has produced a self-reliance in disaster response that mainland municipalities do not require.

For Tokyo's metropolitan government the islands are the first part of its territory the storm reaches, and the alert systems that will operate across Kanto on Sunday and Monday are being tested at the far end of the prefecture first.

The ferry schedule will resume once the seas allow, and until then the islands ride out the storm as they have ridden out every one before it.

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The Izu Islands Face the Storm on Sunday Night, Closer to the Capital Than Most People Realise

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Between the Ogasawara Islands and Kanto lie the Izu Islands, and the forecast places them in the storm's path from Sunday night into Monday, with high waves, strong winds and heavy rain expected.

The Izu chain runs south from the Izu Peninsula, with Oshima, its largest island, close enough to Tokyo that its volcano is visible from the capital's coast on a clear day.

That proximity means the islands are the storm's last stop before Kanto, and conditions there on Sunday night will indicate what the mainland coast should expect on Monday.

The islands have a history of typhoon damage that includes some of the most severe rainfall events in Japan's records, since their exposed position and steep terrain concentrate the effect of a passing storm.

Ferries and flights connect the nearer islands to Tokyo, and operators typically suspend services a day ahead when a storm's track is established, which will isolate the islands over the holiday.

Heavy rain with thunder is already possible on the islands on Friday, ahead of the storm's main

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approach, as the outer bands reach them first.

Tourism is the islands' principal industry, and a five-day holiday that surveys suggest will keep eight in ten households near home would ordinarily have brought visitors; the typhoon's timing removes that.

The Tokyo metropolitan government administers the islands alongside Ogasawara, and the disaster management arrangements that will operate across the mainland on Monday are the same ones now being applied at sea.

Warning-level rain forecast for Kanto's coast on Sunday and Monday is the mainland expression of the same system that will cross the islands the night before.

For residents of the chain the advice is the one their history has taught: secure boats, check the hazard map, and treat Sunday night as the night to be indoors.

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The Boats No One Owns Become Hazards When the Wind Rises

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Among the typhoon's agricultural consequences reported by FNN is a risk that has nothing to do with crops: fires from abandoned boats, which coastal municipalities have raised as a hazard for years and which a storm turns from a nuisance into a danger.

Japan's fishing fleet has shrunk with its fishing population, and vessels left in harbours by owners who have stopped fishing, retired or died accumulate in ports across the country.

Many still hold fuel in their tanks and batteries aboard, and when a storm breaks their moorings and throws them against quays or ashore, the fuel and the electrical systems create a fire risk that a working boat, secured and attended, would not.

Municipalities face a legal difficulty in removing them, since a vessel whose owner cannot be traced cannot simply be scrapped, and the process for declaring one abandoned takes time and money that small coastal towns lack.

The problem is a small illustration of a larger one: the physical residue of depopulation, in boats, houses and equipment, that no one is responsible for and that weather eventually disposes of dangerously.

Typhoon No. 25's approach to the Izu Islands and the Kanto coast over the weekend places harbours along that stretch in the storm's path, and the boats in them will be tested.

Fire services in coastal municipalities have identified the vessels of concern in many ports, though identification is not removal.

For fishing communities that still operate, an abandoned boat breaking loose in a storm is a threat to the working vessels moored beside it as much as to the shore.

National policy has begun to address the problem through registration requirements and disposal subsidies, though the backlog of vessels already abandoned exceeds what the programmes have reached.

The storm will find them, as storms have found them before, and the fires FNN's reporting warns of are the reason the issue reaches the national press once a year.

SOCIETY

The Document to Read Before Sunday Is the One Most Households Have Never Opened

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

With warning-level rain forecast for Kanto's coast on Sunday and Monday and Typhoon No. 25's closest approach possible on the holiday, the document every household in the region should consult before the weekend is the municipal hazard map.

Hazard maps are published by municipalities and identify the areas exposed to flooding, storm surge and landslide under defined scenarios, and they are the document that determines which alert applies to which household.

Most households have one, delivered with municipal notices or available on the municipal website, and most have never opened it, which is the gap disaster officials spend every storm season trying to close.

The map tells a household three things: whether its location is exposed to river flooding, coastal surge or

slope failure; where the designated evacuation site is; and which route to it avoids the hazards the map identifies.

The transport ministry's expanded list of restricted underpasses, published this week after three deaths in submerged vehicles, is a related document for anyone who will drive.

Municipal alert levels run on a five-step scale, and disaster officials consistently advise acting on Level 3 for those who need time and Level 4 regardless, since Level 5 frequently arrives after safe movement has become impossible.

The ground across eastern Japan is already saturated by a month of rain, which means the soil water index municipalities use to assess landslide risk will be elevated before the storm's rain begins, and the map's landslide zones apply more urgently than usual.

Households that have dropped flood cover from their fire insurance to hold down premiums, a trend reported this week, are the ones the map most needs to reach, since their exposure is greatest and their protection least.

Reading the map takes ten minutes. Finding the evacuation site on it takes one. Both are best done on Friday rather than on Sunday night.

The forecast track may shift, and a change of 100 kilometres changes the rainfall totals materially, but the map does not change, and it is the one thing about the weekend that can be prepared in advance.

SOCIETY

What a School Does After Thirteen Injuries

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Ezuriko Junior High School in Kitakami City faces the sequence that follows any incident injuring pupils at a Japanese school, and thirteen injuries from a discharged bear spray canister is an incident of unusual scale.

The immediate response, ventilation, medical assessment and the removal of those affected, is the part that has already happened, and the fact that the injuries were reported as thirteen rather than as hospitalisations suggests most were treated at the scene.

The prefectural board of education is expected to examine the circumstances, which is the standard sequence, and Iwate's board will want to establish how the canister came to be at school and whether its discharge was deliberate.

Schools in bear-affected districts have adjusted routines over recent years, with escorted walks and altered timetables, but a canister brought into a classroom is a scenario the guidance did not anticipate.

Whether the discharge was deliberate, accidental or a prank determines the response, since the first involves the police, the second involves the product and the third involves the pupil.

Parents will be informed and, in a community where bear encounters have become routine, the presence of repellent in a school bag may seem less remarkable than it would in Tokyo.

The products themselves carry warnings about enclosed spaces that a teenager may not have read, and the incident may prompt guidance to families about where such items belong.

Japan Agricultural News, which reported the incident, has followed the spread of bear encounters across rural Japan through years of coverage, and the school incident belongs to that longer story.

Kitakami sits in central Iwate, in a prefecture that has recorded some of the largest increases in bear sightings in the country.

The school will reopen with the matter under examination, and the board's findings will determine whether the guidance changes for schools across the prefecture.

SPORTS

SoftBank Beat Orix 7-1 for a Ninth Straight Win as the Magic Number Falls

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Fukuoka SoftBank defeated Orix 7-1 on Thursday, extending their winning streak and making progress toward the magic number for the Pacific League championship, according to Nikkan Sports. A third consecutive title is within reach.

SPORTS

Onosato Recovers, Kotozakura Falls, and the Council Wants More From Its Yokozuna

Day five leaves no one unbeaten. Kirishima and Atamifuji lead on four wins, Aonishiki has lost two in a row, and the Yokozuna Deliberation Council has told Onosato to show the confidence of his rank

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Yokozuna Onosato defeated Yoshinofuji by yorikiri, the frontal force-out, on the fifth day of the Autumn tournament on Thursday, bringing his record to four wins and one loss, according to Mainichi Shimbun and Sports Hochi. Ozeki Kotozakura lost to Minoumi, ending the tournament's last perfect record.

Ozeki Kirishima and Atamifuji each stand on four wins. Aonishiki has suffered consecutive losses. Day six is today.

The Yokozuna Deliberation Council has urged Onosato to show the confidence of a yokozuna, a public statement that the council issues sparingly and that carries weight out of proportion to its length.

The council's remark follows Onosato's loss to Takayasu on day four, which handed the veteran his seventh kinboshi and left the tournament's sole competing yokozuna carrying a defeat before the first week was out.

A yorikiri win on day five is the answer the council would have wanted, a decisive frontal force-out rather than a scramble, and Onosato's four-and-one record keeps him within a bout of the leaders.

Kotozakura's loss to Minoumi removes the tournament's last unbeaten wrestler after five days, a rare state for a basho to reach so early and one that opens the championship considerably.

With Hoshoryu absent and Onosato beaten once, the field is led by an ozeki and a lower-ranked wrestler on identical four-and-one records, which is the kind of scramble that produces memorable second weeks.

Kirishima's four wins keep his yokozuna promotion case alive, though the day-three loss to Takayasu has already removed the possibility of an unblemished record that would have made the council's decision straightforward.

Atamifuji's four wins from lower in the ranks mark him as this tournament's surprise, and the scheduling convention will bring him against the leaders in the second week rather than the first.

Aonishiki's consecutive losses are the sharpest reversal. The Ukrainian-born ozeki, back at the rank this September after a 12-3 finish at sekiwake in July, opened with three wins and has now dropped two in succession.

Two losses in the first five days do not end an ozeki's tournament, but they change its character from a championship pursuit to a defence of the eight wins that keep the rank secure.

The council's intervention is the story the papers led with, and it will follow Onosato through every remaining bout. A yokozuna told publicly to show confidence is a yokozuna being watched for whether he can.

The tournament runs through the 27th at Ryogoku Kokugikan, with the closing days producing the matchups that decide the Emperor's Cup.

The win follows Wednesday's 4-0 victory over the same opponent in ten innings, which had set the streak at eight and the magic number at two.

A 7-1 result is a different kind of win from a ten-inning shutout. Wednesday's game was a bullpen statistic; Thursday's was an offence deciding the matter early.

The magic number counts down the combination of SoftBank wins and second-place Seibu losses needed to clinch, and Seibu's 4-2 defeat by Nippon-Ham on the same evening moved the arithmetic in the same direction as SoftBank's own result.

With both events occurring on the same night, the clinch could arrive at any point in the coming days, and the Pacific League's remaining fixtures now carry a weight their position in a 143-game season would not otherwise give them.

Nine consecutive wins is the longest run of the season for the club, and streaks of that length are rare enough that they usually coincide with a team playing above its underlying quality.

The Pacific League's picture has been settled at the top for weeks, with SoftBank's form leaving

considerably less doubt than the Central League race has produced.

A third consecutive championship would confirm a period of dominance built on pitching depth and a relief corps that has held games through the run.

The Climax Series follows the regular season, and the pennant winner enters the Final Stage with a one-game advantage already banked.

Pacific League fixtures continue today, and the clinch scenario will be recalculated after each result.

