

Bank of Japan Raises Rates to 1.25%, the Highest in 31 Years, and Says More Will Follow

The Nikkei rose 882 points on relief, the yen fell to 158 and was pulled back by rate checks, and Governor Ueda told a packed press conference that increases will continue as conditions warrant. The new rate applies from Thursday

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter, with Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter



Governor Kazuo Ueda takes questions at the Bank of Japan's headquarters in Nihonbashi on Friday afternoon after the policy board raised the rate to around 1.25%, the first increase since June and the highest level since April 1995. Photo: Bank of Japan

The Bank of Japan raised its policy interest rate on Friday from around 1.00% to around 1.25%, the highest level in approximately 31 years, since April 1995, according to Yomiuri Shimbun, Asahi Shimbun and Nihon Nogyo Shimbun. The increase takes effect from the 24th.

It is the first increase in three months, since June, and the shortest interval between increases since Governor Kazuo Ueda took office in 2023. That detail is the one the papers led with, because it says something the level alone does not: the bank has quickened its pace.

Ueda confirmed as much at his press conference on Friday afternoon, delivered from a lectern in the bank's headquarters in Nihonbashi before rows of reporters at laptops. Interest rates will continue to be raised depending on the situation, he said, according to NTV News, a formulation that commits the bank to a direction without committing it to a schedule.

The room in which he said it has heard the opposite sentence far more often. The stone building on the Nihonbashi River, completed in 1896 to Tatsuno Kingo's design and still the bank's home, is where the descent from the rates of 1995 was decided, cut by cut, through the financial crisis of the late 1990s, the zero-rate years, the quantitative easing of the 2010s and the negative rate that ended only in 2024. Friday's decision returned the policy rate to where it stood before that descent began.

The reasons the bank has cited are the ones that have shaped the week: crude oil above \$100 a barrel as the Gulf conflict enters its seventh month, a yen that has weakened sharply, and inter-company prices that have stayed high long enough to threaten consumer prices.

The governor described wage growth as continuing to strengthen, the condition the bank has named at every stage of the normalisation, while maintaining the caution he has expressed throughout about whether it reaches the smaller firms that employ most of the country's workers.

Markets received the decision as relief rather than shock. The Nikkei average closed at 65,018.95 yen, up 882.70 points or 1.38%, a third consecutive day of gains that at one point exceeded 1,300 points, according to Yomiuri Shimbun and Sankei News.

An intraday gain of more than 1,300 that settled at 882 describes a session in which the initial reaction overshot and profit-taking followed, the pattern that recurs when a feared event passes with less than was feared. The market had priced a quarter-point and worried about a larger move or language signalling a faster path; it received the quarter-point with a conditional sentence.

The TOPIX moved the other way, closing at 4,091.14, down 3.05 points. An index that weights by capitalisation falling while the price-weighted Nikkei surged describes a rally carried by a handful of

high-priced technology and growth names rather than by the market as a whole, and it is a rally to read carefully.

The currency had its own day. The yen temporarily fell to the low 158 range against the dollar, according to Yomiuri Shimbun's front page. Sankei News reported that it then surged to the high 156 range after the government and the Bank of Japan conducted rate checks.

A rate check is the step before intervention. Officials telephone dealers to ask the price at which they would trade, and the call itself is the message, since the market understands that a government asking the price is a government prepared to pay it. Friday's call moved the currency roughly two points without a single yen being bought, which indicates a market positioned heavily against the currency and nervous about being caught.

That the yen fell through 158 on the day the Bank of Japan raised rates is the clearest illustration yet of the argument Taro Suzuki's cartoon made on Friday morning: a quarter-point in Tokyo does not repeal a differential that the Federal Reserve widened by the same amount on Wednesday. The two central banks moved in opposite directions this week and the gap between them did not change.

The Federal Reserve's own week ended with the Dow closing down 95.40 points at 51,682.64 on Friday and the ten-year Treasury yield again around 5%, according to Yomiuri Shimbun, which is the environment the differential is measured against and the reason the currency market read Ueda's sentence as insufficient.

For households the decision arrives through two channels. Ordinary deposit interest rates are estimated to rise by 0.1%, according to Yomiuri Shimbun, and the same report pointed to an increased burden of variable-rate loans among younger borrowers, the generation that took mortgages against fourteen years of rising Tokyo land values on the assumption that rates only fell.

The arithmetic of those two channels is unequal. A household with a million yen on deposit earns an additional thousand yen a year; a household with a 30 million yen variable mortgage faces roughly 75,000 yen more, spread across the reset schedule the loan follows. The households most exposed to the second are the ones least helped by the first.

The rate also compounds across the state's own borrowing. Long-term government bond yields reached their highest since 1996 this week on reports of a defence spending target and a food consumption tax cut whose five trillion yen annual cost has no named funding source, and each quarter-point the bank adds is a quarter-point on a debt stock that has grown for three decades.

Politically the decision lands well. A Yomiuri emergency poll published this morning puts cabinet



The Bank of Japan's headquarters on the Nihonbashi River, completed in 1896. Every cut of the thirty-one-year descent from 1.25% was decided inside it. Photo: Bank of Japan

approval at 59%, recovered from its earlier level, with 59% approving the Japan Innovation Party's entry to the cabinet. The economy and employment were named as a priority by 90% of respondents and inflation countermeasures by 85%.

Those two figures explain why a rate increase that raises borrowing costs can be received as good news: households are telling the government that prices are the problem, and a central bank acting against them is acting on the public's stated priority. A rate rise is ordinarily unpopular. This one arrives with the public having already chosen prices over rates as the greater threat.

The other prices on the household's ledger this weekend point in different directions. The gasoline subsidy holds the pump price near 170 yen at a programme cost approaching 9 trillion yen, according to Asahi Shimbun. New rice is selling below old rice, with prices in the 2,000 yen range for the first time in two years. And the yen at 156 to 158 raises the cost of everything priced in dollars, which is the pressure the bank is answering.

Governor Ueda's tenure has been defined by the question of how fast a central bank can leave an emergency setting that lasted a quarter of a century without breaking what the setting was protecting. Friday's answer was: faster than before, and no faster than the situation allows. The interval since June is the shortest of his tenure. The language is unchanged.

The bank's next meeting is the question the market moved to within minutes of the announcement. Depending on the situation is the answer it has been given, and the situation includes a currency the officials had to telephone about, a typhoon bearing down on Kanto with a possible landfall on Monday, and a prime minister leaving the same day for New York and a summit with President Trump on Tuesday.

The Prime Minister will meet a president who spent the week protesting his own central bank's increase, and the currency consequences of that disagreement, which reached Tokyo's dealing rooms on Friday as 158, are among the things a Japanese leader might raise.

The rate takes effect on Thursday, the day after the Autumn Equinox. By then the typhoon will have passed, the Prime Minister will have addressed the United Nations, three days of American trading will have tested the rate checks, and the market will have decided whether 1.25% is a resting point or a waypoint.

On Friday afternoon, in a stone building that has spent thirty-one years cutting, the governor said the direction was up. The market believed him about the direction and doubted him about the pace, and the yen recorded the doubt at 158.

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WEATHER — TOKYO

24°C

Low 19°C · Partly cloudy

Sun
24°

Mon
23°

Tue
25°

Wed
26°

Typhoon No. 25 at Chichijima today, 975 hPa. Rain in Kanto from tonight, warning-level from Sunday afternoon, possible Boso landfall Monday. Full forecast, Page 10.

TODAY IN BRIEF

- BOJ raises the policy rate to around 1.25%, highest since April 1995, effective Thursday. Ueda: increases will continue depending on the situation.
- Nikkei 65,018.95, up 882.70; TOPIX 4,091.14, down 3.05. Yen to 158, back to 156 after rate checks. Dow 51,682.64.
- Yomiuri poll: cabinet approval 59%. Takaichi to New York Monday; Trump summit planned Tuesday.
- Asian Games open today in Nagoya; Japan fields a record 932 athletes. SoftBank clinch a third straight pennant.
- Typhoon No. 25 at Chichijima today; up to 200 mm across Kanto from Sunday, Boso landfall possible Monday. Government opens liaison office.

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MARKETS

Nikkei 225	65,018.95 ▲ 882.70
TOPIX	4,091.14 ▼ 3.05
USD/JPY	156-158
Fed target	3.75-4.00%
BOJ rate	1.25% from Sept. 24
US 10-year	about 5%
Dow	51,682.64 ▼ 95.40
Gasoline	¥169.90/litre

SPORTS AT A GLANCE

- Sumo, day 6: Onosato 5-1 (pull over Gonoyama). Kotozakura 5-1. Kirishima loses to Yoshinofuji, 4-2. Aonishiki 3-3. Day 7 today.
- NPB: SoftBank clinch a third straight Pacific League title (7-1 v Orix Thursday, ninth straight). Today v Rakuten, 2 p.m., Miyagi.
- Rugby: Pacific Nations Cup final, Japan v Fiji, today. Asian Games: U-21 Japan 2-0 Hong Kong; women's volleyball 3-0 Nepal.

THE HOLIDAY WEEKEND

- Today: Asian Games opening ceremony, Paloma Mizuho Stadium, Nagoya. Rugby final, Japan v Fiji. Typhoon 25 nearest Chichijima; rain reaches Kanto tonight.
- Sunday: Higan begins. Swimming, table tennis, badminton, judo begin at the Games. U-21 Japan v Kyrgyzstan. Warning-level rain in Kanto from the afternoon.
- Monday: Respect for the Aged Day. Possible Boso Peninsula landfall. Takaichi departs for New York. Samurai Japan v China, Toyohashi.
- Tuesday: Takaichi-Trump summit planned. Markets reopen. Wednesday: Autumn Equinox. Thursday: new BOJ rate takes effect.

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ALMANAC

- Sunrise 5:27 a.m. Sunset 5:43 p.m. Day length 12h 16m. Higan begins tomorrow. Respect for the Aged Day Monday; Autumn Equinox Wednesday.

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POLITICS

Takaichi to Address the UN and Meet Trump on Tuesday, With China the Subject

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

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi will visit New York from the 21st to the 24th to deliver a speech in the general debate of the United Nations General Assembly, according to Yomiuri Shimbun and Nihon Nogyo Shimbun. A summit meeting with President Trump is being planned for the 22nd.

The aim of the summit, as reported, is to align views on China before the US-China talks later this month, which places the meeting in a specific sequence: Tokyo speaks to Washington before Washington speaks to Beijing.

That sequence is the one Japan has sought at every comparable moment, since a US-China summit that reached agreements affecting Japanese interests without Japanese input would be the worst available outcome for a country whose economy depends on both.

Semiconductor export controls, rare earth supply, tariffs and the Middle East are the items on which alignment would matter, and each reaches Japanese companies through channels that do not require Japan's consent.

The timing has its own awkwardness. The Prime Minister departs on Monday, the day Typhoon No. 25 may make landfall on the Boso Peninsula, and the government has established an information liaison office at the Prime Minister's Office Crisis Management Center in anticipation.

A prime minister abroad during a domestic disaster is a situation Japanese governments have faced before and managed through the chief cabinet secretary, and Minoru Kihara's retention in that post is part of why the trip can proceed.

The UN speech itself will be read for what it says about the Gulf conflict, the Security Council reform Japan has pursued for decades, and the country's position on the Iranian school attack that a UN investigation team has characterised as a war crime.

The Trump summit follows the Federal Reserve's decision to raise rates against the President's stated wishes, a disagreement the President is protesting, and the currency implications of that disagreement are among the things a Japanese prime minister might raise.

Trade will be present whether or not it is on the formal agenda, with August's trade figures having shown the surplus with the United States down roughly 80% under the tariff arrangement Japan accepted last year.

The summit's planned date, the 22nd, is a day after the possible landfall and a day before the equinox holiday, which means the Prime Minister will be meeting the President with the storm's damage assessed and the domestic political calendar paused.

Whether alignment on China produces a shared position or merely a briefed one will be visible in what Washington says to Beijing afterward, which is the measure Tokyo has always had to wait for.

POLITICS

Cabinet Approval Recovers to 59% as Voters Name Prices and Jobs as the Priorities

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

A Yomiuri Shimbun emergency opinion poll conducted after the cabinet reshuffle puts approval for the Takaichi cabinet at 59%, a recovery from its earlier level, with 59% approving the appointment of Japan Innovation Party members to the cabinet.

The policy priorities respondents named are the ones the government would have wanted: the economy and employment at 90%, and inflation countermeasures at 85%.

Those figures describe an electorate whose attention is on the household budget rather than on the reshuffle's internal politics, which is a favourable environment for a government that has just cut the food consumption tax and whose central bank has just raised rates against inflation.

The approval of the Ishin appointment is the more notable number. A junior partner entering government usually costs the senior party something in the polls, and a majority approving the arrangement suggests the cooperation agreement has

been received as competence rather than as compromise.

Emergency polls are conducted quickly after events and reflect first impressions, which are not always durable, and the reshuffle's more contested moves, Hayashi's departure and Yanagi's appointment despite the funds scandal, may register differently once they have been examined in the Diet.

The 59% figure arrives as the Prime Minister prepares to leave for New York, and a leader travelling abroad with domestic approval recovered is in a stronger position at a summit than one travelling with it falling.

The priorities named, prices and jobs, are also a warning. A government whose approval rests on economic management is exposed to the economy, and the yen at 158, the rice paradox and a record gasoline subsidy are all economic stories with household consequences.

The extraordinary Diet session ahead will take up the consumption tax measure whose five trillion yen annual cost has no named funding source, and the poll's numbers give the government room to defend it and reason to be careful.

Opposition parties, reorganising under a provisional name, have not yet found the argument that would convert household anxiety about prices into disapproval of the government addressing them.

Whether the recovery holds through the session, the typhoon and the UN trip will be measured in the next regular poll, and emergency polls are the beginning of a trend rather than its confirmation.

POLITICS

Lower House Electoral Reform to Be Settled by End of October, With an Independent Body Broadly Agreed

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Reform of the House of Representatives electoral system will be decided by the end of next month, and the establishment of a third-party organisation to oversee it has been broadly approved, according to Yomiuri Shimbun and Asahi Shimbun.

Electoral reform in Japan has historically been the kind of question that parties agree to address and then address slowly, since every change to the system alters the arithmetic that put the incumbents in office.

A deadline of the end of October, with a third-party body broadly agreed, is therefore a more concrete step than the subject usually produces, and it arrives in a session that will already be dense.

The current system combines single-seat constituencies with proportional representation blocs, a design introduced in the 1990s that has been criticised since for the disparity in the value of votes between rural and urban constituencies.

Courts have repeatedly found that disparity to be in a state of unconstitutionality without invalidating elections, a formulation that has kept pressure on the Diet without forcing it to act.

An independent body would remove the drawing of boundaries and the allocation of seats from the parties whose fortunes they determine, which is the reform's principle and the reason it has taken so long to agree.

Which parties gain and lose from any specific redesign is the calculation that has stalled previous efforts, and a third-party organisation is a way of making that calculation someone else's responsibility.

The Japan Innovation Party, now in government, has made electoral and administrative reform central to its identity, and its presence in the coalition gives the reform a constituency inside the cabinet.

The opposition's own reorganisation, with a provisional new party name and further realignment under consideration, means the parties that would negotiate the reform's details are themselves in flux.

The end of October is six weeks away, and a decision by then would place the reform's outline before the Diet in the same session as the tax measure and the defence spending trajectory, which is a great deal for one session to carry.

POLITICS

Five Ishin Members Take Vice-Ministerial and Secretary Posts; Arimura to Chair Upper House Budget Committee

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

Five members of the Japan Innovation Party have been appointed as vice ministers and parliamentary secretaries, extending the party's presence in government beyond its single cabinet seat, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

In the House of Councillors, Arimura will chair the Budget Committee and Fujikawa will chair the Steering Committee, appointments reported as Liberal Democratic Party policy.

Vice-ministerial and parliamentary secretary appointments typically follow the cabinet itself by a few days, and their distribution among coalition partners is where the practical depth of a cooperation agreement becomes visible.

Five posts is a substantial share for a party with one cabinet minister, and it places Ishin members inside ministries where policy is drafted rather than only at the table where it is approved.

The upper house committee chairmanships are the more consequential of the two announcements. The Budget Committee is where the government's fiscal programme is examined, and its chairman controls the scheduling and conduct of that examination.

That control matters this session, since the consumption tax outline with its unfunded five trillion yen cost will pass through the Budget Committee, and a chairman drawn from the governing side shapes how hard the questions are pressed.

The Steering Committee manages the chamber's business, which is the function that Asahi Shimbun's editorial this week worried about when it warned of a loss of deliberation following personnel changes.

Both chairmanships arrive after the replacement of the Liberal Democrats' upper house secretary-general over a reported disagreement about parliamentary affairs, and they complete a reorganisation of the chamber's management ahead of the session.

Yomiuri's poll finding that 59% approve of Ishin's entry to the cabinet gives the party a mandate for its expanded role that a less favourable number would have denied it.

How the five vice ministers and secretaries perform in their ministries will determine whether the cooperation agreement delivers the party influence over drafting or only the appearance of it.

POLITICS

Koizumi: Revision of the Security Documents Will Determine the Region's Future

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said in a speech that the revision of the three security documents will determine the future of our country and region, according to Asahi Shimbun.

The three documents, covering the national security strategy, the defence build-up programme and the force structure, were last revised in 2022 in a package that marked the most substantial shift in Japanese defence posture in decades.

That revision introduced counterstrike capability, raised the spending trajectory and identified China as the principal strategic challenge in language more direct than previous documents had used.

The current revision proceeds on an accelerated timeline and against a backdrop that now includes reports of a 3.5% of output spending target, a figure that contributed to bond selling this week.

Koizumi's framing, that the revision determines the region's future as well as the country's, is a claim about Japan's role rather than only its defence, and it aligns with the Prime Minister's stated purpose in meeting President Trump on Tuesday: to coordinate on China before Washington's own summit with Beijing.

The loss of a Global Hawk surveillance aircraft off Tottori this week provided an illustration of how quickly capability can be reduced and how slowly restored, and the revision will need to address the surveillance gap it left.

Personnel remains the constraint that spending addresses least easily, with recruitment falling short of targets in a shrinking working-age population.

Alliance coordination shapes the documents substantially, since Japanese capability is planned to complement American forces rather than duplicate them, and the Trump summit will be the first opportunity to test whether the current administration's expectations match Tokyo's plans.

The revision's completion will require cabinet approval, and Koizumi's retention in the reshuffle means the minister who has managed the process will be the one who brings it to the table.

For the extraordinary Diet session the documents' fiscal implications will sit alongside the tax measure and the electoral reform in an agenda that grows heavier by the day.