SPORTS

Hanshin End Their Slide With a 7-2 Win Over Hiroshima; DeNA Edge Yakult

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Hanshin defeated Hiroshima 7-2 on Thursday, ending a seven-game losing streak that had been the club's longest of the season, according to the Central League results carried in the morning editions.

Yokohama DeNA beat Yakult 2-1.

A 7-2 win after seven consecutive defeats is the result a club needs to stop the questions, and Hanshin's offence producing seven runs after a week in which it had produced very few is the detail that matters.

The slide had reshaped the Central League run-in, with Hanshin's advantage eroded through a period in which Yomiuri were unable to capitalise because of their own losing run.

DeNA's 2-1 win over Yakult continues a run that has kept the club in the postseason conversation deeper into the season than earlier expectations suggested.

The Central League race remains the closer of the two, and a Hanshin recovery combined with DeNA's steady form leaves the question of finishing positions open into the season's final weeks.

The Climax Series admits the top three clubs in each league, and second place carries the right to host the First Stage, which keeps the contest below the top meaningful.

Pitching usage tightens through September as clubs manage bullpens and rotations toward the postseason, which changes how late-season fixtures are contested.

Hiroshima's defeat leaves the Carp outside the picture, playing out a schedule against contenders in the September rhythm familiar to clubs whose season has already been decided.

The regular season runs through the end of October, leaving enough fixtures for the position to change and few enough that each result now carries weight.

Central League fixtures continue through the weekend, with the typhoon forecast for Kanto on Sunday and Monday a consideration for games scheduled in the region.

SPORTS

Nippon-Ham Beat Seibu 4-2 to Move SoftBank's Clinch Closer; Rakuten Down Lotte

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Hokkaido Nippon-Ham defeated Seibu 4-2 on Thursday and Rakuten beat Lotte 5-1, according to the Pacific League results in the morning editions.

The Nippon-Ham result carries consequence beyond its own two teams. Seibu are the second-place club whose losses count toward SoftBank's magic number, and a defeat on the same night SoftBank won 7-1 advanced the leaders' clinch from both directions.

Nippon-Ham's own season has been about establishing a position for the Climax Series rather than contesting the pennant, and a win over the second-place club is the kind of result that shapes seeding.

Rakuten's 5-1 win over Lotte follows Lotte's brief recovery earlier in the week, when consecutive home runs by Koki Yamaguchi had ended a losing run.

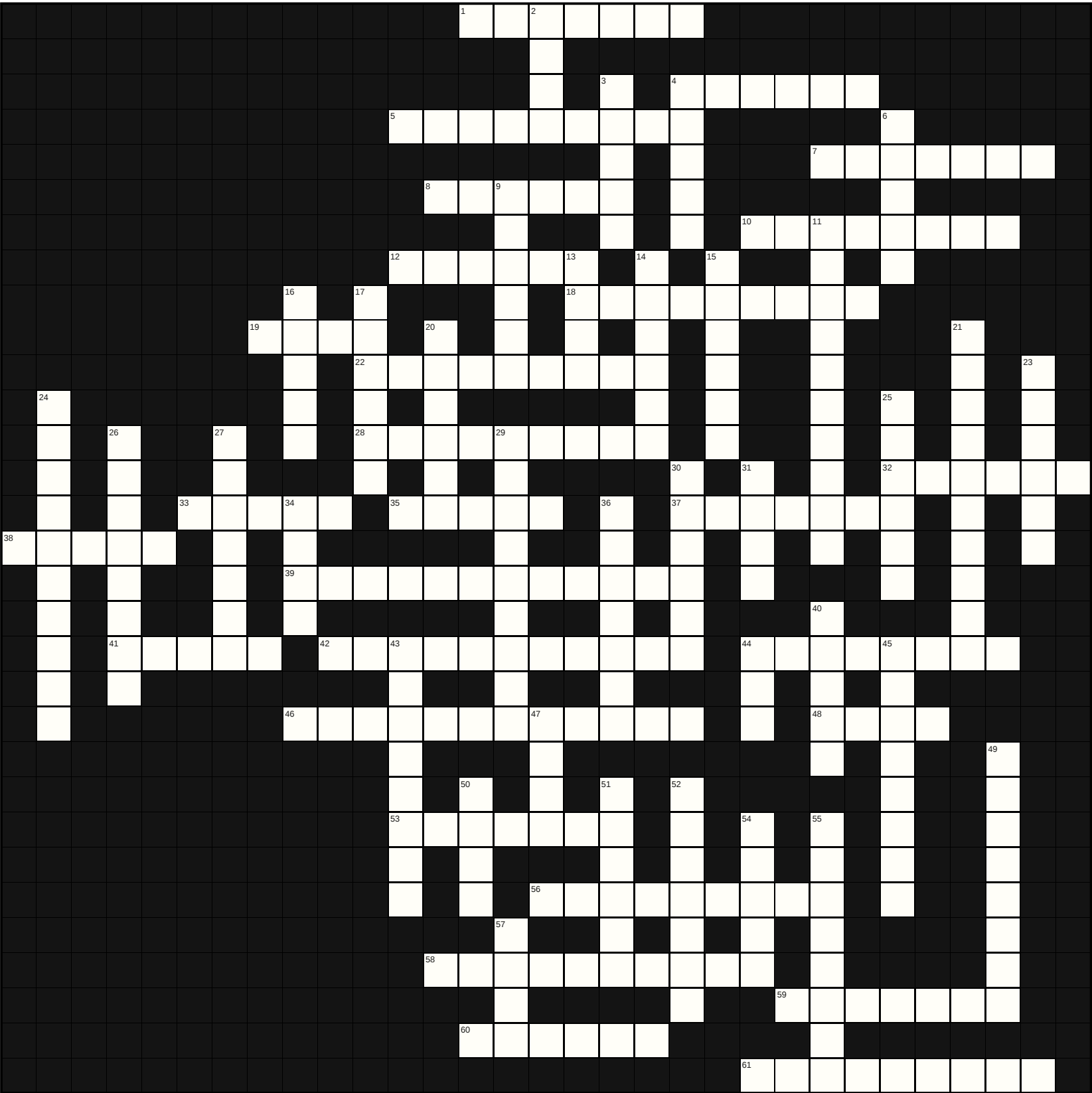
The Pacific League's lower positions remain contested for the third Climax Series place, which is where the meaningful competition now sits below SoftBank's run at the top.

Seibu's position as SoftBank's nearest challenger has been a matter of arithmetic rather than genuine pursuit for some time, and Thursday's defeat narrows the window further.

The league's remaining fixtures will be watched for the clinch, which could arrive on any night when

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 63 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional / Sunday-level.

ACROSS

- Division champions for a fifth year (7)
- Capsizing report cites a culture of leaving safety to others (6)
- Ishin's first cabinet minister (9)
- Junior high school with 13 injured (7)
- Average closing at 64,136.25 (6)
- Prime minister whose second cabinet is complete (8)
- Typhoon No. 25's name, from the azalea (6)
- Islands facing seven-metre waves (9)
- Hyogo lawmaker taking Education (4)
- Face on the ten-thousand-yen note (9)
- Surprise leader on four wins (9)
- Country whose prime minister resigned (6)
- Kosei ___, Team Japan leader (5)
- Fed chairman who defied a president (5)
- Yokozuna now 4-1 (7)
- Hideki ___, Diet Affairs chairman (5)
- What Asahi fears the Diet may lose (12)
- Broader gauge at 4,094.19 (5)
- Onosato's day-five opponent (11)
- Frontal force-out (8)
- What the cartoon says cannot be repealed (12)
- Vissel Kobe's match-winner (4)
- METI minister keeping his file (7)
- LDP figure calling the AI race a new Cold War (9)
- Island the storm passes near on Saturday (10)
- Minister who resigned from Internal Affairs (7)
- ___ Week, five days for the first time in 11 years (6)
- Road dip added to a restriction list (9)

DOWN

- Japan's legislature (4)
- Reported successor at Internal Affairs (5)
- Equinox week beginning Sunday (5)
- US secretary of state (5)
- Shinkansen resuming full service (6)
- Japan's Sunday football opponent (10)
- Chiba city with three robbery arrests (4)
- New Agriculture minister (6)
- Yamagata city searching for a missing boy (6)
- Union federation with an emergency survey (5)
- Maker targeting a million domestic units (6)
- Chief cabinet secretary retained (6)
- Community chest missing 70 million yen (10)
- Foreign minister kept in post (6)
- Shin-___, where speed limits remain (10)
- Goshi ___, back in a cabinet (6)
- Pitcher who worked hard all year (8)
- Wrestler who beat Kotozakura (7)
- Holdings now overtaken by stocks and trusts (9)
- Economy and fiscal policy minister (6)
- Toy the yen becomes in today's cartoon (4)
- Governor holding an afternoon press conference (4)
- Defence minister retained (7)
- President protesting a rate rise (5)
- Club on nine straight wins (8)
- Currency near 156 to the dollar (3)
- Finance minister who stays (8)
- City with a gas container explosion (4)
- Iwate city where bear spray was discharged (8)
- Taihei ___, ANA Open leader (4)
- Chinese foreign minister who met Rubio (6)
- Club that ended a seven-game slide (7)
- Prefecture with 35.4 billion yen in rain payouts (5)
- Country where a fraud base was raided (8)
- Rugby final opponent (4)

SoftBank win or Seibu lose.

Sapporo's weather, on the Sea of Japan side of Hokkaido's typhoon exposure, is forecast to remain clear through the weekend, which favours Nippon-Ham's home schedule.

Pacific League play continues today.

Full standings and the updated magic number will be published after the evening's results.

SPORTS

Dodgers Take a Fifth Straight Division Title; Yamamoto: 'I Worked Hard All Year'

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

The Los Angeles Dodgers have won their division for a fifth consecutive year, and Yoshinobu Yamamoto said he had worked hard all year, according to Asahi Shimbun. Shohei Ohtani remains on the injured list and is in the phase of resuming batting.

Five consecutive division titles describe a franchise operating at a level of sustained dominance that the regular season measures and the postseason does not always reward.

Yamamoto's remark, brief and characteristic, understates a season in which he has anchored a rotation that absorbed sustained attrition, with an earned run average and strikeout total that placed him among the league's leading starters.

Ohtani's absence from the clinch is the detail Japanese readers will note. Placed on the injured list earlier this month, he has progressed to tee work, the first rung of a hitter's return ladder, with live batting practice the checkpoint that follows.

The postseason begins in early October, and the Dodgers' calculation about Ohtani turns on readiness rather than availability, since a hitter returning without timing contributes little in the compressed environment of October baseball.