POLITICS

Communist Party's Yuka Asaga Enters the Yokohama Mayoral Race

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent, Tokyo Bureau

Yuka Asaga of the Japanese Communist Party has announced her candidacy for the Yokohama mayoral election, according to Asahi Shimbun, adding a third declared entrant to a race that already includes a former House of Representatives member.

Yokohama is Japan's second-largest city by population, and its mayoralty carries policy weight across infrastructure, housing and economic development in the greater Tokyo region.

Kazuma Nakatani, the former House of Representatives member, announced his candidacy earlier this month, bringing national-level political experience to a municipal contest.

The Communist Party contests mayoral races in major cities regularly, and its candidates typically draw a consistent base rather than a winning coalition, which shapes the race by defining the left's position rather than by threatening to take the office.

Asaga's platform has not been detailed in the available reporting, though the party's municipal campaigns generally emphasise public services, housing affordability and opposition to large-scale development.

The Yokohama contest will be conducted against a national political backdrop that includes a reshuffled cabinet, a consumption tax measure and a Yomiuri poll showing voters prioritising the economy and prices.

Municipal elections in large cities have periodically produced results that national parties did not anticipate, and Yokohama's own recent history includes a mayoral race decided on the question of an integrated resort.

The city's school lunch contamination figures, reported this week, are the kind of local issue that mayoral campaigns turn on, and each candidate will be asked about them.

The election date and the full field will be confirmed as the campaign period approaches, with further candidates possible.

For Asaga the announcement establishes a presence in a race whose outcome will be shaped by which of the other candidates consolidates the non-Communist vote.

POLITICS

Koga Named to Lead LDP's Fukuoka Federation as Aso and Takeda Close Ranks

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent, Tokyo Bureau

House of Representatives member Atsushi Koga has been appointed chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party's Fukuoka Prefectural Federation, with Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso, Takeda and others having united behind the choice, according to Asahi Shimbun.

Prefectural federations manage the party's local organisation, candidate selection and campaign machinery, and their chairmanships are contested when a prefecture's Diet members belong to competing camps.

Fukuoka has been such a prefecture. Aso and Takeda represent different strands of the party's Kyushu politics, and their agreement on Koga's appointment resolves a division that had complicated the federation's operation.

POLITICS

The timing follows the cabinet reshuffle, in which Aso retained his position as deputy prime minister, and it suggests the party's most senior figure is using his standing to settle local arrangements ahead of the coming session.

Fukuoka's mayoral election, with four candidates in the field after the incumbent's decision not to run, gives the federation an immediate task in which unity matters.

Prefectural chairmanships also shape the selection of candidates for Diet seats, and a settled federation is better placed to prepare for whatever election comes next.

Koga's own standing in the prefecture and his relationships with the camps that agreed on him will determine whether the unity reported is durable or convenient.

Kyushu's politics carry particular weight in the party, since the region has produced prime ministers and remains a base for several of its most experienced figures.

The federation's next test will be the Fukuoka mayoral race, where an open field and no incumbent give the party an opportunity and an obligation.

For Aso, the appointment is a small demonstration of the influence his continuation in the cabinet preserves.

POLITICS

Hosono, Now Minister for Disaster Management, Has a Typhoon on His First Weekend

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

Goshi Hosono, appointed to the cabinet in this week's reshuffle, holds the disaster management portfolio, and his first public act in it has been to call on residents to check their hazard maps ahead of Typhoon No. 25, according to Mainichi Shimbun and TBS.

The government has established an information liaison office at the Prime Minister's Office Crisis Management Center, the standard first step when a storm's track threatens a populated region, and the office will escalate to a full response headquarters if the forecast landfall on the Boso Peninsula on Monday materialises.

Hosono's appointment had been reported ahead of the reshuffle as a return to cabinet by a politician whose career has crossed party lines, and whose experience of the 2011 disaster response in a previous government gives him a personal connection to the brief.

Disaster management sits within the Cabinet Office rather than in a line ministry, coordinating the fire and disaster management agency, the meteorological agency, the transport ministry and the prefectures whose alert systems reach residents directly.

The Prime Minister departs for New York on Monday, the day of the possible landfall, which places the domestic response in the hands of the chief cabinet secretary and the disaster minister for the storm's most consequential day.

Hosono's call to check hazard maps echoes the advice disaster officials give before every storm and that residents, by the officials' own assessment, mostly ignore.

The transport ministry's expanded list of restricted underpasses, published this week after three deaths in submerged vehicles, is a related document the minister will be asked about if the storm produces the flooding forecast.

The forecast calls for warning-level rain across Kanto from Sunday afternoon, up to 200 millimetres in places, and a possible landfall with storm-force winds on Monday, which is the scenario the liaison office was established for.

A minister's first disaster is the event by which the public forms its judgment of him, and Hosono's will be conducted while the Prime Minister is abroad.

The equinox holiday on Wednesday will find the country assessing what the storm left, and the minister accounting for the response.

POLITICS

Why Electoral Reform Keeps Returning: The Disparity Courts Have Called Unconstitutional

By William | Senior Political Analyst

The decision to settle lower house electoral reform by the end of October, with a third-party body broadly agreed, addresses a problem that Japanese courts have identified repeatedly without resolving.

The disparity in the value of a vote between the most and least populous constituencies has exceeded two to one at several recent elections, meaning a voter in a rural district has had more than twice the electoral weight of one in a metropolitan district.

Japan's Supreme Court has found that disparity to be in a state of unconstitutionality on several occasions, a formulation that declares the situation constitutionally defective without invalidating the election that produced it.

That formulation has kept pressure on the Diet to act while leaving the Diet to decide how, and the Diet has acted incrementally, adjusting seat allocations at the margin rather than redesigning the system.

The reason is arithmetic. Every reallocation of seats from rural to urban constituencies moves seats from areas where the governing party has historically been strongest to areas where it has been weakest.

An independent body would take the drawing of boundaries and the allocation of seats out of the parties' hands, which is the reform's principle and the reason every party has reasons to hesitate.

The current system's combination of single-seat constituencies and proportional representation blocs was itself a reform, introduced in the 1990s to replace multi-member districts that had produced factional competition within parties.

Each redesign has produced consequences its designers did not intend, and the proportional blocs that were meant to give smaller parties a foothold have become the route through which realignments like this month's opposition reorganisation occur.

A decision by the end of October would place a reform outline before a Diet session already carrying a tax measure, a defence spending trajectory and the fiscal questions both raise.

The disparity will be measured again at the next election, and whether the new body has changed the arithmetic by then is the test the reform will face.

POLITICS

The General Debate: What a Japanese Prime Minister Says at the UN and Who Listens

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

Prime Minister Takaichi's speech in the general debate of the United Nations General Assembly, during her visit to New York from the 21st to the 24th, follows a form that Japanese leaders have used for decades and that is read for its departures from it.

The general debate is the annual sequence of national statements that opens the Assembly's session, and each leader's speech is a summary of the country's foreign policy priorities delivered to a hall that is rarely full.

Japanese prime ministers have consistently used the platform to call for reform of the Security Council, on which Japan has sought a permanent seat for decades, and to affirm the country's commitment to nuclear disarmament as the only nation to have suffered atomic attack.

This year's speech will be read for what it says about the Gulf conflict, in its seventh month, and about the UN investigation team's finding that the attack on an Iranian school was an American war crime, which places Japan's principal ally at the centre of the Assembly's attention.

A Japanese leader addressing that finding must weigh the alliance against the country's stated commitment to international humanitarian law, and the language chosen will be examined in Washington as closely as in the hall.

The speech's timing, on the day after a possible typhoon landfall and the day before a summit with President Trump, means it will be delivered with domestic attention elsewhere and diplomatic attention on the meeting that follows.

Yomiuri's poll gives the Prime Minister standing at home that a leader travelling with approval falling

would lack, and 59% is the kind of number that makes a foreign trip a demonstration rather than a risk.

The summit's stated purpose, alignment on China before the US-China talks, is the trip's substance, and the speech is its public face.

The General Assembly's hall will contain representatives of every government Japan trades with, including China's, and a speech that positions Japan between Washington and Beijing will be heard by both.

What the Prime Minister says about the school will be the line the international press reports, whatever else the speech contains.

POLITICS

Yokohama's Mayoral Race Takes Shape With Three Declared Candidates

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent, Tokyo Bureau

Yuka Asaga's entry for the Communist Party brings the declared field in Yokohama's mayoral election to three, following Kazuma Nakatani's candidacy earlier this month and the earlier declaration of a third entrant.

Yokohama is the country's second-largest city, and its mayor administers a budget and a set of responsibilities, in port operations, housing, transport and education, that exceed those of many prefectures.

The city's recent political history has been shaped by the integrated resort question, which decided the last mayoral election and remains a marker of how the city's voters respond to large development proposals.

Nakatani's national-level experience in the House of Representatives gives him the profile that municipal contests in cities of this size have increasingly favoured.

The Communist Party's candidates in major city races typically draw a consistent share rather than a winning coalition, and Asaga's candidacy defines the left's position more than it threatens to take the office.

The school lunch contamination figures reported this week, 36 cases in the city in the first half of the year, are the kind of local issue that mayoral campaigns turn on, and each candidate will be asked about them.

Housing affordability in a city whose land values have followed Tokyo's upward for years is another, and the Bank of Japan's rate increase, with its effect on the variable mortgages Yokohama's younger households hold, arrives in the middle of the campaign.

The national backdrop of a reshuffled cabinet, a consumption tax measure and a Yomiuri poll showing voters prioritising the economy will shape how the candidates position themselves.

Further entrants remain possible before the campaign period formally opens, and the eventual field will determine whether the non-Communist vote consolidates or divides.

Yokohama's electorate has surprised national parties before, and the race will be watched as a measure of how the metropolitan region's voters regard the government's economic management.

POLITICS

Why the Upper House Budget Committee Chair Matters This Session

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Arimura's appointment as chairman of the House of Councillors Budget Committee and Fujikawa's as chairman of the Steering Committee, reported by Yomiuri Shimbun as Liberal Democratic Party policy, complete the reorganisation of the upper house's management ahead of the extraordinary session.

The Budget Committee is the chamber's principal forum for examining the government's fiscal programme, and its sessions are broadcast, which makes it the venue in which ministers are questioned most publicly.

The chairman controls the committee's scheduling and the conduct of questioning, including the allocation of time among parties and the handling of witnesses, and a chairman drawn from the governing side shapes how hard the questions are pressed.

This session's fiscal programme includes a consumption tax outline whose five trillion yen

annual cost has no named funding source, a gasoline subsidy budget approaching 9 trillion yen and a defence spending trajectory the bond market has priced, and each will pass through the committee.

The Steering Committee manages the chamber's business, the scheduling of bills and the arrangement of votes, which is the function Asahi Shimbun's editorial this week identified when it warned of a loss of deliberation.

Both appointments follow the replacement of the party's upper house secretary-general over a reported disagreement about parliamentary affairs, and together they place the chamber's management in hands the leadership has chosen.

The House of Councillors can delay legislation the lower house has passed, which gives its committees a leverage the government must manage rather than command.

The five Ishin members appointed as vice ministers and parliamentary secretaries extend the coalition partner's presence into the ministries, while the committee chairmanships extend the governing side's control of the chamber's process.

Yomiuri's poll finding 59% approval for Ishin's entry gives the arrangement public standing that the opposition, reorganising under a provisional name, will find difficult to contest.

How the Budget Committee handles the funding question will be the session's test, and its chairman's conduct will be the measure.

POLITICS

With the Prime Minister Abroad, the Chief Cabinet Secretary Holds the Storm

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

When Prime Minister Takaichi departs for New York on Monday, the domestic response to Typhoon No. 25 will run through Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara, retained in the reshuffle and the government's coordinating hub for exactly this contingency.

The chief cabinet secretary chairs the crisis machinery in the Prime Minister's absence, and the information liaison office established at the Crisis Management Center reports through him.

Kihara's retention was among the reshuffle's signals of continuity, and a storm on the Prime Minister's first day abroad is the test that continuity was retained for.

The disaster management minister, Goshi Hosono, holds the portfolio's substantive brief, and the two will divide the response between coordination and operation.

Japanese governments have managed prime ministerial absences during disasters before, and the machinery for doing so is established rather than improvised.

The political risk nonetheless falls on the Prime Minister, who will be judged on a response she is not conducting, and a mishandled storm would reach her in New York faster than any diplomatic outcome would reach voters.

Yomiuri's poll gives her a cushion, at 59% approval, and a competent response conducted by the ministers she chose would confirm the judgment the reshuffle invited.

The transport ministry's underpass restrictions, the meteorological agency's alerts and the prefectures' evacuation orders are the instruments the response will use, and the chief cabinet secretary's role is to ensure they operate together.

Monday is also Respect for the Aged Day, and the population most exposed to a storm's dangers is the one the holiday honours.

The Prime Minister's summit on Tuesday will be conducted with the storm's damage assessed, and the chief cabinet secretary's Monday will determine what that assessment says.

POLITICS

The Opposition's Problem With a 59% Government

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Yomiuri's emergency poll, with cabinet approval at 59% and majorities approving the coalition arrangement and prioritising the economy, describes an opposition problem as much as a government success.

POLITICS

The parties reorganising under a provisional name, with further realignment under consideration, have not yet found the argument that converts household anxiety about prices into disapproval of a government addressing them.

A government that has cut the food consumption tax, extended a record fuel subsidy and whose central bank has just raised rates against inflation is doing, visibly, the things 85% of respondents said they wanted.

The opposition's available argument is the funding question: five trillion yen a year with no source, nine trillion for fuel, and long-term borrowing costs at their highest since 1996.

That argument is correct and difficult, since it asks voters to worry about a bond market that most do not follow rather than about a grocery bill that all of them do.

The reshuffle's contested moves, Yanagi's appointment despite the funds scandal and Hayashi's departure, are the second available argument, and emergency polls conducted before the Diet has examined them may not reflect how they land.

The electoral reform now scheduled for decision by the end of October is a third, since the design of an independent body will determine which parties' arithmetic changes.

The Communist Party's candidacy in Yokohama, announced this week, describes a left that is contesting offices rather than consolidating, which is the pattern the poll's numbers reward the government for.

The extraordinary session is the venue in which the opposition can convert the funding question into a public one, and the Budget Committee's chairmanship, now in governing hands, shapes how that conversion is allowed to proceed.

A 59% government is not invulnerable, but it is not the government the opposition's reorganisation was designed to face.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: The Bank of Japan Quickened Its Pace, and the Public Approved Before It Asked

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

The detail in Friday's decision that matters most is not the level of 1.25% but the interval: three months since June, the shortest gap between increases since Governor Ueda took office. The bank has changed its tempo, and it has said so.

Ueda's formulation, that increases will continue depending on the situation, is the language of a central bank that intends to keep moving and does not intend to say how fast.

The market's reaction, an 882-point rise in the Nikkei on relief, suggests investors had feared something worse, either a larger increase or a statement signalling a faster path, and received instead a quarter-point with conditional language.

The yen's reaction, a fall through 158 arrested only by rate checks, suggests the currency market read the same statement as insufficient to close a differential the Federal Reserve had widened on Wednesday.

Those two readings are both correct, and the gap between them is the bank's position: fast enough to reassure equities that it is acting, not fast enough to satisfy the currency market that it is acting enough.

The political reception was the surprise. A Yomiuri emergency poll published the morning after the decision puts cabinet approval at 59%, with 85% naming inflation countermeasures as a priority.

A rate increase is ordinarily unpopular, since it raises borrowing costs on the variable mortgages most Japanese households hold, and Yomiuri's own reporting noted the increased burden on younger borrowers.

That the public nonetheless names inflation as the problem suggests households have reached the view that prices are the greater threat to their budgets than rates, which is the judgment the bank made and the government has now been rewarded for sharing.

The bank's next decision will be made against a currency at 156 to 158, a fiscal position that includes an unfunded five trillion yen tax cut, and a government whose approval rests on economic management.

Depending on the situation is a phrase that can accommodate any of those, and the market will spend the next weeks trying to determine which the bank weighs most.

For households the practical arithmetic is simple. Deposit rates rise by about 0.1%. Variable mortgages reset over the coming year. The gasoline subsidy holds the pump price near 170 yen at a budget cost approaching 9 trillion yen. And the rice on the shelf is cheaper new than old.

The bank has quickened. Whether the situation lets it continue is not within its control, which is what Ueda's phrase acknowledges.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: A Prime Minister Flying Into a Summit as a Typhoon Flies Into Kanto

By William | Senior Political Analyst

The Prime Minister's departure for New York on Monday, to address the United Nations and meet President Trump on Tuesday, falls on the day Typhoon No. 25 may make landfall on the Boso Peninsula, and the coincidence describes the position a Japanese leader occupies more often than the calendar admits.

The trip's purpose is the more important for being narrow: to align with Washington on China before Washington meets Beijing. That sequence is the one Tokyo has sought at every comparable moment, and it is not one that can be rescheduled around weather.

The storm's timing, with landfall possible on Monday and the summit on Tuesday, means the Prime Minister will meet the President with the storm's damage assessed and the domestic response conducted by the chief cabinet secretary and the disaster minister.

Japanese governments have managed prime ministerial absences during disasters before, and the machinery for doing so, the liaison office at the Crisis Management Center and the ministers who remain, is established rather than improvised.

The political risk is nonetheless real. A leader abroad during a domestic emergency is judged on the response she is not conducting, and a mishandled storm would reach her in New York faster than any diplomatic outcome would reach voters at home.

Yomiuri's poll gives her a cushion. Approval at 59%, with the economy and prices named as priorities by overwhelming majorities, is the kind of standing that survives a weekend of rain if the response is competent.

The summit itself carries the substantive stakes. Semiconductor controls, rare earths, tariffs and the Gulf conflict all reach Japanese companies through decisions Washington and Beijing make without Tokyo, and a prime minister who has briefed the President before he meets his counterpart has done what the position allows.

The Federal Reserve's decision against the President's wishes, and his protest, add a currency dimension the Prime Minister may raise, since the yen's fall to 158 is a consequence of a differential her own central bank cannot close alone.

Defence will be present through the security documents revision Koizumi says will determine the region's future, and the Trump administration's expectations of Japanese spending are a subject on which the two leaders' positions will need to match.

The UN speech is the trip's public face and the summit its purpose, and the storm at home is the test of whether a government can do both at once.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: What a Three-Peat Means in a League Designed to Prevent Them

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

SoftBank's third consecutive Pacific League championship, clinched on Thursday and celebrated across Saturday's sports pages, is rarer than the club's dominance makes it look, and the reason is the structure of the league it was won in.