Roki Sasaki's return to pitching has been discussed this week, which would restore a further Japanese arm to a staff planning for the playoffs.

The division title guarantees a place in the postseason and the seeding advantages that come with it, though the Dodgers' recent history includes both a championship and early exits from positions of comparable strength.

Japanese attention on the club has grown to the point where Dodgers results are carried in the domestic papers' sports sections alongside NPB's own pennant races.

The clinch arrived on the same night SoftBank moved closer to their own championship in Fukuoka, giving Japanese baseball readers two title stories in one morning edition.

Yamamoto's next start and Ohtani's next step in rehabilitation will be the items the Japanese coverage follows through the season's final fortnight.

SPORTS

Asian Games Open Tomorrow; Inoue Says Team Japan Is United

Team leader Kosei Inoue's press conference struck a confident note. Mainichi noted rising costs and falling attention

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games hold their opening ceremony tomorrow, and Team Japan leader Kosei Inoue held a press conference on Thursday at which he said the team was united, according to Mainichi Shimbun.

Inoue is among the most recognisable figures in Japanese sport, an Olympic judo champion whose later career as a national coach gave him standing across disciplines, and his appointment as team leader was intended to lend the delegation exactly that authority.

Mainichi's coverage also noted increased costs and decreased attention, two observations that have followed multi-sport games everywhere in recent years and that Japan's own experience with the Tokyo Olympics made familiar.

Competition has been under way for several days ahead of the ceremony, with Japan's men's football, women's football and women's volleyball teams all winning their opening fixtures.

The opening ceremony's position after the first results is standard for a Games of this size, since the number of events cannot be fitted into the period after the ceremony without extending the whole schedule.

Tomorrow's ceremony will draw the flame relay to its conclusion, with figure skaters Riku Miura and Ryuichi Kihara among those photographed carrying it this week.

Japan Sport Council officials identified swimming, judo, gymnastics and athletics as the disciplines

carrying realistic medal expectations, with judo carrying the most weight as the sport's country of origin and Inoue's own.

China remains the overwhelming favourite in the overall medal table, a position built across more disciplines than any competitor matches.

The weather forecast for the host region is favourable for tomorrow, with Nagoya expected to see sunny conditions and a high near 25°C, though Typhoon No. 25's approach to eastern Japan over the weekend will affect events scheduled toward the Pacific coast.

A North Korean delegation is attending, with the sports minister having travelled via Beijing, a presence the Games' charter obliges the host to accommodate regardless of bilateral relations.

Costs and attention are the two variables Mainichi named, and the ceremony tomorrow is the moment at which the second is tested.

SPORTS

Japan's Under-21s Beat Hong Kong 2-0; Kyrgyzstan Next on Sunday

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan's under-21 men's football team defeated Hong Kong 2-0 in their opening Group A fixture at Toyota Stadium, and their second match is against Kyrgyzstan on Sunday the 20th, according to the Games coverage.

The Nadeshiko women's team completed their preliminary matches with a convincing win over Thailand, finishing the group stage they opened with an 8-0 victory.

Asian Games men's football is an age-group competition, which distinguishes it from senior tournaments and means the squads are drawn from players on the way up rather than established internationals.

A 2-0 opening win establishes the position without settling anything. Group qualification frequently turns on goal difference, and Sunday's fixture against Kyrgyzstan will determine whether Japan's path through the group is comfortable or contested.

South Korea's 4-1 win over Qatar in the same round sets up the rivalry that has defined this competition for decades, with the two countries' age-group sides meeting in finals more often than any other pairing.

Toyota Stadium sits in the city whose automotive industry anchors the host region, and it will host further fixtures as the tournament progresses.

The women's tournament proceeds to its knockout rounds, where host advantage tends to matter most in the tight fixtures decided by fine margins.

Japan's women's programme carries a pedigree few in Asia can match, built on the 2011 World Cup title and sustained by a domestic league and youth structure that has continued producing internationally competitive players.

Weather is a consideration for fixtures scheduled over the weekend, with Typhoon No. 25's approach to eastern Japan a variable for venues toward the Pacific coast, though the host region's own forecast is favourable for Saturday.

Sunday's fixture against Kyrgyzstan falls on the day the typhoon's effects are expected to begin reaching Kanto, some distance from Aichi.

SPORTS

Women's Volleyball Opens With a Sweep of Nepal in Pursuit of a First Gold in 48 Years

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Japan's women's volleyball team defeated Nepal 3-0 to open their Asian Games campaign, beginning a pursuit of the programme's first gold medal at the Games in 48 years, according to the tournament coverage. Beach volleyball competition is also progressing.

Forty-eight years reaches back to the era in which Japanese women's volleyball dominated the sport internationally, winning Olympic gold in Tokyo in 1964 and Montreal in 1976.

A 3-0 sweep of Nepal establishes the gap between Japan and the opponents it will face in the group stage; the knockout rounds against China, South Korea and Thailand are where the competition begins.

China's women's programme has been the region's strongest for decades, and any Japanese gold would almost certainly require beating them in the final.

The domestic V.League has professionalised over recent years, improving the training environment available to national team candidates and supplying the players featured in the tournament coverage.

SPORTS

Host advantage in indoor volleyball is substantial, with familiar venues, no travel and a crowd whose support in a sport of momentum swings can shift a set.

The men's team has already secured the Asian Championship and with it a place at the Los Angeles Olympics, giving Japanese volleyball a strong period across both programmes.

Beach volleyball's progress alongside the indoor competition reflects the Games' breadth, with Japan fielding pairs in a discipline where the regional standard has risen sharply.

The women's group stage continues over the coming days, with the seeding it produces determining the path through the knockout rounds.

Forty-eight years is the kind of figure that becomes a burden as a tournament progresses, and the squad's management will be conscious of it.

SPORTS

Samurai Japan's Amateur Side Opens Against China on Monday With Training Intensified

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

The Samurai Japan amateur team will begin its Asian Games campaign on Monday the 21st against China, with matches at Toyohashi and Okazaki, and it has been announced that the intensity of training is being increased during the training camp, according to Samurai Japan's official channels.

Asian Games baseball is contested by amateur and semi-professional squads rather than by NPB's professionals, which is why the question of an Olympic pause in the professional season is a separate matter under consideration by the owners.

Japan's amateur baseball system, drawing on university and corporate teams, is deep enough that the squad assembled for the Games is competitive against most of the region's professional selections.

South Korea has historically fielded professional players at the Games in pursuit of the military service exemption that a gold medal carries for its athletes, which has made the Japan-Korea fixture the tournament's defining contest.

Increased training intensity in the final days before competition is a standard management decision, sharpening a squad assembled from different teams into a unit before its first fixture.

Toyohashi and Okazaki are cities in Aichi's eastern and central districts respectively, extending the Games' footprint across the prefecture beyond Nagoya.

Monday's opener falls on Respect for the Aged Day and on the day Typhoon No. 25 may make its closest approach to Kanto, though Aichi's own forecast is more favourable and the venues sit well west of the storm's expected track.

The U-18 Asian Championship, which ended this week with Japan losing the final to South Korea, provides a recent measure of the rivalry at youth level, with Yokohama's Shoki Oda among those returned home to draft and future-path reports.

Japanese baseball's amateur and professional tiers are watched closely by the same scouts, and performances at the Games shape draft interest.

The tournament's schedule brings the strongest fixtures toward its close, with the group stage establishing the bracket.

SPORTS

Japan Face Fiji in Saturday's Pacific Nations Cup Final After a 63-14 Semi-Final

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan's rugby national team meets Fiji in the Pacific Nations Cup final tomorrow, having beaten the United States 63-14 in the semi-final, according to the tournament coverage.

A 63-14 result is a statement of the gap between Japan and the American programme, with nine tries' worth of scoring describing a side that controlled possession and converted it at a rate the opposition could not match.

Fiji present a different problem entirely. Fijian rugby is built on a running game and offloading skill that no other nation quite replicates, and Japanese sides that have beaten them have done so by controlling possession and denying the space in which that game

thrives.

The Pacific Nations Cup has become the competition in which Japan measures itself against the Pacific island nations and the United States between World Cups, and a final against Fiji is the fixture it exists to produce.

Japan's own World Cup runs in 2015 and 2019 established a style based on tempo and fitness, and the semi-final performance suggested that approach remains intact under the current coaching.

A win on Saturday would give the national side a title in a year that has otherwise been about rebuilding toward the next World Cup cycle.

Fiji's own semi-final produced the opponent, and the islanders arrive with the physical edge that their game has always carried and a set-piece that has improved considerably.

The final's venue and kickoff will determine the weather's relevance, with Typhoon No. 25's approach to eastern Japan a consideration for any fixture scheduled toward the Pacific coast over the weekend.

Japanese rugby's domestic League One has professionalised the player base, and the national squad drawn from it carries more depth than the sides that produced the earlier World Cup performances.

The final falls on the same day as the Asian Games opening ceremony, giving Japanese sport two marquee events on a single Saturday.

SPORTS

Vissel Kobe Win First Away Match in Asian Competition on Muto's Goal; Kashiwa Progress

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Vissel Kobe won their opening away match in the AFC Champions League Elite East Division, with Muto scoring the winning goal, according to Kobe Shimbun. Kashiwa Reysol are also progressing in the East Division group stage.

An away win in the opening round of Asian competition is the result Japanese clubs most often fail to produce, given the structural handicap of a domestic calendar that leaves them playing continental fixtures at a different point in their season from their opponents.

Muto's winner gives Kobe a start that the club's recent domestic form had suggested was possible, with the striker's finishing the difference in a match the reporting describes as decided by a single goal.

Kashiwa's progress in the group stage follows their fixture against Jeonbuk, one of Korean football's most decorated clubs, in a rivalry that the competition's league-phase structure guarantees will recur.

The restructured ACL Elite created Asian club football's top tier, with a smaller field and a league phase intended to guarantee more matches between the continent's strongest clubs.

East Division fixtures bring together clubs from Japan, South Korea, China, Thailand and Australia, a grouping whose travel demands are lighter than the full continental draw would impose.

Squad depth determines how well a club manages the combined load of domestic and continental fixtures, and the J.League's salary structure limits how far any club can insulate itself.

Continental success carries genuine commercial value through prize money and qualification for the Club World Cup, which has grown considerably in scale.

Kobe Shimbun's coverage reflected the local interest in a club whose recent domestic success has raised expectations for its performance abroad.

League-phase standings will take shape over the coming rounds, with progression to the knockout stage the objective for both Japanese sides.