The Pacific League's Climax Series admits three clubs to the postseason and gives the pennant winner a single game's advantage in the Final Stage, which means a regular season of sustained superiority buys very little in October.

That format was designed to keep the season interesting for clubs that fall behind, and it has succeeded to the point where the pennant has come to feel like a preliminary.

Winning three in a row against that structure requires a club to be good enough to win the regular season three times while absorbing the roster churn that a postseason-oriented league produces.

SoftBank's answer has been pitching depth and a relief corps that holds games, which is the foundation on which the nine-game streak that produced the clinch was built.

The Nankai Hawks' three-peat in the mid-1960s, the comparison the papers have drawn, was achieved in a league without a Climax Series, where the pennant was the prize and the Japan Series followed directly.

That the current Hawks have matched it under a harder format is the substance behind the 60-year comparison.

Hiroki Kokubo's achievement in his first year as manager, joining a list of three, describes a succession that did not disrupt what it inherited, which is itself a skill.

Masayoshi Son's presence in the doage is the image the weekend will remember, and it describes an owner whose involvement in the club has been visible since he acquired it, in a country where owners are usually neither seen nor heard.

The Climax Series will now test whether the three-peat becomes a Japan Series appearance, and the format that made the pennant rare will make the postseason uncertain.

For Fukuoka, whose baseball identity was formed when the club arrived from Osaka, a three-peat that reaches back to the Nankai era joins the franchise's two halves.

The Hawks play Rakuten today in Miyagi, the first game of a champion's remaining schedule, and the season that produced the pennant now turns to the postseason that will judge it.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: The Games Open in Clear Weather While Half the Country Waits for Rain

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games open today under sunny skies, with Nagoya at 26°C, while Tokyo waits for a typhoon whose rain area expands across Kanto from tonight and whose landfall on the Boso Peninsula is possible on Monday.

The geography is fortunate for the organisers. Aichi sits far enough west of the storm's expected track that the host region's venues should escape the worst, and the Games' first competition days will proceed while eastern Japan shelters.

It is less fortunate for the attention the Games hoped to command. Mainichi Shimbun observed on Thursday that costs have risen and attention has fallen, and a typhoon over the capital on the first weekend directs the country's attention elsewhere.

Television audiences may compensate. A survey this week found eight in ten households planning to stay close to home, and warning-level rain across Kanto converts that into staying inside, where the Games are on the screen.

The record delegation of 932 athletes, the target of surpassing 78 golds, the Emperor's declaration and Hakuho's flame are the elements of an opening that would ordinarily dominate the weekend, and this weekend they share it with hazard maps.

The run-up's incidents, the anthem error, the accommodation complaints, the Hideyoshi apology, are the kind that competition overtakes, and Sunday's first medals in swimming and the martial arts will begin the overtaking.

The rugby final against Fiji, on the same Saturday, adds a second national event to a day already crowded, and Japanese sport rarely has this much happening at once.

SoftBank's three-peat, clinched on Thursday, gives the sports pages a third story, and the Hawks play Rakuten in Miyagi this afternoon under rain.

For the Games' organisers the calculation is simple: a strong first week of Japanese results will draw the attention the weather has diverted, and a weak one will confirm Mainichi's observation.

The Games close on October 4, by which time the storm will be long past, and the medal table will have decided what the opening weekend's weather could not.

INTERNATIONAL

China's Youth Unemployment Hits 18.9%, the Worst on Record

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

China's unemployment rate for those aged 16 to 24 has reached 18.9%, the worst level on record, according to Asahi Shimbun. The overall rate is 5.3%.

The youth figure is the one that matters, since a rate nearly four times the overall one describes an economy that is not creating the jobs its graduates were educated for.

China's statistical authorities suspended publication of the youth rate in 2023 after it reached levels the government found uncomfortable, and resumed it with a revised methodology that excludes students; the record now reported is under that revised measure.

The causes combine a property sector in prolonged contraction, a private sector that regulatory campaigns had discouraged from hiring, and a graduating cohort whose numbers exceed the professional positions available.

For Japan the figure registers in several ways. Chinese consumer demand shapes Japanese exports, a generation without stable employment consumes less, and the political pressure the figure creates in Beijing shapes how the Chinese leadership approaches the summit with Washington later this month.

A government facing youth unemployment near a fifth has reasons to seek stability in its external relations, which is one reading of the restraint Foreign Minister Wang Yi has counselled in his recent meetings.

The Prime Minister's trip to New York, with a Trump summit intended to align views on China before the US-China talks, will be conducted with this figure among the background conditions.

Chinese students and young workers have been among the groups drawn to Japan by employment opportunities and a currency that makes Japanese wages attractive in yuan terms, and a worsening domestic picture may increase that flow.

The overall rate of 5.3% is stable and unremarkable, which is the contrast the youth figure draws: an economy functioning for those already in it and failing those trying to enter.

Asahi's carriage of the figure on a Saturday reflects the attention Japanese readers give to the neighbouring economy's condition, which affects their own more directly than most.

INTERNATIONAL

UN Investigators Call the Attack on an Iranian Primary School a US War Crime; 150 Children Died

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

A United Nations investigation team has reported that an attack on an Iranian elementary school was a war crime by the United States, with 150 children killed, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

The finding is the most serious of the conflict's seventh month, and it arrives days before the Prime Minister addresses the UN General Assembly and meets President Trump.

UN investigation teams are established by the Human Rights Council or the Secretary-General to examine alleged violations, and their findings carry evidentiary weight without carrying enforcement, since prosecution depends on courts and states that the team cannot compel.

An attack that killed 150 children at a school is the kind of event that reshapes a conflict's politics regardless of the legal characterisation, and the characterisation as a war crime by a UN body makes it a matter every government at the General Assembly will be asked about.

Japan's position is delicate. The alliance with the United States is the foundation of its security policy, the Gulf conflict has set the price of everything it imports for seven months, and its Prime Minister will be standing at the General Assembly's podium within days of the finding.

INTERNATIONAL

The congressional estimate this week putting American spending on the conflict at roughly 5.9 trillion yen in the Japanese-language reporting describes the war's cost to the country conducting it; the school describes its cost to the country it is conducted against.

American responses to UN findings of this kind have historically ranged from rejection to internal investigation, and the current administration's response has not been reported.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's call for restraint, delivered to the Iranian foreign minister and repeated to Secretary of State Rubio, will be cited by Beijing as the position the finding vindicates.

For the diplomacy in Oman, where Gulf and Iranian officials have been discussing a routing proposal for the Strait of Hormuz, a finding of this gravity complicates any narrow arrangement by raising the political cost of appearing to cooperate.

The Prime Minister's speech to the General Assembly will be read for whether it addresses the finding, and her summit with the President for whether it is raised.

INTERNATIONAL

Australia to Move Working Holiday Visa Renewals to a Lottery

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Australia is to implement a lottery system for renewing working holiday visas, according to Yomiuri Shimbun, a change that affects the young Japanese who have used the programme in large numbers.

The working holiday arrangement between Japan and Australia allows young people to live and work in the other country for a defined period, and Australia has been the most popular destination for Japanese participants for decades.

A lottery for renewals introduces uncertainty into a programme that had operated on eligibility, and it reflects Australian concern about the number of participants and their concentration in particular sectors and cities.

Demand from Japan has risen as the weak yen has made Australian wages, earned in dollars, considerably more attractive in yen terms, which is the same currency effect that has drawn Japanese workers toward overseas employment across several destinations.

For the Australian labour market, working holiday participants fill roles in agriculture, hospitality and regional industries that domestic workers do not, which is why the programme has been expanded rather than restricted in the past.

The lottery's mechanism, its quotas and its timing were not detailed in the available reporting, and the Japanese participants currently in Australia will be watching for the specifics.

Japan's own working holiday agreements with other countries continue to operate on eligibility, and the Australian change may redirect some demand toward them.

The change arrives as Japan's own inbound visitor numbers reach records and its outbound travel is constrained by the same currency that makes Australian work attractive, an inversion that describes the yen's effect on both flows.

For young Japanese the programme has been a route to English, to overseas experience and to earnings that domestic entry-level employment does not match, and a lottery makes that route less reliable.

The Prime Minister's UN trip will include the multilateral contacts at which such bilateral arrangements are sometimes raised, though the visa change is an Australian domestic decision.

INTERNATIONAL

The Working Holiday and the Weak Yen: Why Australia Is Rationing Renewals

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Australia's move to a lottery for working holiday visa renewals, reported by Yomiuri Shimbun, responds to demand that the yen's weakness has increased and that Australian policy has concluded requires managing.

The working holiday arrangement allows young Japanese to live and work in Australia for a defined period, and Australia has been the most popular destination for Japanese participants since the

programme began. A yen at 156 to 158 to the dollar makes Australian wages, earned in a currency that has held its value, considerably more attractive in yen terms than they were, and the same arithmetic has drawn Japanese workers toward overseas employment across several destinations.

Australian concern centres on the number of participants and their concentration in particular sectors and cities, where housing pressure and labour market effects have become political questions.

For the Australian economy working holiday participants fill roles in agriculture, hospitality and regional industries that domestic workers do not, which is why the programme has historically been expanded rather than restricted.

A lottery for renewals introduces uncertainty into a programme that operated on eligibility, and Japanese participants currently in Australia will be watching for the specifics of quotas and timing.

Japan's own inbound visitor numbers are at records while its outbound travel is constrained by the same currency, an inversion that describes the yen's effect on both flows.

For young Japanese the programme has been a route to English, to overseas experience and to earnings that domestic entry-level employment does not match, and a lottery makes the route less reliable.

China's youth unemployment at 18.9%, reported the same day, describes a neighbouring cohort under pressure of a different kind, and the flows of young people across the region respond to both.

Japan's working holiday agreements with other countries continue on eligibility, and some demand may redirect toward them.

INTERNATIONAL

What 18.9% Means Across the Water

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

China's youth unemployment rate of 18.9%, the worst on record, describes a condition in the neighbouring economy that reaches Japan through several channels, and the channels are worth setting out.

The first is demand. Chinese consumers are among the largest buyers of Japanese goods, and a generation without stable employment consumes less, which reaches Japanese exporters through the trade figures.

The second is people. Chinese students and young workers have been drawn to Japan by employment opportunities and a currency that makes Japanese wages attractive in yuan terms, and a worsening domestic picture increases that flow.

The third is politics. A government facing youth unemployment near a fifth has reasons to seek stability in its external relations, which is one reading of the restraint Foreign Minister Wang Yi has counselled in his recent meetings and of the summit diplomacy both capitals have described as the key.

The Prime Minister's meeting with President Trump on Tuesday, intended to align views on China before the US-China talks, will be conducted with this figure among the background conditions.

China's statistical authorities suspended publication of the youth rate in 2023 after it reached levels the government found uncomfortable, and resumed it with a methodology that excludes students; the record now reported is under that revised measure.

The causes combine a property sector in prolonged contraction, a private sector that regulatory campaigns had discouraged from hiring, and graduating cohorts whose numbers exceed the professional positions available.

The overall rate of 5.3% is stable, which is the contrast the youth figure draws: an economy functioning for those already in it and failing those trying to enter.

Japan's own labour market runs the other way, with shortages across sectors and a working-age population that shrinks each year, which is why the flows of young people across the region respond to both conditions.

Asahi's carriage of the figure on a Saturday reflects the attention Japanese readers give to the neighbouring economy, which affects their own more directly than most.

INTERNATIONAL

The Sequence Tokyo Wants: Japan Speaks to Washington Before Washington Speaks to Beijing

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

The stated purpose of the Prime Minister's planned summit with President Trump on the 22nd, to align views on China before the US-China talks, describes the sequence that Japanese diplomacy has sought at every comparable moment.

A US-China summit that reaches agreements affecting Japanese interests without Japanese input is the outcome Tokyo most wants to avoid, since the country's economy depends on both and its security on one.

Semiconductor export controls, which reach Japanese equipment makers directly, are the first item. Rare earth supply, which China restricts and Japanese manufacturers depend on, is the second. Tariffs, which sit at 15% on most Japanese exports to the American market, are the third.

The Gulf conflict, in its seventh month and now carrying a UN finding of an American war crime, is the fourth, and China's foreign minister has positioned Beijing as the counsellor of restraint in a way the finding will reinforce.

China's youth unemployment at 18.9% describes a leadership with domestic reasons to seek stability abroad, which is the condition under which summit diplomacy produces agreements.

Japan's role is to ensure those agreements account for it, and the mechanism is a briefing to the President before he meets his counterpart.

Whether alignment produces a shared position or a briefed one will be visible in what Washington says to Beijing afterward, which is the measure Tokyo has always had to wait for.

The Federal Reserve's decision against the President's wishes, and his protest, add a currency dimension the Prime Minister may raise, since the yen's fall to 158 is a consequence of a differential her central bank cannot close alone.

The Prime Minister's UN speech on the same trip is the public statement of Japan's position; the summit is where it is negotiated.

The US-China talks follow later this month, and the sequence's success will be measured in what they produce.

ECONOMY

The Rate Check: How a Telephone Call Moved the Yen Two Points

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Sankei News reported that the yen surged from the low 158 range to the high 156 range after the government and the Bank of Japan conducted rate checks, and the mechanism deserves explaining because no yen were actually bought.

A rate check is a telephone call. Officials at the Bank of Japan, acting for the Ministry of Finance, contact dealers at major banks and ask the price at which they would trade dollars for yen.

The call is not an order. Its purpose is the call itself, since dealers understand that a government asking the price is a government that may be about to pay it, and the market moves in anticipation.

Rate checks are the step below intervention on a ladder that runs from verbal warnings, through checks, to actual purchases of yen from the foreign exchange reserves, and each step is more expensive than the last.

Friday's check moved the currency roughly two points, which is a substantial reaction to a telephone call and indicates a market positioned heavily against the yen and nervous about being caught.

Intervention itself, when it comes, is conducted by the Bank of Japan as the ministry's agent, selling dollars from the reserves and buying yen, and it is announced only after the fact if at all.

The check's timing, on the day the Bank of Japan raised rates and the yen nonetheless fell through 158, illustrates the argument of Friday's cartoon: a quarter-point does not repeal the differential, and the rope has to be pulled anyway.

Coordinated intervention with the United States Treasury, of the kind conducted earlier this month, is more effective than unilateral action because it removes the possibility that the two governments are

working against each other. Officials never name a level, since naming one invites the market to test it, and the finance minister's customary formulation, that authorities are watching with a high sense of urgency, will be repeated until the next check.

The Prime Minister's meeting with President Trump on Tuesday, days after the Federal Reserve raised rates against his wishes, is the venue at which the differential's American half might be discussed, if it is discussed at all.

ECONOMY

Ueda: Increases Will Continue Depending on the Situation

The governor's afternoon press conference gave the market a direction and withheld a schedule

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Governor Kazuo Ueda's press conference on Friday afternoon, following the decision to raise the policy rate to around 1.25%, delivered the sentence the market had been waiting for: interest rates will continue to be raised depending on the situation, according to NTV News and Asahi Shimbun.

The market's focus, as Asahi put it, is now on the next pace, and the governor's phrasing was constructed to leave that pace open.

Depending on the situation is a formulation Ueda has used through the normalisation, and its function is to commit the bank to a direction while reserving judgment about timing, so that no single meeting becomes a scheduled event the market can front-run.

The situation the governor described includes the three pressures the bank cited: crude above \$100 a barrel, a weak yen, and inter-company prices that have stayed high long enough to threaten consumer prices.

On the currency, the governor's remarks were characteristically restrained, since currency policy is the finance ministry's domain and a central bank governor who comments on the exchange rate invites the market to test him.

That restraint was tested within hours, as the yen fell through 158 and the government and the bank conducted rate checks that pulled it back to the high 156 range.

Wage growth, the condition the bank has named at every stage, was described as continuing to strengthen, though the governor has been consistent that the question is whether it reaches the smaller firms that employ most workers.

The interval since June, the shortest between increases in his tenure, was acknowledged as a quickening, and the governor did not suggest the interval would lengthen again.

The effective date of the 24th gives banks and borrowers a few days to adjust, and deposit rate increases of about 0.1% are expected to follow, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

The next meeting will be conducted against whatever the situation has become by then, and the governor's phrase means the market will spend the intervening weeks constructing its own forecast of what the bank considers sufficient.

ECONOMY

Nikkei Clears 65,000 on Relief, Up 1,300 at One Point, While the TOPIX Slips

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

The Nikkei average closed at 65,018.95 yen on Friday, up 882.70 points or 1.38%, a third consecutive day of gains that at one point exceeded 1,300 points, according to Yomiuri Shimbun and Sankei News. The rise was attributed to relief over the Bank of Japan's decision.

The TOPIX closed at 4,091.14, down 3.05 points, moving in the opposite direction from the Nikkei on the same session.

That divergence is the day's structural story. The Nikkei is price-weighted, giving outsized influence to a handful of high-priced technology and growth names; the TOPIX weights every prime-market company by capitalisation.

A Nikkei up 1.38% while the TOPIX falls describes a rally concentrated in the names the Nikkei overweights, with the broader market flat to lower, which is a narrower advance than the headline suggests.

ECONOMY

Relief is the explanation the papers gave, and it fits. The market had priced a quarter-point increase and feared something more, either a larger move or language signalling a faster path, and it received the increase with conditional language.

The weaker yen contributed. A currency falling toward 158 flatters exporters' translated earnings, and automotive and machinery names benefit even as importers and households absorb the cost.

An intraday gain of more than 1,300 points before settling at 882 describes a session in which the initial reaction overshot and profit-taking followed, a pattern common on days when a feared event passes.

Three consecutive gains take the index from Tuesday's 63,484 to Friday's 65,018, a rise of roughly 2.4% across a week that included a Federal Reserve increase, a cabinet reshuffle and a domestic rate decision.

The index remains roughly 11% 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 picture.

Tokyo markets are closed for the weekend and Monday's holiday, and Tuesday's session will be the first to price the storm's damage, the Prime Minister's summit and whatever the yen has done in the interval.

ECONOMY

The Yen Fell Through 158 on the Day the Bank Raised Rates, Then Officials Made a Call

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

The yen temporarily fell to the low 158 range against the dollar on Friday, according to Yomiuri Shimbun's front page, on the same day the Bank of Japan raised its policy rate to the highest level in 31 years.

Sankei News reported that the currency then surged to the high 156 range after the government and the Bank of Japan conducted rate checks, the step below intervention in which officials telephone dealers to ask the price.

A currency falling on a rate increase is the outcome that Friday morning's cartoon predicted with its caption about the differential, and the mechanism is straightforward: the Federal Reserve widened the gap on Wednesday by the same quarter-point the Bank of Japan narrowed it on Friday.

The rate check's effect, roughly two points, indicates a market positioned heavily against the yen and nervous about being caught by actual intervention, which earlier this month was conducted in coordination with Washington.

For households the currency arrives as import prices, with energy priced in dollars and converted at 156 to 158 costing more in yen than it did at any point in the previous decade.

The gasoline subsidy at a record level, with a budget approaching 9 trillion yen according to Asahi Shimbun, is the state's visible response to one of those prices, and the subsidy's cost widens the fiscal gap that weighs on the currency.

For exporters the effect runs the other way, which is why the Nikkei rose on the same news, and Nissan's target of a million units of domestic production as an export base rests on the currency staying roughly where it is.

The finance minister, retained in the reshuffle, will be asked about the currency again before the Prime Minister leaves for New York, and the summit with President Trump on Tuesday follows a Federal Reserve decision the President is protesting.

Rate checks are typically followed by intervention if the market resumes the move that prompted them, and the market's behaviour on Tuesday, after the holiday, will indicate whether Friday's call was sufficient.

The low 158 range is the weakest the yen has reached this month, and the high 156 range is where the officials' telephone left it.

ECONOMY

Deposit Rates to Rise by 0.1%; Younger Borrowers on Variable Mortgages Carry the Other Side

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

Ordinary deposit interest rates are estimated to rise by about 0.1% following the Bank of Japan's decision, according to Yomiuri Shimbun, and the same report pointed to an increased burden of variable-rate loans

among younger generations.

The two figures describe the transition's asymmetry. Savers gain a tenth of a percent on deposits; borrowers on variable mortgages face resets that will bring the full increase to their payments over the coming year.

Younger borrowers are the most exposed because they are the most recent. A household that bought in the past few years borrowed against Tokyo land values that had risen for fourteen consecutive years, and took a variable rate because fixed rates carried a premium that decades of falling rates had made look unnecessary.

Variable-rate mortgages in Japan reset their interest rate twice yearly while adjusting the monthly payment only every five years, with a convention limiting any payment increase to 125% of the previous amount, which spreads the effect across cycles.

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

The cumulative increases from negative rates to 1.25% will reach payment adjustments over the coming years, and the households that borrowed most recently, at the highest valuations, will feel the largest change.

Deposit rates rising more slowly than lending rates is a feature of the transition rather than a permanent condition, and competition among banks for deposits is expected to narrow the gap as normalisation proceeds.

The Bank of Japan's flow of funds data reported this week showed household stock and investment trust holdings overtaking insurance for the first time, a shift that occurred partly because deposits paid nothing, and a deposit that pays something may draw some of that money back.

Yomiuri's emergency poll found 85% of respondents naming inflation countermeasures as a priority, which suggests households have weighed the cost of higher rates against the cost of higher prices and chosen.

The rate takes effect on the 24th, and the first resets that reflect it will arrive on mortgage statements in the months that follow.

ECONOMY

New Rice Is Cheaper Than Old Rice, and the Government Is Buying the Old Rice Back

A paradox in the shops: low wholesale purchase prices for this year's crop against high inventory prices at the cooperatives
By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

A paradox has appeared on supermarket shelves: new rice from this year's harvest is selling for less than last year's old rice, according to Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun. The cause is low purchase prices paid by wholesalers for the new crop against high inventory prices at the agricultural cooperatives holding the old one.

Rice prices have returned to the 2,000 yen range for the first time in two years, according to Yomiuri Shimbun's general news section, and the government is moving toward buying back old rice for its reserves.

The situation inverts the ordinary logic of the rice market, in which new rice commands a premium for freshness and old rice is discounted as it ages.

The mechanism is inventory. Agricultural cooperatives bought last year's crop at prices that reflected the shortage and high prices of that season, and they hold it at those prices. Wholesalers buying this year's crop are paying less, and the new rice reaches shelves at a lower cost.

A shopper comparing the two bags sees the newer, better product at the lower price, which is a bargain for the shopper and a loss for whoever holds the old stock.

The government's move toward buying back old rice for the strategic reserve is the intervention that resolves the cooperatives' position, absorbing inventory they cannot sell at the prices they paid.

That resolution has a cost, and it arrives in a week when the gasoline subsidy budget approaches 9 trillion yen and a food consumption tax cut of five trillion yen a year awaits a funding source.

For farmers the low wholesale prices for the new crop are the bad news beneath the shoppers' good

news, arriving after a month of prolonged rain that delayed the harvest and ahead of a typhoon expected to damage what remains in the fields.

Rice bankruptcies have run at a record pace this year, and a harvest that combines weather damage with low purchase prices lands on a sector with little in reserve.

The Agriculture ministry, under Kazuo Yanagi following this week's reshuffle, faces the paradox as its first substantive question, with the buyback's scale and price the decisions that will determine who bears the loss.

Rice is the commodity Japanese households watch most closely, and a price in the 2,000 yen range after two years above it is the kind of relief that registers politically, which Yomiuri's poll on prices reflects.

ECONOMY

The Gasoline Subsidy Is at a Record, and Its Budget Is Approaching ¥9 Trillion

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Gasoline subsidies continue at a record high, and the budget for the programme is approximately 9 trillion yen, according to the explanation reported by Asahi Shimbun.

Nine trillion yen is a figure that belongs alongside the five trillion yen annual cost of the food consumption tax cut, since both are drawn from a general account whose long-term borrowing costs reached their highest since 1996 this week.

The subsidy is paid to wholesalers rather than at the pump, holding the nationwide retail price near 170 yen a litre while the unsubsidised price, with crude above \$100 a barrel and a yen near 158, would sit far above it.

The 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.

The Gulf conflict's seventh month, with three pumps damaged on Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline and the Strait of Hormuz contested, is the condition, and it shows no sign of resolving.

For the transport and logistics sectors the subsidy functions as a brake on the inflation that would otherwise reach every delivered product, which is why its withdrawal is politically difficult regardless of its cost.

The Bank of Japan's decision to raise rates was justified partly by high oil prices, and a subsidy that holds down one visible price does not change the underlying pressure the bank is responding to.

Yomiuri's poll finding that 85% of respondents name inflation as a priority describes the constituency the subsidy serves, and 9 trillion yen is what serving it currently costs.

The reappointed economic ministers, whose retention markets read as fiscal continuity, will be asked in the extraordinary session how the subsidy, the tax cut and the defence trajectory fit within the responsible half of responsible and proactive.

The subsidy's future is a decision for the government rather than the central bank, and the rice buyback announced the same week adds a further claim on the same budget.

ECONOMY

Dow Slips 95 Points as the Ten-Year Yield Sits Near 5% Again

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

The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed down 95.40 points at 51,682.64 on Friday, and the yield on the ten-year Treasury is again around 5%, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

A modest decline two days after the Federal Reserve's increase describes an American market that has absorbed the decision and is now pricing the further increase the committee hinted at for this year.

The ten-year yield near 5% is the figure that matters most for Japan, since it sets the American half of the differential that pushed the yen through 158 on Friday and that the Bank of Japan's quarter-point did not close.

American yields at that level tighten global financial conditions independently of anything Tokyo decides, raising the discount rate applied to equities everywhere and drawing capital toward dollar assets.

President Trump's protest against the Federal Reserve's decision, and his call for cuts, introduces a political variable that markets have learned to price: the possibility that pressure produces either a change in the committee's behaviour or a change in its leadership.

The committee's unanimous vote was its answer, and Chairman Warsh's statement that inflation is too high and has lasted too long leaves little room for the President's preferred reading.

Japanese institutional investors hold substantial Treasury positions, and the level of American yields is a live balance-sheet question for domestic insurers and pension funds rather than a foreign data point.

The Prime Minister's summit with the President on Tuesday follows the Federal Reserve's decision by six days, and the currency consequences of the disagreement between the White House and the central bank are among the things a Japanese leader might raise.

Tokyo markets are closed until Tuesday, and the first session after the holiday will price three days of American trading, the storm's damage and the summit's outcome at once.

The Dow's level, above 51,000, remains within reach of its recent highs despite the week's decline, which describes an American market more concerned with the rate path than with the level.

ECONOMY

Markets, Rates and Prices at a Glance

Compiled by the Economics Desk

BANK OF JAPAN: policy rate raised from around 1.00% to around 1.25% on Sept. 18, effective Sept. 24. First increase since June; shortest interval under Governor Ueda; highest since April 1995. Ueda: increases will continue depending on the situation.

NIKKEI 225 (Sept. 18 close): 65,018.95 yen, up 882.70 points or 1.38%, a third consecutive gain. Up more than 1,300 points intraday.

TOPIX (Sept. 18 close): 4,091.14, down 3.05 points, moving opposite to the Nikkei.

CURRENCY: yen temporarily in the low 158 range; back to the high 156 range after government and Bank of Japan rate checks.

DEPOSITS AND LOANS: ordinary deposit rates estimated to rise about 0.1%. Increased burden on variable-rate borrowers, particularly younger households.

NEW YORK (Sept. 18): Dow 51,682.64, down 95.40. Ten-year Treasury yield again around 5%. Fed target range 3.75%-4.00% after Wednesday's increase.

GASOLINE: subsidy at a record level; programme budget approximately 9 trillion yen. Retail average around 169.90 yen a litre.

RICE: new rice selling below old rice; prices in the 2,000 yen range for the first time in two years. Government moving to buy back old rice for reserves.

POLITICS AND THE ECONOMY: Yomiuri emergency poll: cabinet approval 59%; economy and employment a priority for 90%, inflation countermeasures for 85%.

MARKETS CLOSED: Tokyo markets are closed Saturday, Sunday and Monday's holiday. Trading resumes Tuesday.

WEEK AHEAD: Prime Minister Takaichi in New York Sept. 21-24; Trump summit planned for Sept. 22. New policy rate applies from Sept. 24.

ECONOMY

Why the New Rate Applies From Thursday Rather Than Today

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

The Bank of Japan's decision on Friday raises the policy rate from around 1.00% to around 1.25%, but the new rate applies from the 24th, and the gap between decision and effect is a feature of how the bank operates rather than an oversight.

The policy rate is the rate the bank targets for uncollateralised overnight call money, the market in which banks lend to each other for a day, and the bank steers it through the interest it pays on the reserves banks hold with it.

Changing that interest rate requires notice to the institutions affected, and the bank has conventionally

ECONOMY

set an effective date a few business days after the decision to allow the market to adjust.

The interval also gives banks time to reprice deposits and loans, which is why Yomiuri Shimbun's estimate of a 0.1% rise in ordinary deposit rates refers to a change that will follow rather than one that has occurred.

For borrowers on variable-rate mortgages the effective date is less relevant than their next reset, which follows the mortgage's own schedule rather than the bank's calendar.

The word around, in the phrase around 1.25%, reflects the bank's practice of targeting a level rather than fixing one precisely, since the overnight rate moves within a range around the target as the market clears.

The effective date's position, the day after the Autumn Equinox holiday, means the new rate will apply on the first full business day after a long weekend that includes a possible typhoon landfall and the Prime Minister's summit in New York.

By then the yen will have had three days of American trading to react to, and the market's first session on Tuesday will price the storm, the summit and the rate together.

The interval since June is the shortest between increases in Governor Ueda's tenure, and the effective date of the next increase, if there is one, will be read for whether the interval shortens further.

For households the practical date is the one on their next mortgage statement, and for savers it is the one on which their bank announces its own change.

ECONOMY

One Market, Two Directions: Why the Nikkei Rose 882 Points While the TOPIX Fell

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Friday's session produced a Nikkei up 882.70 points and a TOPIX down 3.05, and the divergence is worth explaining because it recurs every time the market moves on a narrow group of names.

The Nikkei 225 averages the share prices of 225 selected companies with an adjustment factor, which means a company with a high nominal share price influences the index out of proportion to its actual size.

The TOPIX weights every company on the prime market by market capitalisation, so a large company moves it more than a small one regardless of share price, and it is the better measure of the market as a whole.

When a handful of high-priced technology and growth names rise sharply, the Nikkei follows them and the TOPIX does not, which is what happened on Friday.

An intraday Nikkei gain of more than 1,300 points that settled at 882 while the broad market ended flat describes relief concentrated in exactly those names, which had been sold hardest in the AI-sector repricing of recent weeks.

The reverse occurred on Monday, when the Nikkei fell 1.93% while the TOPIX rose and more than 70% of prime stocks gained, and the two sessions together illustrate how much a few constituents determine what the headline index appears to have done.

For investors the distinction matters because the Nikkei is the number quoted in headlines and the TOPIX is the benchmark most institutional portfolios track.

For the Bank of Japan, which holds substantial equity exposure through its past purchases of exchange-traded funds, the distinction affects the value of holdings that were accumulated during the easing years.

Foreign investors, substantial net participants in Japanese equities this year, tend to trade the Nikkei through futures, which amplifies the index's moves relative to the broader market.

A rally the TOPIX does not confirm is a rally to read carefully, and Friday's was one.

ECONOMY

The Rate Is Now Where It Was in April 1995, and the Country Is Not

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Friday's decision took the policy rate to around 1.25%, the highest since April 1995, and the comparison the papers have drawn rewards a second look now that it is realised rather than forecast.

In the spring of 1995 the Bank of Japan was cutting rates, not raising them, in response to a yen that had strengthened sharply, an economy that was not recovering as expected, and the aftermath of the Kobe earthquake that January.

The asset price bubble had burst four years earlier and its consequences were still being denied as often as confronted, with bad loans whose scale had not been acknowledged and a financial crisis still two years away.

Deflation had not yet set in as the persistent condition it became, and the cuts of 1995 were the beginning of a descent that reached zero by 1999 and continued below it.

The 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 rather than a strong one.

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

That last inversion is the one Friday made vivid. In 1995 the yen's strength was the problem the bank was cutting rates to address; on Friday the yen fell through 158 on the day the bank raised them.

For households the comparison is direct only for those old enough to remember, and a generation of borrowers has taken mortgages in an environment where rates only fell.

For the government the arithmetic is the reverse of 1995's. A rate of 1.25% then sat on a debt stock the country could service without strain; the same rate now compounds across borrowing that has grown for three decades.

Governor Ueda's phrase, depending on the situation, is the answer to whether 1.25% is a resting point, and the situation includes everything 1995 did not.

ECONOMY

How the Rice Reserve Works, and Why the Government Is Buying Old Rice Back

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

The government's move toward buying back old rice for its reserves, reported by Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun, uses a mechanism established after the poor harvest of 1993 sent the country searching for imported rice.

The reserve holds rice against the possibility of a failed harvest, purchasing from the market in ordinary years and releasing in years of shortage, and its stock is rotated so that older rice is sold and newer rice bought.

Last year's shortage and high prices prompted releases from the reserve that were themselves controversial, with the timing and quantity of the releases debated as prices stayed high.

This year's paradox runs the other way. Agricultural cooperatives hold last year's crop at prices that reflected the shortage, and this year's crop is reaching the market at lower wholesale prices, leaving the cooperatives with inventory they cannot sell without loss.

Buying that old rice back for the reserve absorbs the inventory, restores the cooperatives' position and takes the older rice off shelves where it is competing unfavourably with the new crop.

The cost falls on the general budget, in a week when the gasoline subsidy programme approaches 9 trillion yen and a food consumption tax cut of five trillion yen a year awaits a funding source.

For shoppers the buyback may remove the bargain, since old rice cheaper than new was a temporary inversion, and the 2,000 yen range prices Yomiuri reports for the first time in two years describe a market that has corrected rather than collapsed.

For farmers the buyback does not raise the wholesale price of the new crop, which is the number that determines their income, and the harvest now threatened by the typhoon will be sold at prices set before the damage.

The Agriculture ministry, under a minister appointed this week, will decide the buyback's scale and price, and those decisions determine who bears the loss the paradox has created.

Rice policy in Japan has been a matter of politics as much as economics for a century, and a reserve that buys in a year of low prices and releases in a year of high ones is doing what it was designed to do, at a cost that the budget will record.

ECONOMY

A Tenth of a Percent: How Much the Deposit Rate Increase Is Worth

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Yomiuri Shimbun's estimate that ordinary deposit interest rates will rise by about 0.1% following the Bank of Japan's decision describes a change that is large in proportion and small in yen.

A household with one million yen in an ordinary account earns an additional thousand yen a year from a 0.1% increase, before tax, which is the price of a modest lunch.

Against that stands the variable mortgage. A household with 30 million yen outstanding faces an additional 75,000 yen a year in interest from a quarter-point rise, spread across the reset schedule the mortgage follows.

That asymmetry is why Yomiuri's report paired the deposit estimate with the increased burden on younger borrowers, since the households most exposed to the second are the ones least helped by the first.

Banks set deposit rates competitively and have felt little pressure to raise what they pay, since the largest institutions hold deposit bases so large that competition for funds is muted.

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

The Bank of Japan's flow of funds data this week showed household equity holdings overtaking insurance, a shift that occurred partly because deposits paid nothing, and a deposit that pays something may draw some savings back.

For older households, whose savings were accumulated during decades of zero rates and whose income depends partly on what those savings earn, the increase is a small benefit after a long wait.

The rate takes effect on the 24th, and banks will announce their own changes in the days that follow, with the majors typically moving together.

Governor Ueda's phrase, that increases will continue depending on the situation, implies that the tenth of a percent is the first of several, and that the arithmetic for both savers and borrowers will change again.

ECONOMY

Nine Trillion for Fuel, Five Trillion for Food, and a Bond Market Doing the Sum

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Two figures from this week's reporting belong side by side: the gasoline subsidy programme's budget of approximately 9 trillion yen, according to Asahi Shimbun, and the food consumption tax cut's annual cost of roughly 5 trillion yen with no funding source named.

Together they describe a government spending fourteen trillion yen to hold down two household prices, fuel and food, in a week when its central bank raised rates to fight the inflation those prices express and its long-term borrowing costs reached their highest since 1996.

The bond market has been doing this sum for days. Yields at three-decade highs reflect a judgment that a government spending more and taxing less will borrow the difference, and every quarter-point the Bank of Japan adds compounds across the debt that borrowing creates.

The rice buyback announced this week, absorbing the cooperatives' old inventory into the reserve, adds a third claim on the same budget, smaller than the other two but drawn from the same account.

Yomiuri's poll explains the politics. With 85% of respondents naming inflation countermeasures as a priority and 90% naming the economy and jobs, a government holding down fuel and food prices is doing what the electorate asked, at a cost the electorate has not yet been asked to pay.

The reappointed economic ministers describe the posture as responsible and proactive, and the extraordinary session's Budget Committee, under a chairman drawn from the governing side, is where the responsible half will be examined.

The Bank of Japan is being asked, implicitly, to offset with monetary policy a pressure that fiscal policy is creating, and Governor Ueda's phrase, that increases will continue depending on the situation, acknowledges an environment the bank does not control.