SPORTS

Taihei Sato Leads the ANA Open After a First-Round 66

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Taihei Sato is reportedly in first place after the opening round of the ANA Open with a score of 66, six under par, according to the golf coverage in Friday's editions.

The ANA Open is among the longer-established events on the Japan Golf Tour, played in Hokkaido in September, and its position in the calendar places it at

the point where the tour's autumn stretch begins.

A 66 on the opening day establishes a lead without settling anything over four rounds, and the field behind will be measured by how close it sits after Friday's second round.

Hokkaido's weather this week has been the clearest in the country, with high pressure bringing autumn conditions that favour scoring, and the typhoon approaching eastern Japan is not expected to affect the island materially.

The Japan Golf Tour has faced the same pressure as other domestic sports in retaining attention against overseas competition, with its leading players increasingly pursuing careers abroad.

Sato's lead will be tested against a field that includes the tour's established names, and the second round typically separates the players who can sustain an opening score from those who cannot.

The tournament concludes on Sunday, which places its final round on the first day of the holiday weekend and outside the typhoon's expected reach.

Golf coverage in the Japanese papers has grown with the success of Japanese players on the international tours, and domestic events benefit from the attention that success has drawn.

Sato's round will be examined in the specialist coverage for the shots that produced it, with the par-five holes typically the source of a low score.

Friday's second round begins this morning.

SPORTS

U-18 Squad Returns as Runners-Up, With Draft Attention Following

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

The U-18 Asian Championship has ended with Japan losing the final to South Korea and finishing as runners-up, and Yokohama's Shoki Oda and other squad members have returned home, with reports on the draft and their future paths continuing, according to the tournament coverage.

The final, decided 2-0 and remembered for a one-hit shutout by the Korean pitcher nicknamed Busan's Ohtani, was a result Japan's high school system does not often absorb at this level.

Runners-up in a tournament they would have expected to win is the kind of outcome that tends to sharpen rather than discourage the players who experienced it.

The NPB draft follows in the autumn, and the players returning from the championship are among those whose names will feature in the speculation that precedes it.

Shoki Oda's return to Yokohama places him back in the school baseball environment that produced him, with his future path a subject of the reporting the tournament has generated.

Japan's high school baseball system operates at a scale unusual in world sport, and its graduates populate NPB's rosters, the university leagues and, increasingly, Major League Baseball's organisations.

South Korea's development pathway runs through a smaller number of specialised schools, a more concentrated model that produces fewer players at a higher average level of training.

Comparisons between the two systems recur whenever results run against expectation, and this final will be cited in that argument.

Professional scouts from several leagues followed the competition, and the performances shape draft interest well beyond the tournament.

The Asian Games baseball tournament, opening Monday with the Samurai Japan amateur side, provides the next measure of the Japan-Korea rivalry at a level above the U-18s.

SPORTS

Ohtani's Rehabilitation Continues as the Dodgers Clinch Without Him

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Shohei Ohtani is in the phase of resuming batting while on the injured list, according to Asahi Shimbun, as the Dodgers clinched their fifth consecutive division title without him in the lineup.

Tee work is the first rung of a hitter's return ladder, striking a stationary ball with no pitch recognition or timing demand, and it establishes whether the swing can be executed without aggravating whatever kept

the player out.

The progression from there is standardised: soft toss, then batting practice against live pitching, then simulated game situations, with each stage contingent on the previous one producing no setback.

For the Dodgers the timing matters because the postseason begins in early October, and a return has to be judged against readiness rather than availability.

Roki Sasaki's return to pitching has been discussed this week, which would restore another Japanese arm to a staff planning for the playoffs.

Yoshinobu Yamamoto's remark on the clinch, that he had worked hard all year, reflects a season in which he anchored a rotation that absorbed sustained attrition.

Japanese coverage of the Dodgers has grown to the point where the club's results are carried in domestic sports sections alongside NPB's own races, and Ohtani's rehabilitation is followed day by day.

Both the Ohtani and Sasaki timelines remain contingent on how each player responds, the standard qualification attached to any rehabilitation schedule announced before its completion.

The division title guarantees postseason baseball and the seeding that comes with it, and the question of who is available for it will shape the Dodgers' preparation through the season's final fortnight.

Ohtani's next step in the progression will be the item the Japanese coverage follows most closely.

SPORTS

How a Magic Number Falls, and What a Clinch Does Not Settle

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

SoftBank's magic number, which stood at two after Wednesday's win, fell further on Thursday when the Hawks beat Orix 7-1 and second-place Seibu lost 4-2 to Nippon-Ham, according to the results in the morning editions.

A magic number counts down the combination of a leader's wins and its nearest rival's losses required to clinch, and either event reduces it by one.

When the leader and the rival both play on the same night, the number can fall by two, which is why the arithmetic can resolve faster than the schedule alone suggests.

SoftBank's third consecutive championship is described as within reach, and the clinch could now arrive on any night when they win or Seibu lose.

What a clinch settles is the pennant. What it does not settle is anything beyond it.

The Climax Series admits the top three clubs in each league, with the second and third-place finishers meeting in a best-of-three First Stage and the survivor facing the pennant winner in a best-of-six Final Stage.

The pennant winner's advantage in that Final Stage is a single game already banked, which is substantial without being decisive, and clubs that have won the pennant comfortably have lost the Final Stage often enough to keep the format controversial.

A clinch also changes how a club manages the remaining fixtures, with pitching rotations adjusted to align the strongest starters with the postseason and regulars rested.

For Seibu and the clubs below them, the meaningful competition continues for the second and third places and the hosting rights that second place carries.

The Japan Series follows the Climax Series, matching the two league champions in the competition that determines the national title.

SPORTS

What It Means When the Yokozuna Deliberation Council Speaks

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Yokozuna Deliberation Council's public urging that Onosato show the confidence of a yokozuna, reported alongside Thursday's day-five results, is the kind of statement the council issues rarely and that the sport treats seriously.

The council is a body of outside figures, drawn from business, academia and the arts, that advises the Japan Sumo Association on promotion to and conduct at the sport's highest rank.

Its recommendations carry no formal force and considerable weight, since a yokozuna's standing

SPORTS

rests on the expectation that the rank is held by someone capable of competing at its level.

The council's interventions run on a scale from encouragement through caution to, in the most serious cases, a recommendation to consider retirement, and a public urging to show confidence sits at the mild end.

That it was issued at all, after a single loss on day four, reflects the position Onosato occupies as the sole yokozuna competing, with Hoshoryu absent and the institutional expectations of the rank concentrated on one wrestler.

A yokozuna cannot be demoted, which converts sustained poor performance into pressure to retire rather than into a lower rank, and the council's remarks are the instrument through which that pressure is applied.

Onosato's response on day five, a decisive yorikiri win over Yoshinofuji, was the answer the council would have wanted, and his four-and-one record keeps him within reach of the leaders.

The council's remark will follow him through the tournament, since a yokozuna told publicly to show confidence is one being watched for whether he can.

Japanese-born yokozuna carry an additional expectation, and Onosato's rank arrived with the weight of being the first for some years, which is part of why the council's attention is close.

Day six is today, and each bout will be read against the council's words.

SPORTS

Seven Gold Stars: The Veteran Who Beat an Ozeki and a Yokozuna on Consecutive Days

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Takayasu's defeat of Onosato on day four earned the veteran his seventh kinboshi, the gold star awarded to a maegashira-ranked wrestler for beating a yokozuna, a day after he had beaten Kirishima and derailed the ozeki's promotion bid.

A kinboshi carries a permanent salary increment for the rest of the wrestler's career, which is why seven of them describe a career as well as a record.

Takayasu reached the ozeki rank himself earlier in his career before injury returned him to the ranks below, and his continued competitiveness against the sport's summit is what has sustained his following.

Beating an ozeki in promotion contention on the third day and a yokozuna on the fourth is the kind of sequence that shapes a tournament without producing a championship, and it is the veteran's particular contribution.

The consequences of those two bouts have run through the tournament since. Kirishima's promotion case lost its possibility of an unblemished record; Onosato's loss drew the Yokozuna Deliberation Council's public attention.

Sumo's scheduling keeps the highest-ranked wrestlers apart until the second week, which means Takayasu's early bouts against an ozeki and a yokozuna were themselves a product of his own rank and the tournament's pairings.

Maegashira wrestlers who beat yokozuna are the sport's disruptors, and the gold star system exists to reward exactly that disruption.

Takayasu's own record through five days will determine whether the two wins are the foundation of a strong tournament or its high points.

The veteran's following draws on the narrative his career has produced: a wrestler who reached the summit's threshold, fell back and kept competing.

With no wrestler unbeaten after five days, the tournament he helped open up runs through the 27th.

SPORTS

Scoreboard and Fixtures

Compiled by the Sports Desk

SUMO, AKI BASHO DAY 5 (Sept. 17): Onosato (Y) def. Yoshinofuji, yorikiri, now 4-1. Kotozakura (O) lost to Minoumi, first defeat. Kirishima (O) 4 wins. Atamifuji 4 wins. Aonishiki (O) consecutive losses. No wrestler unbeaten. Day 6 today at Ryogoku Kokugikan.

NPB, PACIFIC LEAGUE (Sept. 17): SoftBank 7, Orix 1 — ninth consecutive win, magic number falling. Nippon-Ham 4, Seibu 2. Rakuten 5, Lotte 1.

NPB, CENTRAL LEAGUE (Sept. 17): Hanshin 7, Hiroshima 2 — seven-game losing streak ends. DeNA 2, Yakult 1.

MLB: Dodgers clinch a fifth consecutive division title. Ohtani (IL) resuming batting work. Sasaki return under discussion.

ASIAN GAMES, AICHI-NAGOYA: Opening ceremony Saturday, Sept. 19. Men's U-21 football, Group A: Japan 2-0 Hong Kong at Toyota Stadium; South Korea 4-1 Qatar; Japan v Kyrgyzstan Sunday, Sept. 20. Women's football: Japan completed group play with a win over Thailand. Women's volleyball: Japan 3-0 Nepal. Baseball: Samurai Japan (amateur) v China, Monday, Sept. 21, Toyohashi/Okazaki. Athletics opens Sept. 23.

RUGBY: Pacific Nations Cup final, Japan v Fiji, Saturday, Sept. 19. Semi-final: Japan 63, United States 14.

FOOTBALL, ACL ELITE EAST: Vissel Kobe won away, Muto scoring the winner. Kashiwa Reysol progressing in the group stage.

GOLF, ANA OPEN: First round, Taihei Sato leads at 66 (-6). Second round today.

U-18 BASEBALL: Asian Championship final, South Korea 2, Japan 0. Japan runners-up.

NPB MANAGEMENT: Akimi Iijima, former Mitsui & Co. president, nominated as next commissioner, to take office Dec. 7. Suspension of games during the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics under consideration.

SPORTS

Yorikiri: The Technique That Answered the Council

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Onosato's day-five win over Yoshinofuji came by yorikiri, the frontal force-out, and the technique deserves explaining because it was the right one for a yokozuna who had just been told to show confidence.

Sumo records the winning technique of every bout, drawing on a list of kimarite that runs to more than eighty, and yorikiri is the most common of them and the most direct.

It describes a wrestler who secures a grip on the opponent's belt, drives forward and forces him out of the ring without lifting or throwing, and it is the technique of a wrestler who has controlled the bout from the initial charge.

A yokozuna is expected to win by yorikiri and its relatives more often than by the pulls, slaps and evasions that a smaller or weaker wrestler uses, since the rank is supposed to embody the sport's straightforward power.

The Yokozuna Deliberation Council's public urging that Onosato show the confidence of his rank was, read in that light, a comment on manner as much as on results, and a frontal force-out on day five was the manner it wanted.

Kotozakura's loss to Minoumi on the same day, ending the last perfect record, was recorded with its own kimarite, and the technique by which an ozeki loses is examined as closely as the one by which a yokozuna wins.

Kinboshi, the gold star Takayasu earned by beating Onosato on day four, is awarded regardless of technique, though the manner of a maegashira's win over a yokozuna shapes how it is remembered.

The list of kimarite is maintained by the Japan Sumo Association and expanded occasionally as new techniques are recognised, though the great majority of bouts end in a dozen common ones.

Yorikiri, oshidashi and their variants account for most top-division results, which is why a tournament's story can be read partly in the distribution of techniques across its bouts.

Day six is today, and Onosato's kimarite will be read against the council's words as closely as his result.

SPORTS

Costs Up, Attention Down: The Two Numbers Mainichi Put Beside the Games

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Alongside Kosei Inoue's press conference declaring Team Japan united, Mainichi Shimbun's coverage of the Asian Games' eve noted two things that organisers would rather it had not: increased costs and decreased attention.

Both are familiar from every multi-sport games of the past decade, and Japan's own experience with the Tokyo Olympics, whose costs rose substantially from the original bid and whose public support wavered, made them familiar at home.

Costs rise because venues require more than planned, because security expands, and because the period between winning a bid and staging the event is long enough for every estimate to age.

Attention falls because the Games compete with a sporting calendar that has grown denser, with club football, professional baseball and overseas leagues all occupying the audience the Games once commanded.

The Aichi-Nagoya Games open on Saturday with competition already under way and with the domestic news dominated by a cabinet reshuffle, a central bank decision and a typhoon, which is the environment Mainichi's observation describes.

The host region's industrial base gave organisers a logistical advantage that a comparable prefecture without it would have lacked, and the venues distributed across Aichi were largely existing rather than built for the purpose.

Attention is the harder problem. A five-day holiday would ordinarily deliver an audience, and the survey finding that eight in ten households plan to stay close to home may deliver a television one, but a typhoon over Kanto on the holiday's second day will compete for it.

Inoue's presence as team leader was intended to lend the delegation exactly the recognisability that attention requires, and his remark that the team is united is the kind of statement made when the question has been asked.

Japan's medal prospects in swimming, judo, gymnastics and athletics will determine whether attention rises once results arrive, since a host nation winning is the surest cure for indifference.

The opening ceremony tomorrow is the moment at which the second of Mainichi's numbers is tested.

SPORTS

Seibu's Season Has Become a Matter of Someone Else's Arithmetic

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Seibu's 4-2 defeat by Nippon-Ham on Thursday counted toward SoftBank's magic number as surely as SoftBank's own 7-1 win over Orix, which is the position the second-place club now occupies: its results matter mainly for what they do to someone else's clinch.

The Pacific League's top has been settled in practice for weeks, with SoftBank's nine-game winning run leaving the pennant a question of when rather than whether.

Seibu's own objective has shifted to securing second place and the right to host the Climax Series First Stage, which carries real advantage across a short series in front of a home crowd.

Nippon-Ham's win over them is the kind of result that shapes that contest, and the third Climax Series place remains contested among the clubs below.

A magic number of two, standing after Wednesday, could have fallen to zero on Thursday had SoftBank won and Seibu lost, and the results in the morning editions are being read for exactly that arithmetic.

The clinch may arrive tonight, tomorrow or over the holiday weekend, depending on the fixtures, and SoftBank's management will already be planning the rotation adjustments a clinched pennant permits.

For Seibu the season's remaining fixtures are about position rather than pursuit, and the club's handling of that transition, resting regulars or pressing for second, will indicate how it regards its Climax Series chances.

The Pacific League's postseason format gives the pennant winner a one-game advantage in the Final Stage, which is substantial without being decisive, and second-place clubs have reached the Japan Series from that position.

Rakuten's 5-1 win over Lotte on the same evening was the other Pacific League result, with the lower positions still contested.

Full standings and the updated magic number will be published after this evening's results.

SPORTS

Kirishima's Case for Promotion Survives Day Five Intact

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Ozeki Kirishima stands on four wins after five days of the Autumn tournament, tied at the top with Atamifuji, and his case for promotion to yokozuna survives the first week in better shape than his day-three loss to Takayasu had threatened.

Promotion to sumo's highest rank is decided by the Japan Sumo Association on the recommendation of the Yokozuna Deliberation Council, and the customary benchmark is two consecutive championships or an equivalent record.

The flexibility in that phrase is where the council's discretion lives, and a strong runner-up finish following a championship has been accepted before.

Kirishima's loss on day three removed the possibility of an unblemished record that would have made the council's decision straightforward, but a four-and-one position at the top of the standings after five days is the position a promotion candidate needs to be in.

The council's public attention this week has been on Onosato, urged to show the confidence of his rank after his day-four loss, which places the council in the unusual position of assessing a yokozuna's conduct and an ozeki's promotion case in the same tournament.

Kotozakura's loss to Minoumi on Thursday removed the tournament's last perfect record, which means Kirishima leads rather than chases, a difference that matters for how the second week's scheduling treats him.

Sumo's convention keeps the highest-ranked wrestlers apart until the second week, and Kirishima's remaining bouts against Onosato, Kotozakura and Aonishiki will decide his tournament.

Aonishiki's consecutive losses have removed one of those opponents from championship contention, though an ozeki defending his rank fights no less hard.

A championship from this position would give the council a decision to make. A strong runner-up finish would give it an argument to have.

Day six is today, and each of Kirishima's remaining bouts will be read against the benchmark the council applies.

SPORTS

Atamifuji Is This Tournament's Surprise, and the Second Week Will Test Whether He Lasts

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Atamifuji's four wins after five days place him level with Kirishima at the top of the Autumn tournament, and his position is the kind that sumo's second week exists to examine.

The Isegahama stable wrestler, still in his early twenties, first drew attention with runner-up finishes in 2023 that marked him as a rising talent, and this tournament's opening is the first time since that he has led a basho this deep into its first week.

Sumo's scheduling convention keeps the highest-ranked wrestlers apart until the second week, which means a lower-ranked wrestler leading after five days has beaten opponents near his own level rather than the field's leaders.

That is not a criticism. It is the structure of the tournament, and it means his four wins establish form rather than superiority, which the coming days will test against the ozeki and the yokozuna.

The scheduling department will now pair him against the field's leaders sooner than his rank would ordinarily require, since a leader's record must be tested before it can be rewarded.

A wrestler who reaches the second week at the top of the standings and holds his position there is a championship contender; one who does not has had a good first week.

Isegahama has produced yokozuna and ozeki across its history, and a young wrestler from the stable leading a tournament carries the expectations that lineage produces.

Kotozakura's loss on Thursday, which ended the last perfect record, opened the tournament in a way that gives a wrestler like Atamifuji a genuine path rather than a consolation prize.

SPORTS

With Hoshoryu absent, Onosato beaten once and Aonishiki twice, the field is more open than a tournament with a full complement of yokozuna and ozeki would allow.

His bouts from day six will be scheduled with the leaders in view, and the tournament's story will turn partly on how a young wrestler handles the attention that leading brings.

SPORTS

Two Losses in a Row Turn Aonishiki's Tournament From Pursuit to Defence

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Aonishiki's consecutive losses on days four and five have changed the character of the Ukrainian-born ozeki's tournament, from a championship pursuit that began with three wins to a defence of the eight wins that keep his rank secure.

He returned to ozeki this September after a 12-3 finish at sekiwake in July triggered the automatic restoration sumo's rules grant a recently demoted ozeki who posts ten or more wins in the following tournament.

That rule cuts both ways. An ozeki with a losing record is placed on notice, and a second consecutive losing record demotes him, which means a wrestler back at the rank for one tournament is defending it immediately.

Two losses in the first five days do not threaten that defence on their own. Eight wins from the remaining ten bouts is achievable, and ozeki have recovered from worse starts.

What the losses remove is the margin for further error, and the second week's scheduling will bring him against Onosato, Kirishima and Kotozakura, the bouts in which an ozeki's record is decided.

Aonishiki reached the rank in fourteen tournaments from his professional debut in September 2023, the fastest promotion since the modern six-tournament calendar was introduced in 1958, and the speed of that ascent has made his form a subject of unusual attention.

His three top-division championships, the first of which came at Fukuoka in November 2025 with a playoff win over Hoshoryu, established him as the most closely watched yokozuna candidate in years.

A tournament spent defending the rank rather than contending for the championship defers that candidacy without ending it, since the council assesses a wrestler across tournaments rather than within one.

The sport's rules give him a clear target: eight wins, which secures the rank and resets the calculation for November.

Day six is today, and the first of his remaining bouts will indicate whether the two losses were a lapse or a pattern.

SPORTS

Nadeshiko Complete the Group and Turn Toward the Rounds That Decide

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Nadeshiko Japan completed their preliminary matches with a convincing win over Thailand, according to the Games coverage, finishing the group stage they had opened with an 8-0 victory and turning toward the knockout rounds.

The group stage in a tournament of this kind is a formality for a side of Japan's standing, and the knockout rounds are where the tournament's genuine contenders separate.

Japan's women's programme carries a pedigree few in Asia can match, built on the 2011 World Cup title and sustained since by a domestic league and youth structure that has continued producing internationally competitive players.

Asian competition has grown more demanding as programmes across the region have invested, with Australia's confederation switch and China's continued development both raising the standard.