The yen's fall through 158 on the day of the rate increase, arrested only by rate checks, is the currency market's reading of the same sum: a government loading one pan of the scale while its central bank pulls on the rope.

The Prime Minister's summit with President Trump on Tuesday follows a Federal Reserve decision the President is protesting, and the fiscal position she brings to the meeting is the one the bond market has priced.

Fourteen trillion yen is the figure the session will have to account for, and the funding question that no one has answered is the one the Budget Committee exists to ask.

ECONOMY

The Weekend's Household Arithmetic: Rates Up, Rice Down, Fuel Held, Yen Weak

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

A household reading Saturday's papers can do its own arithmetic from the figures they contain, and the sum describes a week in which prices moved in several directions at once.

Rates are up. The policy rate rises to 1.25% from Thursday, deposit rates by about a tenth of a percent, and variable mortgages by a quarter-point at their next reset, which for a 30 million yen loan is roughly 75,000 yen a year.

Rice is down. New rice is selling below old, and prices are in the 2,000 yen range for the first time in two years, which for a household buying a five-kilogram bag every fortnight is a saving of several hundred yen each time.

Fuel is held. The subsidy keeps the national average near 170 yen a litre at a programme cost approaching 9 trillion yen, which is roughly 70,000 yen for every person in the country.

The yen is weak. At 156 to 158, everything priced in dollars costs more, from energy to imported food, and the rate increase that was meant to help the currency did not.

The consumption tax on food falls to 1% in April 2027 and 0% for two years after, a saving of several thousand yen a month for a typical household, funded by five trillion yen a year the government has not identified.

Long-term care premiums may rise for high-income residents over 65, and museum admissions will double or triple, two small claims on the household budget that describe the state reaching for revenue where it can.

Yomiuri's poll says 85% of households name inflation as a priority, which is the arithmetic in political form.

The typhoon adds its own line: cancelled fireworks, restricted sites and hotel deposits forfeited, for households whose holiday plans were made before the forecast.

The sum is a household better off on rice and food tax, worse off on mortgages and imports, and waiting to learn who pays for the difference.

BUSINESS

Publishers Demand Answers Over Reports That Nippan Sold Books in Bulk to an AI Company

The Japan Book Publishers Association wants the facts confirmed after Asahi reported the distributor's suspected sales to Anthropic
By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

Nippon Shuppan Hanbai, the book distributor known as Nippan, is suspected of having sold a large quantity of books to the American artificial intelligence company Anthropic, and the Japan Book Publishers Association is demanding confirmation of the facts, according to Asahi Shimbun.

The report places a Japanese institution at the centre of a question that has occupied publishers worldwide: whether books sold as physical objects may be used to train the language models that AI companies build, and who is entitled to decide.

Nippan is one of the two dominant distributors in Japanese publishing, the intermediary through which most books travel from publisher to bookshop, which gives it access to inventory on a scale no individual publisher or retailer commands.

A distributor selling books in bulk to any buyer is, on its face, ordinary commerce. What makes the reported sale contentious is the buyer's presumed purpose and the publishers' view that their rights extend to that purpose.

The association's demand for confirmation is the first step in a dispute that could turn on contract terms, on copyright law's treatment of training data, and on the relationship between distributor and publisher that Japanese publishing has relied on for decades.

Japanese copyright law contains provisions on the use of works for information analysis that have been read as permissive toward machine learning, a reading publishers have contested and that the government has been asked to clarify.

Anthropic has faced litigation in the United States over training data, and settlements there have involved the acquisition of books, which is the context in which a large purchase from a Japanese distributor would be examined.

For Japanese authors and publishers the question is whether their works, sold through a distributor they do not control, have entered a training corpus without their consent, and whether any consideration reached them.

The Tokyo Game Show, under way this weekend with a feature asking what is so great about Japanese games, is a reminder that Japanese cultural exports are among the country's most valuable intellectual property, and the same question applies to them.

Nippan's response to the association's demand, and any account of what was sold and on what terms, will determine whether the matter proceeds as a commercial dispute or as a test case.

BUSINESS

Nissan's Domestic Target and Rengo's Working-Hours Survey Carry Into the Weekend

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Two business stories from Friday's papers carry into the weekend editions: Nissan's president's target of one million units of domestic production as an export base, and Rengo's emergency survey finding that discretionary work systems tend toward long working hours.

Nissan's target rests on a currency calculation that Friday's market made sharper. A yen at 156 to 158 makes vehicles built in Japan and sold abroad earn considerably more in yen terms than they did when the currency was stronger, which converts domestic capacity from a cost into an asset.

The 15% tariff on most Japanese exports to the United States sits on the other side of that calculation, and August's trade figures showing the surplus with the American market down roughly 80% describe the tariff's aggregate effect.

A manufacturer committing to export from Japan is betting that its own margin arithmetic differs from the aggregate's, and the Bank of Japan's decision on Friday, which did not strengthen the yen, left that bet intact for now.

Rengo's survey arrives as the federation prepares for the spring wage negotiations that the Bank of Japan watches as evidence of sustainable wage growth, and the working-hours finding is part of the federation's broader argument about conditions.

Discretionary work arrangements pay for deemed rather than actual hours, and critics have argued since their introduction that they function as a mechanism for unpaid overtime.

Labour shortages have strengthened workers' bargaining position in several sectors, and unions have used that leverage to press on conditions alongside pay.

The economic ministers retained in this week's reshuffle have made domestic industrial capacity a stated priority, and both stories touch that priority from different sides: one about where production happens, the other about how the people doing it are treated.

Yomiuri's poll finding that 90% of respondents name the economy and employment as a priority describes the constituency both stories address.

Tokyo markets are closed until Tuesday, when the first session after the holiday will price whatever the weekend has produced.

BUSINESS

The Transformer Shortage Behind Hitachi Energy's American Plant

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Hitachi Energy's investment of approximately 82 billion yen in a transformer plant in Mississippi, reported this week and carried again in the weekend business coverage, addresses a shortage that has become one of the more consequential constraints on electricity infrastructure worldwide.

Large power transformers step voltage up for long-distance transmission and down again for distribution, and they are built to order over timescales measured in years.

Lead times have stretched as replacement of ageing grids, connection of renewable generation and data centre construction converged on a product built from grain-oriented electrical steel produced by a limited number of mills.

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

That demand is the background the coverage cites, and it persists regardless of the AI-sector repricing in equity markets this month, since order books for grid equipment operate on timescales considerably longer than a fortnight of sentiment.

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.

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.

Nuclear restarts use existing connections and avoid the constraint, an argument in their favour on timing grounds that the Hamaoka withdrawal this week made moot for that plant.

Locating capacity in the United States serves both the largest market for this demand and a policy environment favouring domestic manufacturing.

Construction and commissioning will take several years, placing the plant's output into a demand environment forecasters expect to persist.

BUSINESS

Why a Distributor's Sale Matters: The Structure of Japanese Publishing

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Japan Book Publishers Association's demand for confirmation of the facts, following Asahi Shimbun's report that Nippan is suspected of selling a large quantity of books to an AI company, concerns a transaction that only a distributor could have made.

Japanese publishing runs through two dominant distributors, Nippan and Tohan, which sit between publishers and bookshops and handle the physical movement, the returns and the settlement that the

industry's consignment model requires.

Under that model bookshops return unsold copies to the distributor, and the distributor holds inventory on a scale that no individual publisher or retailer commands, which is what makes a bulk sale of books to a single buyer possible.

What happens to returned or surplus stock has historically been the distributor's business, with pulping the usual fate, and a sale to a buyer prepared to pay for books in bulk would ordinarily be an improvement on pulping.

The buyer's presumed purpose is what changes the calculation. Books acquired to train language models are used in a way the publishers' rights may extend to, and the association's demand reflects the view that a distributor's inventory is not the distributor's to sell for that purpose.

Japanese copyright law contains provisions on the use of works for information analysis that have been read as permissive toward machine learning, a reading publishers have contested and asked the government to clarify.

The distribution system itself has been under strain for years, with bookshop closures leaving many municipalities without one and the consignment model's economics deteriorating as print sales declined.

A distributor finding a new buyer for surplus stock is, in that context, a business looking for revenue, and the dispute is over whether the revenue was the distributor's to find.

The association's demand is the first step in a process that could proceed as a commercial dispute, a test of the copyright provisions or both, and Nippan's response will determine which.

Reading Week in the autumn, the campaign publishers and libraries have run since 1947, opens in a year when the question of what a book is for has acquired a new answer.

BUSINESS

The Order Books Behind the AI Argument Are Measured in Years

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

Hitachi Energy's Mississippi transformer plant, an investment of approximately 82 billion yen with AI-driven demand cited, is a bet on a demand curve that equity markets have been arguing about for a month and that grid equipment order books have already settled.

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

Those components are built to order over years, from grain-oriented electrical steel produced by a limited number of mills, and the order books of the companies that make them extend well beyond any fortnight of market sentiment.

The AI-sector repricing in Tokyo this month, which pushed the Nikkei to its June high and then 11% below it, was an argument about whether capital expenditure on the technology would continue; the transformer order books say the expenditure already committed is enough to fill the plants for years.

Nippan's reported sale of books to an AI company, and the Tokyo Game Show's question about what makes Japanese games great, are the cultural side of the same phenomenon: a technology whose appetite for inputs, whether electricity or text, reaches Japanese suppliers from every direction.

The group's footprint in this equipment came with its purchase of ABB's power grids business, a deal that placed a Japanese company at the centre of the cycle before the cycle arrived.

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

The Bank of Japan's rate increase raises the cost of financing such investments, and a manufacturer committing 82 billion yen at 1.25% rather than at zero is making a judgment about the demand's durability.

Locating the plant in the United States serves both the largest market for the demand and a policy environment favouring domestic manufacturing.

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

BUSINESS

At 156 to 158, the Exporters' Arithmetic and the Importers' Arithmetic Diverge

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

The yen's range on Friday, from the low 158s before the rate checks to the high 156s after them, is the range within which Japanese corporate arithmetic is currently being done, and the two halves of the economy do it differently.

For exporters a weaker yen converts foreign earnings into more yen, which is why the Nikkei rose 882 points on the day the currency fell, with automotive and machinery names among the beneficiaries.

Nissan's target of one million units of domestic production as an export base, stated this week, is an exporter's calculation: capacity in Japan is an asset when the currency makes Japanese-built products cheap abroad.

For importers the same currency raises the yen cost of everything priced in dollars, and energy is the largest of those things, with crude above \$100 a barrel converted at 156 to 158 costing more than at any point in the previous decade.

The gasoline subsidy, at a record level with a budget approaching 9 trillion yen, is the state absorbing the importers' arithmetic on households' behalf.

The Bank of Japan's rate increase was justified partly by the weak yen's contribution to inflation, and a rate increase that does not strengthen the currency addresses the symptom without the cause.

Manufacturers' hedging positions determine how quickly the currency reaches their reported earnings, and most large exporters set annual assumptions considerably stronger than 156, which means the current range is a windfall against plan.

The 15% tariff on most Japanese exports to the United States sits on the other side of the exporters' calculation, and August's trade figures showing the surplus with the American market down roughly 80% describe its aggregate effect.

Yomiuri's poll finding 85% of respondents naming inflation as a priority describes the importers' side of the economy, which is where households live.

Tuesday's session, after the holiday, will price three days of American trading and whatever the rate checks have or have not held.

BUSINESS

A Million Units at Home: What Nissan's Target Says About the Yen and the Tariff

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Nissan's president's target of one million units of domestic production, with Japan described as an important export base, carried into the weekend business pages as a statement about the currency as much as about the company.

Domestic production of that scale, at a manufacturer that has spent years reducing its Japanese footprint, reverses a direction that the strong yen of the previous decade and the company's own restructuring had set.

The reversal's logic is the currency. A yen at 156 to 158 makes a vehicle built in Japan and sold abroad earn considerably more in yen than it did at 110, and domestic capacity becomes an asset rather than a cost.

The 15% tariff on most Japanese exports to the United States sits on the other side of the calculation, and August's trade figures showing the surplus with the American market down roughly 80% describe the tariff's aggregate effect.

A manufacturer committing to export from Japan is betting that its own margin arithmetic differs from the aggregate's, and the Bank of Japan's decision on Friday, which did not strengthen the yen, left that bet intact.

The economic ministers retained in the reshuffle have made domestic industrial capacity a stated priority, and a million units at Nissan is the kind of commitment the priority was meant to produce.

BUSINESS

Suppliers across the automotive chain, concentrated in Aichi and Kanagawa, would feel the target through orders, and the Asian Games opening in the industry's home prefecture today is a reminder of where the plants are.

Rengo's survey on discretionary work and long hours, reported alongside, describes the conditions in which the target would be met, and the spring wage negotiations the Bank of Japan watches will be conducted against both.

The Prime Minister's summit with President Trump on Tuesday is the venue at which the tariff's future might be raised, and the target's viability depends partly on what the summit produces.

Tuesday's market session will be the first to price the weekend's news, and Nissan's shares will carry the target's credibility.

COURTS

Man, 30, Arrested for Stealing Cables From an EV Charging Station

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

A 30-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of stealing cables from an electric vehicle charging station, according to NTV News.

Cable theft from charging stations has become a recognisable category of crime as the number of stations has grown, and the motive is the copper the cables contain.

Copper prices have risen substantially in recent years as demand from electrification and data centre construction outpaced supply, and the metal's value has made cables, wiring and even grounding rods targets for theft.

A charging cable is heavy-gauge copper in a thick insulating jacket, and a single cable yields a quantity of metal that scrap dealers will pay for, which is the economics of the offence.

The theft disables the station until the cable is replaced, which for the charging network is the more consequential damage, since a driver arriving at a station with a cut cable cannot charge.

Japan's charging infrastructure has lagged its vehicle electrification targets, and theft that takes stations out of service compounds a shortage that policy has struggled to address.

Scrap dealers are required to record transactions and identify sellers, and the enforcement of those requirements is the principal means by which cable theft is deterred.

Charging station operators have responded with reinforced cables, alarm systems and cameras, and the arrest suggests one of those measures produced an identification.

Theft of cables from railway lines, solar farms and construction sites has followed the same pattern, and the police treat the offences as connected through the scrap market they feed.

The suspect will face prosecution for theft, with the value of the cables and the cost of the station's repair among the factors in sentencing.

COURTS

Prosecutors Decline to Indict 88-Year-Old Suspected of Killing His Wife, Citing the Circumstances

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The Iida branch of the Nagano District Public Prosecutors Office has decided not to indict an 88-year-old man suspected of murdering his wife, citing consideration of various circumstances, according to NTV News.

A decision not to indict in a suspected killing is rare, and the phrase various circumstances is the prosecutors' way of describing a situation in which the facts of the act are not disputed but the justice of prosecuting it is.

Cases of this kind in Japan have typically involved an elderly spouse caring for a partner with dementia or severe illness, exhausted and without support, and the circumstances the prosecutors considered are likely to include those.

Caregiver killings among the elderly have been documented by researchers and reported by the press for years, and courts that have convicted in such cases have frequently imposed suspended sentences.

A decision not to prosecute at all goes further, and it reflects a judgment that a trial would serve no purpose that the circumstances had not already rendered moot.

The suspect's age, 88, places him among the population whose care needs the long-term care insurance system was created to meet, and the health ministry's consideration this week of premium changes for that population is the policy context.

Iida is in southern Nagano, a rural district where care services are thin and family members carry the burden that facilities in cities would share.

The decision is the prosecutors' and can be reviewed by a prosecution review committee if the victim's family or others request it, though such requests in cases of this kind are uncommon.

The reporting did not detail the wife's condition or the circumstances of her death, and the prosecutors' phrase leaves them to inference.

The case joins a category that the ageing of the population produces with increasing regularity and that the legal system has handled with a discretion the statute does not describe.

COURTS

Tokyo High Court Orders a Neighbour to Install a Screen

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The Tokyo High Court has also ordered a neighbour to install a screen, according to Yomiuri Shimbun, upholding a lower court's finding in a dispute over privacy between adjoining properties.

Neighbour disputes over sightlines are a feature of dense Japanese housing, where properties sit close enough that a window or balcony can overlook a neighbour's living space directly.

Japanese civil law contains a provision requiring a window or veranda within a defined distance of a boundary to have a screen where it overlooks the neighbour's land, a rule dating from the civil code's original drafting.

That provision is invoked rarely, and a High Court order enforcing it indicates a dispute that the parties could not resolve and that the lower court's order did not end.

The word also in the reporting indicates that the High Court's decision affirms a district court order rather than originating the requirement.

Screens of the kind ordered are typically frosted panels or lattices that obstruct the direct view while admitting light, and their installation is a modest remedy for what is often a bitter dispute.

Housing density in Tokyo has increased as land values rose for fourteen consecutive years and properties were subdivided and rebuilt closer together, which makes the civil code's century-old provision more relevant rather than less.

Mediation services offered by ward offices handle most neighbour disputes without litigation, and a case reaching the High Court has passed through those services without resolution.

The order's practical effect is to require the losing party to install and pay for the screen, with the possibility of further enforcement if it is not done.

The case is a reminder that the civil code's oldest provisions continue to govern the most intimate disputes of urban life.

COURTS

When Prosecutors Decline: The Discretion Behind the Iida Decision

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The decision by the Iida branch of the Nagano District Public Prosecutors Office not to indict an 88-year-old man suspected of murdering his wife, citing consideration of various circumstances, exercises a discretion that Japanese prosecutors hold and use sparingly.

Japanese prosecutors may decline to indict even where the evidence would support a charge, a power the code of criminal procedure grants on grounds that include the offender's character, age and circumstances and the situation after the offence.

That power is used routinely in minor cases and rarely in suspected killings, and its use here indicates a judgment that a trial would serve no purpose the circumstances had not already rendered moot.

Cases of this kind have typically involved an elderly spouse caring for a partner with dementia or severe illness, exhausted and without support, and researchers have documented such caregiver killings as a category the ageing of the population produces with increasing regularity.

Courts that have convicted in such cases have frequently imposed suspended sentences, and a decision not to prosecute at all goes a step further along the same reasoning.

The decision can be reviewed by a prosecution review committee, a panel of citizens that examines non-indictment decisions on request, though requests in cases of this kind are uncommon.

The Iida district in southern Nagano is the kind of rural area in which care falls on spouses because the services that would share it are hours away.

The health ministry's consideration this week of higher long-term care premiums for high-income residents over 65 addresses the system's funding, and the Iida case addresses its limits.

The suspect's age, 88, places him among the population the system was created to serve, and the case describes what happens when it does not reach a household in time.