Host advantage tends to matter most in the tight fixtures decided by fine margins, with familiar venues, no travel and home support all contributing.

Japan's tactical identity has consistently emphasised technical passing over physical contest, an approach that has succeeded against larger opponents and

occasionally struggled against organised defensive blocks.

The knockout schedule and its venues will determine the weather's relevance, with Typhoon No. 25's approach to eastern Japan a consideration for any fixture scheduled toward the Pacific coast over the holiday.

The men's under-21 side plays its second group match against Kyrgyzstan on Sunday, giving Japanese football two tournaments running in the same Games.

The women's programme has its own expectations at continental level, and a Games gold on home soil would be a marker for a squad rebuilding toward the next World Cup cycle.

The opening ceremony tomorrow marks the formal start of a competition the football tournaments have already begun.

SPORTS

The Competition That Gives Japan a Final to Play Between World Cups

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan's Pacific Nations Cup final against Fiji tomorrow is the fixture the competition exists to produce, and the tournament's own history explains why.

The Pacific Nations Cup was established to give the Pacific island nations and the second tier of Asian and American rugby regular competition between World Cups, a period in which such sides otherwise struggled to find opponents.

Japan's participation has made the competition its principal annual test, and the national side's development through the 2015 and 2019 World Cup cycles was shaped partly by the fixtures it provided.

Fiji's rugby is built on a running game and offloading skill that no other nation quite replicates, and the islanders have historically been the competition's most dangerous side.

Japan's 63-14 semi-final win over the United States was a statement of the gap between the Japanese programme and the American one, with nine tries describing a side that controlled possession and converted it at will.

Fiji will not concede possession that way. Japanese sides that have beaten them have done so by controlling the ball and denying the space in which the Fijian game thrives, which requires a discipline the semi-final did not test.

Japan's domestic League One has professionalised the player base, and the national squad drawn from it carries more depth than the sides that produced the earlier World Cup performances.

The final's timing places it on the same day as the Asian Games opening ceremony, giving Japanese sport two marquee events on a single Saturday.

A win would give the national side a title in a year that has otherwise been about rebuilding, and a loss to Fiji would be no disgrace against a side of that quality.

The venue and kickoff will determine whether Typhoon No. 25's approach affects the fixture, with the storm's outer bands reaching eastern Japan from Saturday.

SPORTS

Amateurs Carry Japan's Baseball Hopes While the Professionals Debate an Olympic Pause

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Samurai Japan amateur team opens its Asian Games campaign against China on Monday, with training intensified during its camp, according to the team's official channels, and the tournament illustrates a division in Japanese baseball that the professional owners are simultaneously debating.

Asian Games baseball is contested by amateur and semi-professional squads rather than by NPB's professionals, which is why the suspension of official games during the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics is a separate question under consideration.

Japan's amateur system, drawing on university and corporate teams, is deep enough that the squad assembled for the Games is competitive against most of the region's professional selections.

South Korea has historically fielded professionals at the Games in pursuit of the military service

exemption that a gold medal carries for its athletes, which has made the Japan-Korea fixture the tournament's defining contest.

The U-18 Asian Championship, which Japan lost to South Korea in the final this week, is the most recent measure of that rivalry at youth level.

NPB suspended its season for the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, allowing a full-strength squad that won the gold medal, and the precedent is the reference for the current discussion about Los Angeles.

Major League Baseball has consistently declined to pause its own season, which means Japanese players established there would remain unavailable regardless of what NPB decides.

Akimi Iijima, the former Mitsui & Co. president nominated as NPB's next commissioner, will take office in December with the Olympic question among the first on his desk.

Toyohashi and Okazaki, the venues for Monday's opener, sit in Aichi's eastern and central districts, well west of the typhoon's expected track over Kanto.

Whether the amateurs deliver a gold on home soil will shape the argument about whether the professionals should be asked to.

CULTURE

Higan Begins Sunday, Typhoon or Not

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Higan, the seven-day observance centred on the Autumn Equinox, begins on Sunday and runs through the following Saturday, and it proceeds in most weather because its purpose is not recreational.

The word refers to the other shore, the far side of the river separating this world from the next in Buddhist imagery, and the equinox's balance of day and night has long been read as a moment of nearness between them.

Families visit graves, clean memorial sites, replace flowers and light incense, practices that vary in detail by region and family but share a common shape, and temples hold services through the week.

Ohagi, sweet rice dumplings coated in red bean paste, are the food most associated with the autumn observance, their name derived from the bush clover that blooms in the season.

This year's higan opens under a typhoon forecast, with warning-level rain expected across Kanto on Sunday and Monday, and the question for households is not whether to visit but when.

Many will shift their visits to the second half of the week, when the storm is expected to have passed and improvements are forecast, which will concentrate cemetery traffic into fewer days.

Respect for the Aged Day on Monday, the possible day of the typhoon's closest approach, and the Autumn Equinox on Wednesday give the week two public holidays around which the observance is organised.

The centenarian count that passed 100,000 this week gives Respect for the Aged Day a statistical backdrop it did not have when the holiday was established.

For families dispersed by work and education, the equinox week is one of the fixed points at which reunion is expected, a function it shares with the New Year and the summer Obon period.

Cemeteries and temple grounds see their heaviest visitor traffic of the year during the two higan periods, and municipalities in some areas arrange additional transport.

CULTURE

The Autumn Calendar Meets a Typhoon on Its Busiest Weekend

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Japan's autumn observances cluster in the coming week, and this year they arrive with a typhoon forecast to reach Kanto on the second day of a five-day holiday.

Silver Week, the September counterpart to spring's Golden Week, is a calendar accident that occurs only when Respect for the Aged Day and the Autumn Equinox fall close enough to bridge, and this year's is the first five-day version in eleven years.

The Asian Games open in Aichi on Saturday, placing a major international event at the start of a period normally given to domestic observance, and the host region's forecast is favourable.

Higan begins Sunday, and grave visits proceed in most weather, though households across eastern Japan may shift theirs to the improving second half of the week.

Autumn shrine festivals run through the following weeks, and organisers across Kanto face the decision every festival committee dreads, between proceeding under rain and postponing an observance whose date carries religious meaning.

The rugby national team's final against Fiji on Saturday and the Asian Games baseball opener on Monday add sporting fixtures to a calendar already dense.

Reading Week, the autumn campaign established in 1947, and the foliage forecasts that follow the equinox complete a sequence that has organised Japanese cultural life for longer than any of its elements have existed in their current form.

A month of overcast weather across the eastern Pacific coast has already complicated the foliage outlook, since colour change responds to sunshine as well as to falling temperatures.

Eight in ten households have told Sankei News they plan to stay close to home for the holiday, which means the observances will be conducted locally by more people than usual.

The weather has an asymmetric effect on such a week, redirecting rather than cancelling, and the second half of the holiday is forecast to improve in some areas.

CULTURE

The Autumn of Reading, and the Campaign That Made It Official

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Reading Week in the autumn dates to 1947, established in the immediate postwar period on the principle that a country rebuilding needed to read, and it has been observed every year since with a campaign coordinated by publishers and libraries.

The phrase associating autumn with reading predates the campaign considerably, drawing on the season's cooler evenings and longer nights as the natural time for it.

This year's cooler evenings arrived early, with a month of overcast weather across eastern Japan producing the indoor conditions the phrase describes before the calendar reached them.

Japan's publishing industry has faced the same pressures as its counterparts elsewhere, with print sales declining and digital formats growing, and the annual campaign is one of the ways it maintains public attention on books as objects.

Bookshops have closed across the country at a rate that has left many municipalities without one, and library visits have taken on a share of the function that browsing once served.

The survey finding that eight in ten households plan to stay close to home over the holiday, and the typhoon forecast that may keep them indoors, will give the season's reading an audience it might not otherwise have found.

School reading programmes run alongside the campaign, and the tradition of a summer reading list gives way in autumn to the recommended titles that publishers and critics circulate.

Literary prizes cluster in the autumn and winter, with the announcements timed to the season's reading and the gift-giving that follows.

The Tsuchiura First High School philosophy club's book, reported earlier this month, is the kind of unexpected title the campaign exists to draw attention to.

For a country whose cultural calendar is organised around seasons, the autumn of reading is an observance as fixed as any festival, and this year the weather has arranged it.

CULTURE

Ohagi: The Sweet That Marks the Equinox

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

Higan begins on Sunday, and in kitchens and confectioners across the country the sweet that marks it is already being made: ohagi, glutinous rice pressed into ovals and coated in sweetened red bean paste.

The name comes from hagi, the bush clover that blooms in early autumn, and the spring version of the

CULTURE

same sweet is called botamochi, after the peony, which is the seasonal calendar expressed as confectionery.

The rice is cooked, lightly mashed so that grains remain visible, and shaped by hand; the coating is either tsubuan, a coarse paste with whole beans, or koshian, strained smooth, and families divide on which is correct with a firmness that outsiders find surprising.

Variations coat the rice in kinako, roasted soybean flour, or in black sesame, and some regions add walnut or edamame paste in a green the autumn version wears with particular grace.

Ohagi are offered at family altars and graves during the observance, and eaten afterward, which is the sequence that turns a sweet into a ritual.

Confectioners report that the observance is among their busiest periods of the year, and department store food halls stock the sweet in quantities that would seem excessive on any other week.

Home preparation persists, particularly among older households, and the sweet is among the recipes that grandparents pass on with the observance itself.

This year the typhoon forecast for Sunday and Monday may keep families indoors on the observance's first days, which is a circumstance the sweet's kitchen origins suit better than most.

The rice harvest that the storm threatens is the same rice the sweet is made from, and the connection between the field and the altar is one the observance has always carried.

A country whose cultural calendar is organised around seasons marks the equinox with a sweet named for a flower, and the practice has survived every modernisation that was supposed to end it.

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ADDITIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

STOCK MARKET REOPENS AFTER VOLATILE WEEK: Tokyo markets resumed trading Monday following Friday's 1.93% decline, with investors weighing a full week of central bank decisions ahead, including both the Federal Reserve and Bank of Japan meeting within days of each other for the first time in recent memory.

CHUBU ELECTRIC INTERIM LEADERSHIP EXPECTED THIS WEEK: The utility is expected to name interim leadership following Sunday's dual resignation of its president and chairman, with permanent successors likely to take considerably longer given the scale of the Hamaoka data-integrity review still underway.

OKINAWA TRANSITION TIMELINE TAKES SHAPE: Prefectural officials in Naha began preliminary transition planning Monday as Genta Koja's incoming administration works to staff key positions ahead of his formal inauguration, a process that in past Okinawa gubernatorial transitions has typically extended several weeks.

MORE SPORTS AND CULTURE NOTES

NPB PENNANT RACES ENTER FINAL STRETCH: Both the Central and Pacific League races remain genuinely contested with weeks of the regular season still to play, following a weekend that saw Hanshin's lead over Yomiuri narrow further even as SoftBank's own Pacific League position looks increasingly secure.

AKI BASHO FIELD DESCRIBED AS UNUSUALLY DEEP: Sumo commentators continue describing this September's tournament as carrying more credible championship contenders than several recent Aki Basho editions, a dynamic that could make the back half of the fifteen-day tournament considerably more competitive than Aonishiki's status as favorite might otherwise suggest.

ASIAN GAMES BROADCAST COVERAGE EXPANDS: Domestic broadcasters have expanded coverage hours for the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games relative to recent editions hosted outside Japan, reflecting both the host-nation advantage in broadcast rights negotiation and genuine anticipated public interest in Japan's first Asian Games hosting role since 1994.

MORE NATIONAL NOTES

MOUNT TOKACHI EVACUATION ORDER REMAINS IN EFFECT: The evacuation order covering the hot spring area near Mount Tokachi remained in effect Monday, with the Japan Meteorological Agency's Level 3 alert continuing to restrict mountain entry pending further monitoring of seismic activity.

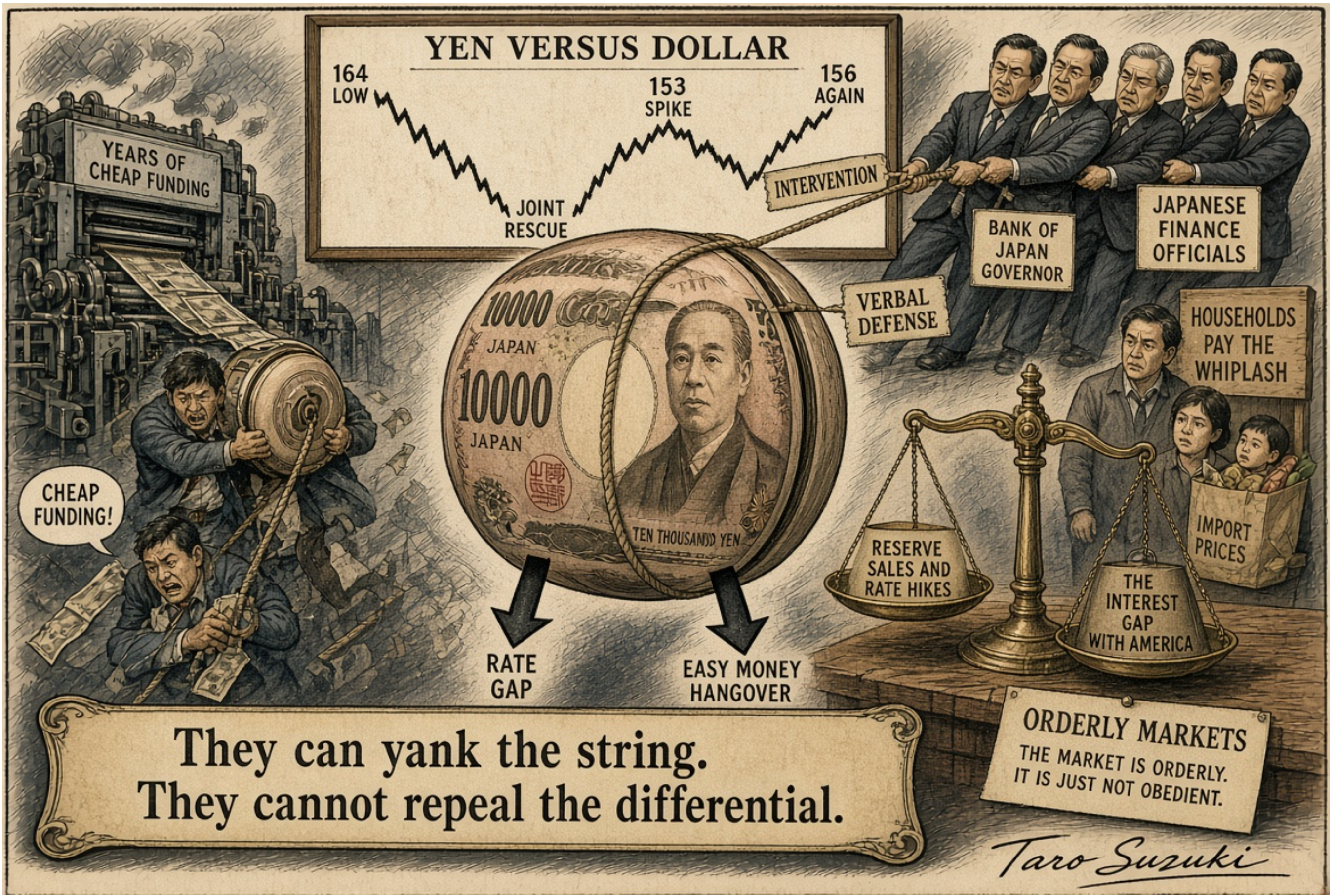
MIC RECORDS QUESTION AWAITS FORMAL RESPONSE: The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications had not issued a detailed public response as of Monday to reporting that chat logs documenting misconduct may have been deleted following a disclosure request, despite legal requirements that such records be preserved.

AUTUMN RAIN FRONT TO BRING WEEK OF WET WEATHER: The stalled seasonal rain front is expected to keep Sea of Japan-facing prefectures under periodic heavy rain through much of the coming week, a pattern forecasters say is typical for mid-September even as this year's specific timing has drawn additional attention given ongoing recovery efforts elsewhere in the country.

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

MONDAY, SEPT. 14: Asian Games open in Aichi-Nagoya. Tokyo markets reopen after the weekend. Gulf and Iranian foreign ministers meet in Salalah, Oman. Aki Basho Day 2 at Ryogoku Kokugikan.

EDITORIAL & OPINION



"They can yank the string. They cannot repeal the differential."
Cartoon by Taro Suzuki

EDITORIAL

They Can Yank the String. They Cannot Repeal the Differential.

On the morning the Bank of Japan is expected to raise rates to their highest since 1995, Taro Suzuki's cartoon says the currency is not obeying. He is right about the mechanism and half right about the remedy

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki's cartoon this morning is built around a yo-yo. The disc is a ten-thousand-yen note rolled into a wheel, Shibusawa Eiichi's face on its side, and the string runs up out of the frame to a rope on which five men in suits are hauling. Their labels are the Bank of Japan governor and Japanese finance officials, and the tags on the rope read INTERVENTION and VERBAL DEFENSE.

Above them is a chart headed YEN VERSUS DOLLAR. It traces a line from a point marked 164 LOW, down through a trough labelled JOINT RESCUE, up to a peak marked 153 SPIKE, and back down to a final point marked 156 AGAIN. That last figure is the one on this morning's front page.

Below the yo-yo two arrows point downward, labelled RATE GAP and EASY MONEY HANGOVER. To the left a printing press marked YEARS OF CHEAP FUNDING spools banknotes into a bin, and two men strain to hold the reel while one of them shouts CHEAP FUNDING! To the right a brass scale weighs RESERVE SALES AND RATE HIKES against THE INTEREST GAP WITH AMERICA, and the gap side sits heavily down. Beside it a family holds a grocery bag labelled IMPORT PRICES under a sign reading HOUSEHOLDS PAY THE WHIPLASH. A placard in the corner reads ORDERLY MARKETS: the market is orderly, it is just not obedient.

The caption: they can yank the string. They cannot repeal the differential.

It is a precise piece of work, and the precision is in the chart. Suzuki has drawn the yen's month as the market has lived it: a low, a coordinated intervention, a sharp appreciation, and then a slide back that has now returned the currency to 156 after the Federal Reserve's increase on Wednesday night. Nikkei's own characterisation this morning, that the overnight fall represents roughly half of the correction made to the yen's first-half-of-September appreciation, is the same arc in words.

The argument the caption makes is that intervention manages volatility and not level. Officials can sell reserves and can talk, and the currency will jump when they do, and then it will return to wherever the difference between American and Japanese interest rates says it should be. The rope is real. The string it pulls is attached to something heavier than the men pulling it.

That argument is correct, and it is worth saying plainly on the morning the Bank of Japan announces its decision, because the decision will be read as though it were the remedy the cartoon says does not exist.

A rise to 1.25%, the highest since April 1995, narrows the gap with the dollar by a quarter of a point. The Federal Reserve widened it by a quarter of a point on Wednesday. The differential this evening will be roughly what it was on Tuesday, which is why the market has priced the Japanese move fully and moved the yen the other way regardless.

The cartoon's scale makes the same point with more economy than an editorial can. Reserve sales and rate hikes sit on one pan. The interest gap with America sits on the other. The gap is heavier, and it will remain heavier for as long as the Federal Reserve's target range sits two and a half points above Japan's policy rate, which after today it still will.

So far the drawing and the morning's news agree. Where the cartoon requires a correction is in what it leaves off the lighter pan, and the omission matters because it is where policy actually lives.

The differential is not a natural constant. It is the product of decisions on both sides of the Pacific, and the Japanese half of it is being changed, slowly and with visible reluctance, by the same institution the cartoon draws hauling on a rope. The Bank of Japan has gone from negative rates to 1.00% and, if the forecasts hold, to 1.25% today. Each step narrows the gap. None closes it.

That is not the same as saying the differential cannot be repealed. It is saying it cannot be repealed quickly, and that the reasons it cannot are on the printing press at the left of the frame rather than on the rope at the right.

YEARS OF CHEAP FUNDING is the most honest label in the drawing. A decade and more of zero and negative rates built an economy, a financial system and a government balance sheet on the assumption that money cost nothing. Households took variable mortgages. Corporations borrowed to hold cash. The state ran deficits whose servicing cost was, for practical purposes, zero.

Unwinding that is what the EASY MONEY HANGOVER arrow describes, and it constrains the pace at which the bank can raise rates far more than any consideration of the currency does. Long-term yields at their highest since 1996 are the market telling the government what its borrowing now costs, and every quarter-point the bank adds compounds across a debt stock three decades in the making.

Which brings the argument to the pan the cartoon does not draw at all. The government approved on Tuesday a consumption tax cut costing roughly five trillion yen a year with no identified source of funding, and completed its cabinet reshuffle this week keeping in place the ministers who approved it, describing the continuity as responsible and proactive fiscal policy.