The reporting did not detail the wife's condition or the circumstances of her death, and the prosecutors' phrase leaves them to inference, which is itself a form of discretion.

SOCIETY

Bomb Threat Made Against School Attended by Okinawa Governor's Child

The threat demanded that Koja resign and hold a new election, days after he took office

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent, Tokyo Bureau

A bomb threat has been made against a school attended by a child of Okinawa's new governor, Genta Koja, according to Sankei News. The threat called for him to resign from his post and hold a re-election.

Threats against the families of politicians cross a line that Japanese political culture, whatever its other divisions, has generally observed, and this one arrives less than a week after Koja took office.

Koja won Sunday's gubernatorial election by a decisive margin over Denny Tamaki, ending twelve years of All Okinawa coalition control of the governorship and installing a governor who accepts the Henoko base relocation.

The election's result was contested politically, as elections are, and the threat's demand for a re-election indicates a refusal to accept it that has moved from political opposition to something criminal.

Police in Okinawa are investigating, and schools that receive threats follow protocols that typically involve searches, heightened security and, where warranted, temporary closure.

That the target was a child's school rather than the governor's office is the detail that will draw the strongest response across the political spectrum, since it places a family member at the centre of an adult dispute.

Okinawa's base politics have been conducted with intensity for decades, and the prefecture's local media have covered the relocation dispute more closely than any other outlet in Japan, but threats of this kind have not been a feature of that coverage.

The Prime Minister confirmed this week that the government will cooperate with the new governor and resume dialogue with the prefecture gradually, and a threat against his family will not slow that resumption.

Grassroots opposition to the relocation has continued independently of the election result, and its organised groups will be as concerned as anyone that a threat of this kind not be associated with their cause.

The investigation's outcome will determine whether the threat was credible or an attempt at intimidation, and either is a matter for the police rather than for the prefecture's politics.

SOCIETY

Typhoon No. 25 Reaches Chichijima Today and May Make Landfall on the Boso Peninsula Monday

975 hectopascals, gusts to 45 metres a second, and up to 200 millimetres of rain across Kanto from Sunday morning. The government has opened a liaison office and the disaster minister is telling residents to read their hazard maps

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Typhoon No. 25 was approximately 190 kilometres southwest of Chichijima at 3 a.m. on Saturday, with a central pressure of 975 hectopascals, a maximum sustained wind of 30 metres a second and maximum instantaneous gusts of 45 metres a second, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency as reported by RSK. It is moving northwest at approximately 15 kilometres an hour, with a storm radius of about 110 kilometres.

Today is the closest approach to the Ogasawara Islands. Wave heights of 7 metres, winds exceeding 25 metres a second and landslides all require strict vigilance, according to Nihon Keizai Shimbun and Weathernews, with 24-hour rainfall of up to 150 millimetres in places until this morning.

The storm has slowed markedly since Friday, from around 40 kilometres an hour to around 15, and slowed storms are more dangerous than fast ones because they deliver their rain to the same ground for longer.

The Izu Islands face the storm from Sunday, with wave heights of 5 metres expected and high waves, strong winds and heavy rain on Sunday and Monday.

For Kanto the sequence is now specific. The rain area expands from tonight. Warning-level heavy rain begins on Sunday afternoon, with coastal areas possibly seeing 30 millimetres or more an hour. From 6 a.m. Sunday to 6 a.m. Monday, up to 200 millimetres is expected in parts of Kanto and Izu, according to the meteorological agency and Weathernews, and totals may exceed 200 millimetres. In Izu, totals may exceed 300 millimetres.

On Monday there is a possibility of landfall on the Boso Peninsula accompanied by a storm area, according to Mainichi Shimbun and Sankei News. Afterward the storm is expected to move east of Japan and become an extratropical cyclone. The forecast cone remains large.

The government has established an information liaison office at the Prime Minister's Office Crisis Management Center, and Goshi Hosono, the minister in charge of disaster management, has called on residents to check their hazard maps, according to Mainichi Shimbun and TBS.

The Tokai and Tohoku Pacific coasts should prepare for landslides, lowland flooding and river swelling on Sunday and Monday, as the storm stimulates the autumn rain front that has sat near Honshu for most of the month.

The holiday weekend is already being reshaped. The fireworks at Tokyo German Village have been cancelled, Izu City in Shizuoka plans to restrict access to some tourist areas, hotel cancellations have occurred, and the meteorological agency is asking the public to change plans flexibly, according to Oricon and Mainichi Shimbun.

Hokkaido and Okinawa are expected to see little direct effect, with Sapporo forecast sunny at 24°C and Naha at 31°C under the same high pressure that has kept the country's edges clear all week.

Farmers' concerns about the rice harvest, already delayed by a month of prolonged rain, continue as the storm approaches, according to Japan Agricultural News.

Separately, a linear rainband is predicted to form in southern Miyazaki Prefecture and may occur within three hours, according to Asahi Shimbun and UMK, with rain until around noon and clear skies by evening.

An earthquake with a maximum intensity of 1 occurred in Miyagi, Fukushima and Ibaraki, and volcanic earthquakes temporarily increased at Mount Tokachi, where the Sapporo Regional Meteorological Observatory continues its vigilance, according to TBS and FNN.

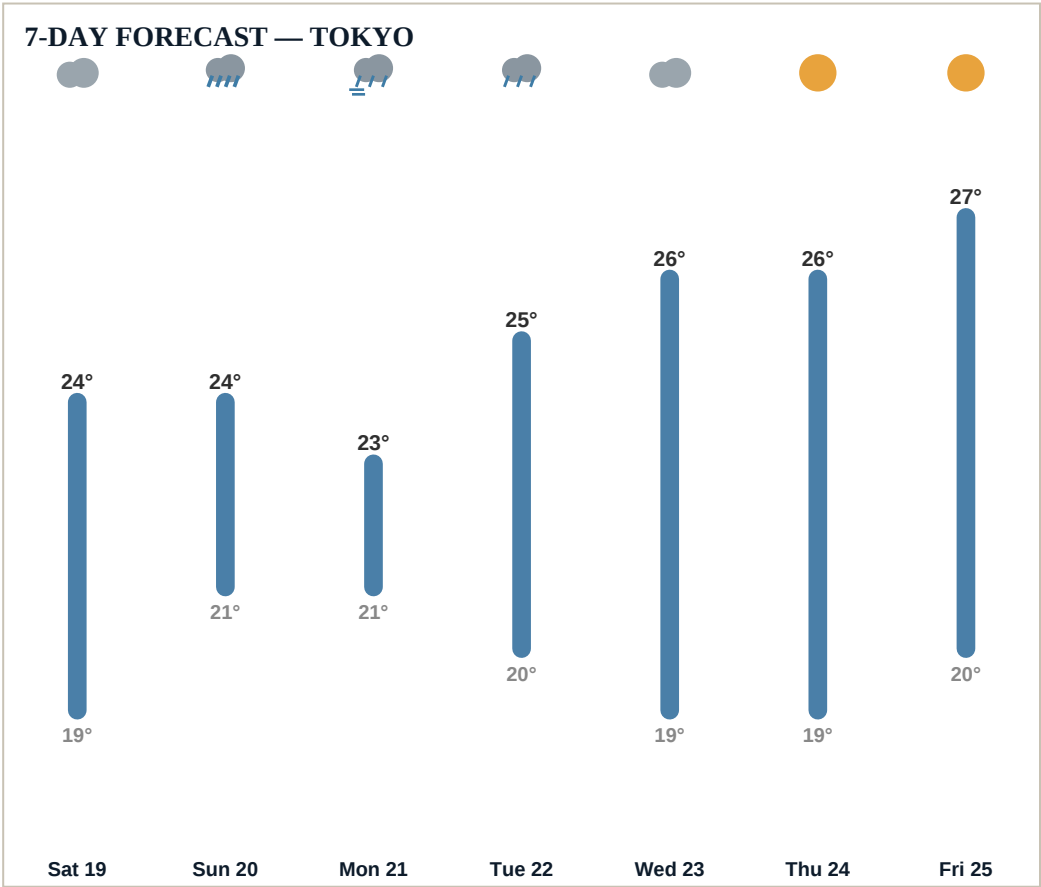
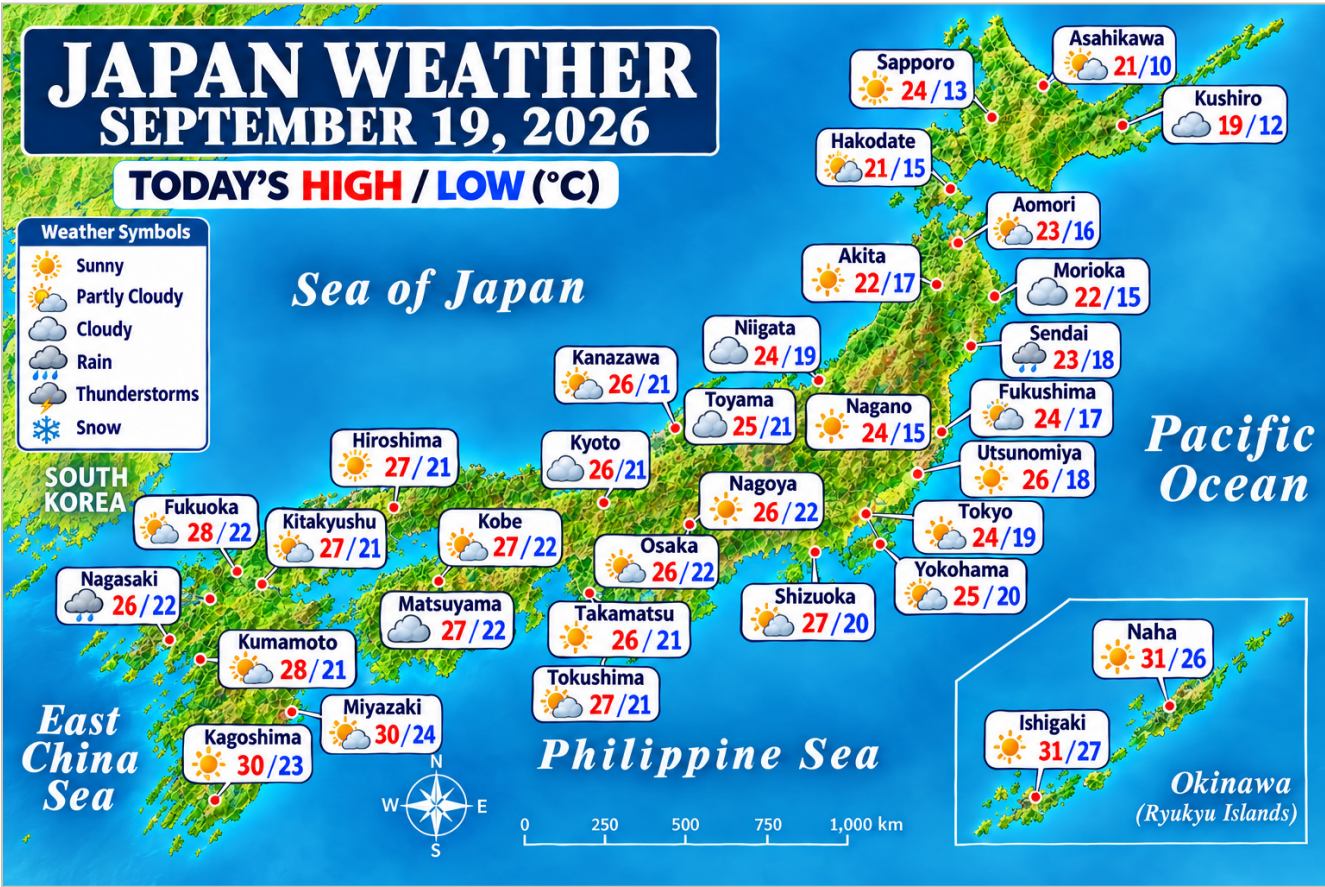
The transport ministry's expanded list of restricted underpasses, published this week after three deaths in submerged vehicles, is the document drivers across Kanto should consult before Sunday.

A shift of 100 kilometres in the storm's track changes both the rainfall totals and the wind strength over

WEATHER & SOCIETY

24°C

Tokyo — Partly cloudy, high 24°C; rain from tonight, warning-level Sunday, possible Boso landfall Monday



TOKYO METROPOLITAN AREA — Saturday, September 19, 2026

Morning: Partly cloudy, the last settled morning before the typhoon. Around 20°C at 7 a.m. Sunrise 5:27 a.m.

Afternoon: Partly cloudy with sunny intervals, high 24°C, near the seasonal average. Cloud thickens from the south through the afternoon.

Evening: Cloudy with the rain area expanding across Kanto from tonight, around 21°C by 9 p.m. Sunset 5:43 p.m.

Overnight: Rain setting in, low 19°C. Falls become steadier toward dawn along the coast.

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Saturday's map divides the country between clear edges and a Pacific side that is beginning to feel Typhoon No. 25. High pressure keeps Hokkaido and the Sea of Japan coast fine, with clear autumn weather from Sapporo to Akita. Kanto has a last partly cloudy day before the rain arrives tonight. Tokai and Kansai are warm and largely fine, with Nagoya sunny for the Asian Games opening. Western Japan is the warmest, with 30°C at Miyazaki and Kagoshima, and Nagasaki the one western station under rain. Okinawa is clear and summer-like at 31°C, outside the storm's easterly track.

Rain on Saturday is concentrated at three points: Sendai on the Tohoku Pacific coast, Nagasaki in western Kyushu, and the islands south of Tokyo. Hokkaido and Okinawa are expected to see little direct effect from the typhoon.

TYPHOON NO. 25

At 3 a.m. Saturday Typhoon No. 25 was approximately 190 kilometres southwest of Chichijima with a central pressure of 975 hectopascals, a maximum sustained wind of 30 metres a second and maximum instantaneous gusts of 45 metres a second. It is moving northwest at approximately 15 kilometres an hour, with a storm radius of about 110 kilometres.

Today is the closest approach to the Ogasawara Islands. Strict vigilance is required for wave heights of 7 metres, winds exceeding 25 metres a second and landslides, with 24-hour rainfall of up to 150 millimetres in places until this morning.

The Izu Islands face the storm from Sunday, with wave heights of 5 metres expected and high waves, strong winds and heavy rain on Sunday and Monday.

KANTO OUTLOOK

The rain area expands across Kanto from tonight. Warning-level heavy rain is expected from the afternoon of Sunday the 20th, and coastal areas may see rainfall of 30 millimetres or more an hour. From 6 a.m. Sunday to 6 a.m. Monday, up to 200 millimetres is expected in parts of Kanto and Izu, and total rainfall may exceed 200 millimetres. On the Izu Peninsula, total rainfall may exceed 300 millimetres.

On Monday the 21st there is a possibility of landfall on the Boso Peninsula accompanied by a storm area. Afterward the storm is expected to move east of Japan and become an extratropical cyclone. The forecast cone remains large, and a shift of 100

kilometres in the track changes both the rainfall totals and the wind strength over the capital materially.

The Tokai and Tohoku Pacific coasts should prepare for landslides, lowland flooding and river swelling on Sunday and Monday. Ground across eastern Japan is saturated by a month of prolonged rain.

The government has established an information liaison office at the Prime Minister's Office Crisis Management Center, and the minister in charge of disaster management has called on residents to check their hazard maps. The Japan Meteorological Agency is requesting that the public change holiday plans flexibly. The fireworks at Tokyo German Village have been cancelled, Izu City plans to restrict access to some tourist areas, and hotel cancellations have occurred.

The transport ministry's expanded list of underpasses subject to restriction during flooding, published this week after three deaths in submerged vehicles, should be consulted by drivers across Kanto before Sunday.

MIYAZAKI AND THE WEST

A linear rainband is predicted to form in southern Miyazaki Prefecture and may occur within three hours. Rain is expected until around noon, with clear skies by evening. The rest of Kyushu is warm and largely fine.

EARTHQUAKES AND VOLCANOES

An earthquake with a maximum seismic intensity of 1 occurred in Miyagi, Fukushima and Ibaraki prefectures. Volcanic earthquakes temporarily increased at Mount Tokachi in Hokkaido, and the Sapporo Regional Meteorological Observatory continues its vigilance under the Level 3 alert.

AGRICULTURE

Concerns continue about delays in the rice harvest as the typhoon approaches after prolonged rain. New rice is reaching shelves at lower prices than last year's old rice, and the crop still standing in eastern Japan's fields is the one the storm threatens.

UV INDEX & AIR QUALITY

UV Index: 5 (Moderate) in Tokyo under partly cloudy skies, 9 (Very High) in Okinawa 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 24/13 sunny, Asahikawa 21/10 partly cloudy, Kushiro 19/12 cloudy, Hakodate 21/15 partly cloudy: clear autumn weather under high pressure, the coolest nights in the country, and little direct effect expected from the typhoon.

Tohoku — Aomori 23/16 partly cloudy, Akita 22/17 sunny, Morioka 22/15 cloudy, Sendai 23/18 rain, Fukushima 24/17 partly cloudy: fine on the Sea of Japan side, rain on the Pacific coast at Sendai.

Chubu & Hokuriku — Niigata 24/19 cloudy, Toyama 25/21 cloudy, Kanazawa 26/21 partly cloudy, Nagano 24/15 sunny, Nagoya 26/22 sunny: cloud along the Sea of Japan coast, sunny inland and at Nagoya for the Games' opening ceremony.

Kanto — Utsunomiya 26/18 sunny, Tokyo 24/19 partly cloudy, Yokohama 25/20 partly cloudy, Shizuoka 27/20 partly cloudy: a last settled day before the rain area expands from tonight.

Kansai — Kyoto 26/21 cloudy, Kobe 27/22 partly cloudy, Osaka 26/22 partly cloudy: warm and largely fine, west of the storm's reach.

Shikoku — Takamatsu 26/21 sunny, Tokushima 27/21 partly cloudy, Matsuyama 27/22 cloudy: fine across most of the island.

Chugoku — Hiroshima 27/21 sunny: sunny and warm.

Kyushu — Fukuoka 28/22 partly cloudy, Kitakyushu 27/21 partly cloudy, Nagasaki 26/22 rain, Kumamoto 28/21 partly cloudy, Miyazaki 30/24 partly cloudy, Kagoshima 30/23 sunny: warm across the island, with rain at Nagasaki and a linear rainband possible in southern Miyazaki until around noon.

Okinawa — Naha 31/26 sunny, Ishigaki 31/27 sunny: clear and summer-like, outside the storm's easterly track.