An unfunded five trillion yen commitment weighs on the yen. It does so through the bond market, which prices additional issuance before it arrives, and through expectations, which price a government that spends more and taxes less as one that will need its central bank to stay accommodative for longer than it would otherwise. That is a thumb on the heavier pan, applied by the same officials drawn pulling the rope.

The cartoon cannot draw that, because a drawing of the finance ministry pulling on a rope and simultaneously loading the opposite scale would be an illustration of a contradiction rather than a cartoon. But it is the contradiction the finance minister will be asked about this afternoon, and it is the reason the households in the corner of the frame are holding a bag marked IMPORT PRICES.

Import prices are where the differential becomes a kitchen-table matter. Energy priced in dollars and converted at 156 costs more in yen than the same energy converted at 153, and food follows with a lag. The gasoline subsidy reached a record 51 yen a litre this week, which is the state paying to hold one visible price below where the currency would otherwise put it, at a fiscal cost that widens the very gap the subsidy is compensating for.

The sign reading HOUSEHOLDS PAY THE WHIPLASH is therefore accurate in a way the cartoonist may not have fully intended. The whiplash is not only the currency's month of swings. It is the sequence of policies, each addressing the last one's consequences, that leaves the household paying at every stage: for the cheap funding through the currency, for the currency through import prices, for the import prices through subsidies, and for the subsidies through the deficit that weakens the currency.

There is a defence of the current posture available, and it should be stated. The Bank of Japan's caution reflects an institutional memory of tightening into weakness, an error it has been accused of in earlier cycles and one its current leadership has been visibly determined to avoid. Wage growth, the condition the bank has named at every stage, has strengthened but has not yet reached the smaller firms that employ most Japanese workers. A central bank that raised rates faster to defend the currency and choked a recovery in the process would have repealed nothing and broken something.

That defence has force. It is also a defence of the pace of Japanese policy rather than of the direction of Japanese fiscal policy, and the cartoon's scale is weighing both.

What would move the scale? The honest answer is that nothing available to Japanese officials moves it quickly, and the cartoon is right about that. What moves it slowly is a combination the drawing gestures at without naming: a policy rate that continues to normalise as wage growth permits, a fiscal position that does not hand the bond market a new reason for concern every week, and an energy supply that depends less on fuel priced in a currency Japan does not control.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

The last of those is the one that connects this morning's cartoon to the rest of the week's news. Crude above \$100 a barrel is the reason import prices hurt at 156 more than they would have at any point in the previous decade, and the nuclear restart programme that would reduce the exposure was set back this week by a utility whose seismic data could not be trusted. The differential is a monetary fact. The vulnerability to it is an energy policy choice.

ORDERLY MARKETS, the placard reads: the market is orderly, it is just not obedient. The finance ministry's own vocabulary is the target here. Officials describe intervention as a response to disorderly moves, and they are careful never to name a level, because naming a level invites the market to test it. The cartoon's joke is that the market has understood the distinction better than the officials intended. It moves in an orderly fashion, at a measured pace, toward wherever the differential points, and the rope does not change the destination.

The joint rescue drawn in the chart's trough is the exception that tests the rule. Coordinated intervention, with Washington's participation, did move the currency, and it moved it substantially, from 164 toward 153. The cartoon records that honestly. It also records what happened next, which is that the currency came back, because the differential had not changed.

The lesson the officials will draw is that intervention works when it is coordinated, timed to a market already overextended, and followed by a policy change that gives the move somewhere to settle. The first two conditions were met this month. The third was not, and the yen is at 156 again.

For the finance minister this afternoon, the question is not whether to pull the rope. It is whether the government she serves in is prepared to stop loading the other pan. That is a fiscal question dressed as a currency one, and the reshuffle that kept her in post was designed to avoid asking it.

For the governor at his own press conference, the question is how much of the differential the bank intends to close and over what period, and whether the answer changes now that the Federal Reserve has demonstrated it will raise rates against its own president's wishes.

It is worth pausing on the figure at the centre of the yo-yo, because Suzuki chose him deliberately. Shibusawa Eiichi, whose face appears on the ten-thousand-yen note, is remembered as the founder of modern Japanese capitalism, the man who built the first bank and argued that commerce and public ethics were the same enterprise. A currency wearing his face being yanked up and down on a string is a comment on what the enterprise has become.

Shibusawa's own era knew something about currency crises. The Meiji state's early decades were shaped by the struggle to establish a money the world would accept, and the lesson its founders drew was that a currency's value rested on the credibility of the institutions behind it rather than on any single intervention. The cartoon's rope-pullers would recognise the argument. They would be less comfortable with its application.

Credibility is the word that connects the two pans of the scale. Reserve sales and rate hikes are credible when they are consistent with everything else the state is doing. They are less credible when the state is simultaneously approving unfunded commitments, targeting a defence trajectory the bond market has already priced, and describing the combination as responsible. Markets do not price intentions. They price the sum of actions, and the sum this month has weighed on the currency more than the rope has lifted it.

The Federal Reserve's decision on Wednesday supplies a second lesson the cartoon does not draw but the week has delivered. An American central bank raised rates by unanimous vote against the stated wishes of an American president who has called for cuts and is now protesting. Whatever one thinks of the decision, it demonstrated that the differential's American half is set by an institution prepared to act on its own reading of the data. The Japanese half is set by an institution that has, for a decade, been asked to accommodate the state's fiscal choices, and the difference in posture is part of the differential.

None of this is an argument for the Bank of Japan to move faster than its own judgment permits. It is an argument that the government should stop making the

bank's judgment harder than it needs to be, and that the finance minister who signed off on the tax outline should be the one asked why the remedy for a weak currency is being sought from the central bank rather than from the cabinet she sits in.

The men on the rope in Suzuki's drawing are straining, and the drawing is sympathetic to them. It is less sympathetic to the system they are straining against, which is the system that put the currency on the string in the first place. YEARS OF CHEAP FUNDING is not a label on a machine someone else built. It is a label on the choices of successive governments, and the choice made on Tuesday belongs on the same press.

What the households in the corner of the frame would say, if the cartoon gave them a speech bubble, is that they did not vote for the differential and cannot repeal it either. They can only pay it, through the grocery bag in their hands, until the people pulling the rope stop loading the scale. That is the whiplash, and it is not the currency's. It is policy's.

Suzuki's caption is correct in every particular. The string can be yanked. The differential cannot be repealed, not by intervention and not by a single quarter-point, and the households in the corner will pay the whiplash until it narrows.

The correction the drawing needs is to the word cannot. The differential can be narrowed. It is being narrowed. It is being narrowed slowly, by an institution that has good reasons for its pace, while the government that appointed that institution's governor adds to the weight on the far pan with every unfunded measure it approves.

That is the argument for reading today's decision less as a currency event than as a fiscal one. A quarter-point rise will not move the yen. A government that stopped asking its central bank to compensate for its own choices might, eventually. The rope is in the hands of the men who are also, off to the right of the frame, tipping the scale.

They can yank the string. Whether they will stop leaning on the other side is the question the cartoon is too polite to draw and this morning's papers are too busy to ask.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 15: US Federal Reserve begins its two-day policy meeting. Asian Games competition continues across multiple venues.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 16: Bank of Japan begins its two-day policy meeting. Asian Games competition continues.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 17: Federal Reserve policy decision expected. Asian Games competition continues.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 18: Bank of Japan policy decision expected, with markets widely anticipating a move to 1.25%.

THROUGH SEPT. 27: Aki Basho grand sumo tournament continues daily at Ryogoku Kokugikan.

THROUGH LATE SEPTEMBER: Asian Games competition continues across the Aichi-Nagoya host region.

THROUGH OCT. 31: NPB regular season continues, followed by the Climax Series and Japan Series.

MARKET REFERENCE
NIKKEI 225 (Friday close): 64,011.34, down 1,259.61 points or 1.93%.

TOPIX (Friday close): 4,028.30, down 26.28 points or 0.65%.

YEN: approximately 153-154 per dollar.

CRUDE OIL (WTI): mid-\$104 range, briefly above \$108 in recent sessions.

BOJ POLICY RATE: 1.00%, with a move to 1.25% widely expected this week.

FED TARGET RANGE: 3.50%-3.75%, with a hike priced as more likely than not.

52-WEEK NIKKEI HIGH: 72,831.73, set June 22, 2026.

TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC ADVISORIES
KAN-ETSU EXPRESSWAY: Partial closures continue near Minakami, Gunma Prefecture, following Sunday's multi-vehicle collision. Drivers are advised to seek alternate routes and to check current conditions before departure.

MOUNT TOKACHI, HOKKAIDO: Eruption alert at Level 3. Mountain entry is restricted and an evacuation order remains in effect for the nearby hot spring area. Travelers to the Tokachi region should check current alert status before finalizing plans.

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SEA OF JAPAN COAST: A stalled autumn rain front is expected to bring heavy rain along the Sea of Japan side through much of the week. Residents in affected prefectures are advised to monitor local advisories, particularly in areas where soil is already saturated.

OKINAWA: Prefectural offices in Naha are conducting the handover to Governor Genta Koja's administration, with dialogue between the prefecture and the central government to resume gradually. Routine public services continue without interruption. Routine public services are expected to continue without interruption during the handover.

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PUBLIC NOTICES
TRANSPORT ADVISORY: The autumn rain front is stalled south of Japan. Heavy rain is expected along the Pacific side from southern Kyushu to southern Tohoku, with thunderstorms in places. Flooding and heavy rain caution is advised, and a tropical depression may develop into a typhoon during Silver Week.

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ADDITIONAL PROPERTY LISTINGS
AZABU: Renovated 3-bedroom townhouse, 142 sq m, private garden. Reference AZ-2026-08.

MINATO: New-build 2LDK near Tokyo Tower, 91 sq m. Reference MNT-227.

YOKOHAMA MINATO MIRAI: Waterfront 2LDK with bay views, 88 sq m. Reference YMM-331.

SETAGAYA: Family house, 4LDK, 168 sq m, near international school. Reference STG-813.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES
TRANSITION NOTICE: Prefectural offices in Naha are conducting the handover to Governor Genta Koja's administration, with dialogue between the prefecture and the central government to resume gradually. Routine public services continue without interruption.

This section is provided for informational purposes. The Japan Morning Post recommends consulting a licensed attorney or notary for matters requiring legal advice.

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TOMORROW IN THE JAPAN MORNING POST
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 16: The Federal Open Market Committee concludes its two-day meeting. The Bank of Japan begins its own two-day meeting. Asian Games competition continues in Aichi-Nagoya. The Aki Basho enters its fourth day. Coverage of Tuesday's standard land price release from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

EDITORIAL STANDARDS
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