SEVEN-DAY OUTLOOK, TOKYO

Saturday: Partly cloudy, high 24°C, low 19°C. Rain area expands from tonight. Sunday: Rain, heavy from the afternoon and at warning level, high 24°C, low 21°C. Monday (Respect for the Aged Day): Rain and strong winds, possible Boso Peninsula landfall, high 23°C, low 21°C. Tuesday: Rain easing as the storm moves east and becomes extratropical, high 25°C, low 20°C. Wednesday (Autumn Equinox): Cloudy, brighter, high 26°C, low 19°C. Thursday: Sunny, high 26°C, low 19°C. Friday: Sunny, high 27°C, low 20°C.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET

Tokyo: sunrise 5:27 a.m., sunset 5:43 p.m. Osaka: sunrise 5:45 a.m., sunset 6:01 p.m. Sapporo: sunrise 5:21 a.m., sunset 5:33 p.m. Naha: sunrise 6:20 a.m., sunset 6:28 p.m. The Autumn Equinox falls on Wednesday the 23rd.

TIDES, TOKYO BAY

High water 4:52 a.m. and 5:31 p.m.; low water 11:08 a.m. and 11:41 p.m. With the storm passing to the east of the bay from Sunday, storm surge is possible in low-lying districts along the bay's shore, and the evening high water on Sunday and Monday is the period to watch.

Kanto materially, and the Monday landfall scenario should be treated as a possibility the forecasters consider serious rather than as a certainty.

SOCIETY

Fireworks Cancelled, Izu Closing Sites, Hotels Emptying: The Weekend Rearranges Itself

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The first five-day Silver Week in eleven years is being rearranged by a typhoon before it has begun. The fireworks at Tokyo German Village have been cancelled, Izu City in Shizuoka Prefecture plans to restrict access to some tourist areas, and hotel cancellations have occurred, according to Oricon and

Mainichi Shimbun.

The Japan Meteorological Agency is requesting that the public change plans flexibly, which is the agency's way of saying that the plans made for Sunday and Monday should not be kept.

Tokyo German Village, in Chiba, sits on the Boso Peninsula where Monday's landfall is possible, and a fireworks display on the storm's approach was never going to proceed.

Izu's restrictions reflect a forecast of more than 300 millimetres of total rainfall on the peninsula, a quantity that closes trails, floods roads and makes the coastal sites that draw holiday visitors dangerous rather than merely wet.

Hotel cancellations across eastern Japan describe households doing what the agency asked, and the losses fall on an industry that had been counting on a rare five-day holiday to fill rooms.

The survey finding this week that eight in ten households planned to stay close to home has been overtaken; staying close to home now means staying in it.

Weather has an asymmetric effect on such a weekend, redirecting rather than cancelling, and the western half of the country, under clear skies from Nagoya to Kagoshima, may capture holiday traffic the east loses.

The Asian Games opening in Nagoya today, with the host city forecast sunny at 26°C, is the weekend's largest event and the one least affected.

Higan begins on Sunday and grave visits proceed in most weather, though households across Kanto may shift theirs to the improving second half of the week after the storm passes.

For the second half of the holiday the forecast improves, and Tuesday and Wednesday, the Autumn Equinox, may recover some of what the first half loses.

SOCIETY

A Linear Rainband Is Forecast for Southern Miyazaki, Hours Ahead of Its Formation

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

A linear rainband is predicted to form in southern Miyazaki Prefecture and may occur within three hours, according to Asahi Shimbun and UMK, with rain expected until around noon and clear skies by evening.

The forecast is notable for its timing rather than its content. The Japan Meteorological Agency began issuing advance predictions of linear rainbands only recently, and a forecast hours ahead of formation is the capability those predictions were designed to provide.

A linear rainband forms when successive thunderstorms develop over the same location and are carried along the same line, producing sustained torrential rain over a narrow band while areas a few kilometres away receive far less.

SOCIETY

Bands of this kind have produced several of Kyushu's most damaging rain events in recent years, and their narrowness is what makes them dangerous: warnings issued for a region may not convey that one valley will receive most of the water.

Southern Miyazaki's terrain, with steep slopes descending to a coastal plain, is exposed to both the landslides and the flash flooding that a stationary band produces.

Miyazaki's separate position from the typhoon, which is passing far to the east, illustrates that the storm is not the weekend's only hazard, and that the moist southerly flow feeding both is a single system.

The forecast's window, until noon with clearing by evening, gives the band a defined lifespan that residents can plan around in a way that longer events do not allow.

Municipal alert levels apply to rainband events as to any other, and the advice to act on the earlier tiers rather than the final one is the same.

The map shows Miyazaki at 30°C and partly cloudy, a reminder that a rainband is a local event within a regional picture that otherwise describes late-summer warmth across Kyushu.

By evening the band will have passed, and the prefecture's attention will turn to the harvest damage the month's rain has already done.

SOCIETY

Saturday's Map: Clear at the Edges, Cloud in the Middle, Rain Where the Storm Reaches

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Saturday's weather map describes a country whose edges are clear and whose Pacific side is beginning to feel the storm, with the day's rain concentrated at three points: Sendai, Nagasaki and the islands south of Tokyo.

Hokkaido remains under high pressure, with Sapporo sunny at 24°C and 13°C, Asahikawa partly cloudy at 21°C and Hakodate partly cloudy at 21°C, and the typhoon's direct effect on the island is expected to be small.

Tohoku is mixed, with Akita sunny at 22°C and Aomori partly cloudy at 23°C on the Sea of Japan side, while Sendai on the Pacific coast is under rain at 23°C and 18°C and Morioka is cloudy at 22°C.

Kanto sits under partly cloudy skies for a last settled day, with Tokyo at 24°C and 19°C, Utsunomiya sunny at 26°C and Yokohama partly cloudy at 25°C, before the rain area expands from tonight.

The Sea of Japan side of central Honshu is cloudy, with Niigata at 24°C, Toyama at 25°C and Kanazawa partly cloudy at 26°C, while Nagano is sunny at 24°C in the mountains.

Tokai and Kansai are warm and largely fine, with Nagoya sunny at 26°C for the opening ceremony, Shizuoka partly cloudy at 27°C, Osaka partly cloudy at 26°C, Kobe partly cloudy at 27°C and Kyoto cloudy at 26°C.

Western Japan is warmest, with Hiroshima sunny at 27°C, Fukuoka partly cloudy at 28°C, Kumamoto partly cloudy at 28°C, Miyazaki partly cloudy at 30°C and Kagoshima sunny at 30°C, while Nagasaki is the one western station under rain at 26°C.

Shikoku is fine, with Takamatsu sunny at 26°C, Matsuyama cloudy at 27°C and Tokushima partly cloudy at 27°C.

Okinawa is clear and summer-like, with Naha at 31°C and 26°C and Ishigaki at 31°C and 27°C, outside the storm's reach because of its easterly course.

The map is a snapshot of the last day before the storm reaches the mainland, and by Sunday afternoon the Pacific side of eastern Japan will look very different.

SOCIETY

Health Ministry Weighs Higher Long-Term Care Premiums for High-Income Residents Aged 65 and Over

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is considering raising long-term care insurance premiums for high-income earners aged 65 and over, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

Long-term care insurance enrolls everyone aged 40 and above as contributors, with benefits from 65, and

funds services through a combination of premiums, national and local taxation and a user co-payment.

Premiums for those aged 65 and over are set by municipalities on an income-graded scale, and the ministry's consideration concerns the upper bands of that scale rather than the system as a whole.

The arithmetic behind the proposal is demographic. The centenarian count passed 100,000 this week, the covered population grows faster than the contributing one, and the system introduced in 2000 has been adjusted repeatedly as its costs rose.

Raising premiums on higher-income older residents is the least politically difficult of the available adjustments, since it asks more of those best able to pay and leaves the co-payment and the benefit structure untouched.

It is also the smallest, since high-income earners over 65 are a limited group and the additional revenue is modest against the system's total cost.

The proposal arrives alongside the government's decision to raise admission fees to national art museums by two to three times, reported by Asahi Shimbun, and the two describe a state looking for revenue in the places it can reach without a tax debate.

Care sector staffing remains the binding constraint that premium changes do not address, with facility capacity expanded but waiting lists persisting in metropolitan areas and pay trailing the national average.

The Social Security Council's subcommittees do the detailed work of such changes, and their approval generally precedes ministerial adoption, which places this proposal at an early stage.

Respect for the Aged Day on Monday gives the proposal a calendar that the ministry may not have chosen.

SOCIETY

National Art Museums to Raise Admission Two to Three Times as the Government Tells Them to Earn More

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The government is raising admission fees to national art museums by two to three times, urging the institutions to increase their own income, according to Asahi Shimbun.

National museums in Japan have charged admission fees that were low by international standards, a policy rooted in the view that access to the collections was a public good the state should subsidise.

A doubling or tripling reverses that view in favour of one in which the institutions are expected to fund a larger share of their operations from the people who visit them.

The change follows a period in which the weak yen has drawn record numbers of international visitors to Japan, and the fee increase will fall on a visitor base that has grown while the domestic audience's disposable income has been squeezed by prices.

Museums in other countries have followed both models, with some charging substantial fees to international visitors while maintaining free or reduced entry for residents, and whether Japan's increase will distinguish between the two has not been reported.

The fee increase arrives in the same week the health ministry considers higher long-term care premiums for wealthy older residents, and the two together describe a government reaching for revenue at the margins while the larger fiscal questions, an unfunded five trillion yen tax cut and a 9 trillion yen fuel subsidy, remain open.

Curators and museum directors have argued for years that the institutions were underfunded, and higher fees may fund exhibitions and conservation that the previous model could not.

The counter-argument is that a museum whose entry costs three times what it did is a museum fewer people visit, and that the collections exist to be seen.

Reading Week in the autumn and the cultural calendar around the equinox are the periods when museum attendance peaks, and the fee change will be tested against that seasonal demand.

The Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology ministry, under a new minister following this week's reshuffle, oversees the national

institutions concerned.

SOCIETY

Imperial Household Agency Considers a Ceremony to Formalise Adoption

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent, Tokyo Bureau

The Imperial Household Agency is considering a ceremony to formalise adoption, referencing wedding ceremonies and other similar practices, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

The consideration follows the debate over the imperial succession, in which the restoration of former imperial branches through adoption has been among the options discussed for maintaining the number of family members.

Japan's imperial family has shrunk as female members have left it on marriage, and the succession, limited to male-line males, rests on a small number of individuals.

Adoption into the family from the branches that left it after the war has been proposed as a way of expanding the pool without changing the succession rules, and a ceremony to formalise such adoptions would give the mechanism a public form.

Wedding ceremonies within the imperial family follow established rites, and the agency's reference to them as a model suggests a ceremony of comparable formality rather than an administrative act.

The proposal remains under consideration and would require the political decisions on succession that the Diet has approached with considerable caution.

The Emperor and Empress are attending the Asian Games opening ceremony in Nagoya today, where the Emperor declares the Games open, a public role that the family's shrinking numbers make harder to sustain across the calendar of events that require it.

Public opinion on the succession has consistently favoured options the political system has not adopted, and the adoption route is among those that avoid the largest of the disputes.

The agency's consideration is at an early stage, and any ceremony would follow rather than precede the legislative changes that would make the adoptions possible.

For a family whose ceremonies are among the oldest continuously performed rites in the world, the creation of a new one would itself be a notable event.

SOCIETY

Driverless Light Vehicle Rolls Into a Line of Kindergarten Children in Niigata; Five Slightly Hurt

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

An unmanned light vehicle crashed into a line of kindergarten children in Tokamachi City, Niigata Prefecture, injuring five children slightly, according to NTV News and Asahi Shimbun.

An unmanned vehicle in this context means one that moved with no one at the wheel, and the most common cause is a parked vehicle whose brake was not properly set or whose transmission was not in park, rolling on a grade.

That the injuries were slight is the outcome that the low speed of a rolling vehicle usually produces, and it distinguishes the incident from the collisions involving driven vehicles that have killed children in lines and at crossings in recent years.

Kindergarten walks, in which children move in a line under teachers' supervision, are a routine feature of early education in Japan, and their safety depends on the environment around them as much as on the supervision.

Police will establish how the vehicle came to move, which typically involves examining the parking brake, the transmission position and the slope on which it was left.

Tokamachi sits in the hill country of southern Niigata, where grades are common and a vehicle left without its brake fully applied has somewhere to roll.

The prefectural board of education and the kindergarten will conduct their own examination of the walk's route and the circumstances, which is the standard sequence following any incident involving young children.

Light vehicles, the kei class that dominates rural Japanese roads, are small enough that a rolling one causes less harm than a larger vehicle would, which

is part of why five children were hurt slightly rather than seriously.

The owner of the vehicle may face questions about negligence depending on what the examination establishes.

The children were treated and the kindergarten will inform families, and the incident joins a category of accident that is preventable by a handbrake.

SOCIETY

Junior High Student Arrested in Sendai for Headbutting a Teacher in Class

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

A male junior high school student has been arrested in Sendai City on suspicion of assault after headbutting a teacher in his 60s in the face during class, according to Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun.

The arrest of a junior high school student is unusual. Japanese police generally handle minors of that age through the juvenile system's welfare provisions rather than through arrest, and an arrest indicates that the police judged the assault serious enough to require it.

Violence against teachers has been a recurring subject in Japanese education, with the education ministry's surveys recording incidents annually and the numbers rising in recent years after a period of decline.

A headbutt to the face of a teacher in his 60s is an assault that could cause significant injury, and the teacher's condition has not been reported in detail.

The incident follows this week's arrest of a high school teacher for advising students on the disposal of stolen goods and the injury of thirteen people when a student discharged bear spray at an Iwate junior high, a sequence of school incidents that has drawn attention to the pressures on classrooms.

Juvenile cases proceed through the family court, which decides whether the matter is handled through protective measures or, in serious cases, referred for prosecution as an adult would be.

The school and Sendai's board of education will conduct their own examination, and the student's circumstances will be part of it.

Teachers' unions have raised the question of classroom safety alongside working hours in their representations to the ministry, and an incident of this kind gives the argument a specific case.

The teacher's age is a detail the reporting emphasised, and the profession's ageing workforce, with many teachers continuing past the conventional retirement age because of shortages, is part of the context.

Further reporting will follow the family court's handling of the case.

SOCIETY

ANA Flight From Itami to Sendai Diverts to Niigata After Cockpit Window Cracks; 64 Unharm

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

An ANA flight from Osaka Itami to Sendai made an emergency landing at Niigata Airport after the right-side window of the cockpit cracked, according to BSN. All 64 people aboard were unharmed.

A cracked cockpit window is among the more alarming events a flight crew can experience and among the more manageable, since cockpit windows are built in layers and a crack in the outer layer does not compromise the cabin's pressurisation.

Procedure in such cases is to descend to an altitude at which pressure differential is reduced and to land at the nearest suitable airport, which for a flight between Osaka and Sendai over the Sea of Japan side of Honshu is Niigata.

The diversion's route, away from Sendai, which the map shows under rain today, and toward Niigata, which is cloudy, may also have reflected weather at the destination, though the reporting attributes the landing to the window.

Cockpit windows crack for a range of reasons, including thermal stress, bird strikes and, most commonly, failure of the heating element embedded in the glass to prevent icing.

Investigation will examine the window's layers to establish which failed and why, and the aircraft will be inspected before returning to service.

SOCIETY

Sixty-four people on a flight between two regional cities describes a smaller aircraft on a domestic route, and the crew's handling of the diversion will be examined as a matter of routine.

ANA's regional network connects Osaka's Itami airport with cities across Tohoku, and disruption to a single flight cascades through the day's schedule.

Passengers were expected to continue to Sendai by alternative means, with the airline responsible for arranging onward travel.

The Japan Transport Safety Board investigates serious incidents, and whether this one meets its threshold will depend on what the window examination establishes.

SOCIETY

Fire at Kitakyushu Udon Restaurant; Three Employees Evacuate Safely

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

A fire broke out at an udon restaurant in Kitakyushu City, and three employees evacuated safely, according to FBS.

Restaurant fires are among the most common commercial fires in Japan, with kitchens combining open flame, cooking oil and the ventilation ducts in which grease accumulates.

Udon restaurants keep large volumes of water at a rolling boil and fry tempura in oil, which places two distinct fire hazards in the same kitchen.

That three employees evacuated safely is the outcome fire regulations are designed to produce, with clear exits and staff training the requirements that matter when a kitchen fire spreads.

Kitakyushu's fire service responded, and the cause will be established through the examination of the kitchen's equipment and ducting that follows any restaurant fire.

The restaurant's location and whether neighbouring premises were affected were not detailed in the available reporting.

Kitchen exhaust ducts are a frequent source of restaurant fire spread, since grease deposits in the ducting carry flame from the cooking area into the building's structure.

Regulations require periodic cleaning of commercial kitchen ducts, and inspection after a fire typically examines whether that maintenance was current.

Kitakyushu was partly cloudy at 27°C on Saturday's map, and the fire's timing on a holiday weekend morning may have limited the number of customers present.

The restaurant's reopening will depend on the extent of the damage, which the fire service will assess.

SOCIETY

Hitachiomiya Postpones Its Decision on a Nuclear Waste Literature Survey

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

Hitachiomiya City in Ibaraki Prefecture has postponed its decision on whether to accept a literature survey concerning the disposal of high-level nuclear waste, according to NTV News.

A literature survey is the first of three stages in the process by which Japan is attempting to find a site for the final disposal of the waste its reactors have produced over half a century.

The survey examines existing geological records for a municipality that volunteers, and acceptance brings a subsidy without committing the municipality to the subsequent stages, which involve boreholes and, eventually, a repository.

Only a handful of municipalities have accepted a survey since the process was established, and each acceptance has produced local division of the kind Hitachiomiya's postponement reflects.

The subsidy is the incentive, and for a small municipality facing depopulation and a shrinking tax base, it is a substantial one; the objection is the possibility, however distant, of becoming the site.

Ibaraki's position on the Pacific coast north of Tokyo, in a prefecture that already hosts nuclear research facilities at Tokai, gives the question a local history that other candidate municipalities lack.

The waste itself sits in interim storage at reactor sites and at the Rokkasho facility in Aomori, and the

absence of a final disposal site has been the nuclear programme's unresolved question since its inception.

The nuclear restart programme, set back this week by Chubu Electric's withdrawal of the Hamaoka application after falsified seismic data was discovered, depends in the long run on a disposal solution the country has not found.

A postponement keeps the question open without answering it, which is the outcome most municipalities have reached when the survey has been proposed.

The city council's eventual decision will be watched by the other municipalities that have been approached, and by the utilities whose waste has nowhere to go.

SOCIETY

Tokyo Considers an Ordinance Against Littering

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government is considering enacting an ordinance to combat littering, according to NTV News.

Tokyo's reputation for cleanliness rests on a combination of social norms, the near-absence of public bins since the 1995 subway attack, and the expectation that residents carry their rubbish home.

That combination has come under strain as inbound tourism reached record levels, with visitors unaccustomed to the norms and unable to find bins leaving litter in the districts they visit most.

Several wards have introduced their own measures, including designated smoking areas with penalties for smoking elsewhere, and a metropolitan ordinance would provide a framework the wards' rules currently lack.

Kyoto and other destinations have faced the same problem and responded with a mix of signage, patrols and, in some areas, entry charges intended to manage the number of visitors.

The metropolitan government's collection of more than 10,000 lithium-ion batteries this month, reported earlier in the week, is a related waste question that an ordinance would not address but that illustrates the range of what residents are being asked to dispose of properly.

An ordinance with penalties would change the enforcement model from social pressure to legal sanction, which is a change the city's culture has resisted.

The Asian Games in Nagoya and the Tokyo Game Show in Chiba this weekend draw the kind of crowds that produce the litter the ordinance would target, and the metropolitan government will have observed both.

Consultation and drafting would follow the metropolitan assembly's consideration, with any ordinance taking effect after a period of public notice.

Whether penalties change behaviour that norms no longer govern is the question the ordinance would test.

SOCIETY

What a Boso Peninsula Landfall Would Mean for the Capital

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The scenario the forecasters consider possible for Monday, a landfall on the Boso Peninsula accompanied by a storm area, is the one that places the storm's strongest winds and heaviest rain across the eastern side of the Tokyo metropolitan area.

The Boso Peninsula forms the eastern arm of Tokyo Bay, and a storm crossing it from the south passes over Chiba's coastal cities, the bay's eastern shore and the approaches to Narita Airport before moving east of Japan.

The storm area, the radius within which winds reach 25 metres a second or more, is currently about 110 kilometres, which means a landfall on the peninsula would place central Tokyo and Kanagawa within or near its western edge.

Winds of that strength bring down trees and power lines, halt rail services and ground flights, and Chiba's experience with Typhoon Faxai in 2019, which left parts of the peninsula without power for weeks, is the reference residents will recall.

Rain is the larger hazard for the region as a whole. Up to 200 millimetres from Sunday morning to

Monday morning across parts of Kanto, with totals that may exceed that figure, on ground already saturated by a month of rain, is a flooding and landslide scenario before the wind arrives.

Tokyo Bay's shape can amplify storm surge when a typhoon passes to its east, since the winds on the storm's western side push water into the bay from the south, and low-lying districts along the bay's shore are the ones hazard maps mark for surge.

Rail operators typically announce planned suspensions a day ahead once a track is established, which would place any announcement on Sunday for Monday services, the holiday.

After landfall the storm is expected to move east of Japan and become an extratropical cyclone, which ends the typhoon but not the rain, since extratropical systems can produce heavy falls across a wider area.

The forecast cone is large, and a track 100 kilometres east would keep the storm area offshore while still delivering the rain; a track 100 kilometres west would place the strongest winds over central Tokyo.

The information liaison office at the Prime Minister's Office is the step that precedes a full response headquarters, and the escalation would follow confirmation of the landfall track on Sunday.

SOCIETY

Chichijima's Day: Seven-Metre Waves, Winds Above 25 Metres a Second, and No Way Off

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Today is the closest approach of Typhoon No. 25 to the Ogasawara Islands, with the storm 190 kilometres southwest of Chichijima at 3 a.m. and moving northwest at 15 kilometres an hour.

The islands are reached only by a ferry from Tokyo that takes roughly twenty-four hours and sails about once a week, which means the population rides out every storm where it is.

Wave heights of 7 metres, strong winds exceeding 25 metres a second and landslides are the hazards the advisories name, with 24-hour rainfall of up to 150 millimetres until this morning, according to Nihon Keizai Shimbun and Weathernews.

The storm's slowing, from 40 kilometres an hour on Friday to 15 today, extends the period over which the islands receive its rain and wind, which is the more dangerous direction for a storm's speed to move.

Chichijima's harbour and settlement sit on the island's western side, and a storm passing to the southwest places them on the side where winds and seas are strongest.

The islands' steep volcanic terrain sheds water quickly onto the roads and settlements below, which is why landslides feature in the warnings alongside waves and wind.

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 the Tokyo 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 today.

The storm's intensification since Thursday, from 996 hectopascals to 975, has been steady, and its gusts of 45 metres a second are the strongest reported for any storm to affect Japanese territory this month.

The ferry schedule will resume once the seas allow, and the islands' assessment of the damage will reach the mainland before the storm does.

SOCIETY

Three Hundred Millimetres on Izu: Why the Peninsula Is Closing Its Sites

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Izu City in Shizuoka Prefecture plans to restrict access to some tourist areas as total rainfall on the peninsula may exceed 300 millimetres, according to Mainichi Shimbun and the meteorological agency's forecasts.

Three hundred millimetres is a month's rain for the region in a normal September, delivered in two days onto ground that a month of prolonged rain has already saturated.

The Izu Peninsula's terrain, with steep valleys descending from a volcanic interior to a coast of cliffs and small harbours, concentrates rainfall into rivers that rise fast and slopes that fail when the soil water index exceeds its threshold.

The peninsula's tourism economy depends on hot spring towns, coastal walks and the roads that connect them, and restricting access is the municipality's way of keeping visitors away from the places that will be most dangerous.

The Izu Islands, offshore, face the storm from Sunday with 5-metre waves expected, and the peninsula and the islands together form the storm's approach to Kanto.

Hotel cancellations across the region describe visitors doing what the meteorological agency asked, and the losses fall on an industry that had counted on a five-day holiday.

Landslide warnings are issued by prefecture and municipality as the soil water index rises, and Shizuoka's will be among the first in eastern Japan to reach the level that triggers them.

The Tokai coast as a whole is advised to prepare for landslides, lowland flooding and river swelling on Sunday and Monday, with Izu the most exposed part of it.

Residents of the peninsula's valleys are the population hazard maps identify most clearly, and the disaster minister's call to check those maps applies to them before anyone.

The second half of the holiday may bring improvement, and the peninsula's sites will reopen as the water recedes, but the first half belongs to the storm.

SOCIETY

The Harvest the Storm Threatens Is the One That Just Made Rice Cheaper

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Concerns about delays in the rice harvest continue as Typhoon No. 25 approaches after a month of prolonged rain, according to Japan Agricultural News, and the harvest at risk is the one whose low wholesale prices have produced this week's paradox of new rice cheaper than old.

Rice standing in the field in the final weeks before cutting is vulnerable to wind, which flattens it, and to water, which delays the machinery and lowers the quality grading that determines the price.

A harvest already a month behind schedule across eastern Japan now faces up to 200 millimetres of rain across Kanto and more than 300 on Izu, with storm-force winds possible on Monday.

The low purchase prices wholesalers are paying for the new crop reflect a market that expected a large harvest, and a harvest reduced by weather damage would change that expectation after the prices were set.

For farmers the sequence is the worst available: low prices agreed for a crop that the weather then reduces, with the price not rising to compensate because the agricultural cooperatives' inventory of old rice, held at high prices, sits between them and the market.

The government's move toward buying back old rice for the reserve addresses the cooperatives' position rather than the farmers', and the new Agriculture minister will face both questions at once.

The sector has recorded bankruptcies at a record pace this year, and a crop reduced by weather after its price was set arrives at farms that have little cushion left.

Crop insurance covers defined categories of loss, with participation varying and claims processes that take time, and the regional cooperatives will be the channel through which support reaches individual farms.

For shoppers the paradox on the shelf is a bargain, and Yomiuri's poll on prices reflects the relief; for the people who grew the rice it is a loss the storm may deepen.

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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A Week of School Incidents Puts Classroom Safety Back on the Agenda

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Three incidents in a single week, a junior high student's arrest in Sendai for headbutting a teacher, thirteen injured when a student discharged bear spray at an Iwate junior high, and a high school teacher's arrest for advising students on disposing of stolen goods, have placed classroom safety back on the agenda.

The incidents differ in kind. One is violence by a pupil against a teacher, one is a hazardous object brought to school, and one is a teacher's alleged misconduct toward pupils, and each engages a different part of the system.

Violence against teachers has been recorded annually in the education ministry's surveys, with numbers rising in recent years after a period of decline, and teachers' unions have raised classroom safety alongside working hours in their representations.

The ageing of the teaching workforce, with many continuing past the conventional retirement age because of shortages, is part of the context, and the Sendai teacher's age, in his 60s, was a detail the reporting emphasised.

The Iwate incident reflects a countryside adapting to bears it once rarely saw, where carrying repellent has become routine and a canister in a school bag is less remarkable than it would be in Tokyo.

The teacher's arrest engages the licensing system, under which licences can be revoked following conviction, and the education ministry oversees that framework under a new minister following this week's reshuffle.

Prefectural boards of education conduct their own examinations independent of the criminal process, and each of the three incidents will produce one.

A kindergarten walk in Niigata into which a driverless vehicle rolled, injuring five children slightly, adds a fourth incident of a different kind, concerning the environment around schools rather than what happens inside them.

Schools in Japan carry expectations that extend well beyond instruction, and incidents that breach them draw scrutiny of the institution as much as of the individuals involved.

Whether the week's cluster is a coincidence of reporting or a pattern is a question the ministry's next survey will answer.

The Underpass List, the Hazard Map and the Weekend: Three Documents to Read Today

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

With warning-level rain forecast across Kanto from Sunday afternoon and a possible landfall on Monday, there are three documents every household in the region should read today, and the disaster minister has named one of them.

Goshi Hosono's call to check hazard maps, made as the government opened its liaison office, refers to the municipal maps that identify each household's exposure to river flooding, storm surge and landslide, and the evacuation site and route the map designates.

The second is the transport ministry's expanded list of restricted underpasses, published this week after three deaths in submerged vehicles in Chiba and Fukushima, which identifies the road dips that flood fastest and will be closed when rainfall reaches defined thresholds.

The third is the municipal alert level scale, which runs from one to five and on which 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 forecast's specifics make the documents urgent. Coastal Kanto may see 30 millimetres or more an hour on Sunday afternoon, up to 200 millimetres by Monday morning, and totals that may exceed that figure on ground a month of rain has saturated.

Tokyo Bay's shape can amplify surge when a storm passes to its east, and the low-lying districts along the bay's shore are the ones the hazard maps mark.

Rail operators will announce planned suspensions on Sunday for Monday if the track is confirmed, and the holiday's travel that eight in ten households had

already decided to keep local will be curtailed further.

The Tokyo Game Show at Makuhari, the fireworks at Tokyo German Village and the tourist sites of Izu are the events and places already affected, and the list will grow through Sunday.

Households that have dropped flood cover from their fire insurance to hold down premiums, a trend reported this week, are the ones the hazard map most needs to reach.

Reading the map takes ten minutes, finding the evacuation site takes one, and both are best done today, under partly cloudy skies at 24°C, rather than on Sunday night.

Copper at the Charging Station: A Shortage Meets a Scrap Price

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The arrest of a 30-year-old man for stealing cables from an electric vehicle charging station, reported by NTV News, describes a collision between two of the decade's economic facts: a copper price driven by electrification and a charging network that Japan has struggled to build.

Copper prices have risen substantially as demand from electric vehicles, renewable generation and data centre construction outpaced supply, and the metal's value has made cables, wiring and grounding equipment targets for theft across the country.

A charging cable is heavy-gauge copper in a thick jacket, and a single cable yields a quantity of metal that scrap dealers will pay for, which is the economics of the offence.

Japan's charging infrastructure has lagged its vehicle electrification targets, with the number of public chargers well short of what policy envisaged, and theft that takes stations out of service compounds a shortage that policy has struggled to address.

A station with a cut cable is a station a driver cannot use, and the damage to the network's reliability exceeds the value of the copper taken.

The scrap trade is the point at which the offence can be interrupted, since dealers must record what they buy and from whom, and the police work the theft backward from the yard that paid for the copper.

Operators have responded with reinforced cables, alarms and cameras, and the arrest suggests one of those measures produced an identification.

Theft from railway lines, solar farms and construction sites has followed the same pattern, and the police treat the offences as connected through the scrap market they feed.

Nissan's target of one million units of domestic production, reported this week, includes the electric vehicles that will need the stations, which is why the charging network's condition is an industrial question as well as a policing one.

Prosecution for theft will follow, and the cost of returning the station to service, which typically exceeds the scrap value many times over, will be among the sentencing considerations.

An Intensity-1 Earthquake and a Restless Mountain: The Weekend's Other Hazards

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

An earthquake with a maximum seismic intensity of 1 occurred in Miyagi, Fukushima and Ibaraki, and volcanic earthquakes temporarily increased at Mount Tokachi, according to TBS and FNN, two events that the typhoon has overshadowed and that deserve their own note.

Intensity 1 on Japan's ten-step scale is the lowest level at which shaking is felt, perceptible to some people indoors and to almost no one outside, and earthquakes of that intensity occur across the country daily.

That the event was felt across three prefectures indicates a source of moderate magnitude at some depth, of the kind the Pacific plate's descent beneath northeastern Honshu produces routinely.

Mount Tokachi in Hokkaido is a different matter. The volcano is under a Level 3 alert, which restricts entry

to the mountain, and the volcanic earthquake committee met in emergency session this week to assess whether the indicators justify moving toward Level 4.

The committee's finding was that a clear increase in large-scale volcanic earthquakes would indicate magmatic eruption risk, and a temporary increase in volcanic earthquakes is the kind of signal that finding described.

The Sapporo Regional Meteorological Observatory continues its vigilance, which is the agency's phrase for monitoring that has not yet produced a change in the alert level.

Tokachi last erupted in 1988, and its history includes a 1926 eruption whose lahars killed more than a hundred people in the communities below, which is why the alert system treats it with care.

Hokkaido is the one part of the country the typhoon is expected to leave untouched, and the island's hazard this weekend is the mountain rather than the sea.

The earthquake and the volcano are unrelated to each other and to the storm, and the coincidence of all three in a single weekend describes the geological and meteorological position Japan occupies rather than any connection among them.

Residents near Tokachi are advised to follow the observatory's updates, and residents of the three prefectures that felt the earthquake need do nothing.

How a Parked Car Moves: The Physics Behind the Tokamachi Incident

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The unmanned light vehicle that rolled into a line of kindergarten children in Tokamachi, injuring five slightly, moved for one of a small number of reasons that vehicle rollaway investigations examine.

A parked vehicle is held by its parking brake, by its transmission, or by both, and a vehicle on a grade with neither properly engaged will move when the grade's pull exceeds the rolling resistance.

Parking brakes on light vehicles are often hand-operated levers or foot pedals, and a brake applied partially may hold on level ground and fail on a slope, particularly as the mechanism's tension relaxes.

Automatic transmissions left in neutral rather than park provide no restraint, and the small size of the shift positions on some vehicles makes the error easier than drivers expect.

Kei cars weigh less than larger vehicles and roll at speeds a slope determines, which is why a rolling kei car hurt five children slightly rather than seriously.

Tokamachi's hill country in southern Niigata provides the grades on which such incidents occur, and municipalities in similar terrain have seen comparable events.

Police examination will establish the brake's position, the transmission's setting and the slope's angle, and the owner may face negligence questions depending on the findings.

Manufacturers have introduced electronic parking brakes on newer models that engage automatically when the vehicle is switched off, which removes the human step that most rollaway incidents depend on.

Kindergarten walks are supervised by teachers who can protect children from hazards they see approaching, and a silent rolling vehicle from behind is among the hardest to see.

The incident is preventable by a fully applied handbrake, which is the finding such investigations most often reach.

Why a Cracked Cockpit Window Is Alarming and Manageable

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The ANA flight from Itami to Sendai that diverted to Niigata after its right cockpit window cracked, landing safely with 64 unharmed, experienced an event that flight crews train for and that aircraft are designed to survive.

Cockpit windows are built in multiple layers, typically an outer glass ply, an inner structural ply and a plastic interlayer, with an embedded heating element to prevent icing.

A crack in the outer layer, the most common failure, does not compromise the cabin's pressurisation, since the inner layer carries the structural load; a crack in the inner layer is more serious and triggers an immediate descent.

Procedure in either case is to descend to an altitude at which the pressure differential across the window is reduced, and to land at the nearest suitable airport, which for a flight over the Sea of Japan side of Honshu is Niigata.

The most common cause of cockpit window cracking is failure of the heating element, which produces localised thermal stress; bird strikes and manufacturing defects account for most of the remainder.

Investigation examines the window's layers to establish which failed and why, and the aircraft is inspected and the window replaced before it returns to service.

Sixty-four people aboard indicates a smaller aircraft on a regional route, and the crew's handling of the diversion will be reviewed as a matter of routine.

Sendai on Saturday's map is under rain, and Niigata is cloudy, which may have made the diversion airport the better destination on weather grounds as well, though the reporting attributes the landing to the window.

The Japan Transport Safety Board investigates serious incidents, and whether this one meets its threshold will depend on the window examination.

Passengers were expected to continue to Sendai by alternative means, with the airline arranging onward travel.

The Kindergarten Walk and the Road: A Routine That Depends on Everything Around It

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The line of kindergarten children into which a driverless vehicle rolled in Tokamachi this week was doing something that Japanese early education does every day: walking, in a line, under teachers' supervision, through the neighbourhood.

Walks of this kind are a deliberate part of the curriculum, intended to teach children the roads, the seasons and the community, and their safety depends on the environment around them as much as on the supervision.

Several fatal incidents in recent years, in which driven vehicles struck lines of children at crossings and on pavements, prompted a national review of walk routes and the installation of guard rails at identified danger points.

A rolling vehicle from behind is a different hazard from a driven one approaching a crossing, and it is among the hardest for supervising teachers to see.

That the five children were hurt slightly rather than seriously reflects the low speed of a rolling kei car, and it distinguishes the incident from the collisions that prompted the review.

The kindergarten and Niigata's board of education will examine the route and the circumstances, which is the standard sequence following any incident involving young children.

Tokamachi's terrain, hilly and rural, is the kind in which walk routes pass parked vehicles on grades, and municipalities in similar country have identified such points in their reviews.

The owner of the vehicle may face negligence questions depending on what police establish about the brake and the transmission.

Families will have been informed, and the walk will resume on a route the examination has checked.

The incident joins a category that is preventable by a handbrake, which is both the simplest and the most frequently missed of the measures the reviews identified.

Beyond Kanto: The Tohoku and Tokai Coasts Face the Same Two Days

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The Tokai and Tohoku Pacific coasts should prepare for landslides, lowland flooding and river swelling on Sunday and Monday, according to the meteorological agency's advisories, as Typhoon No. 25 stimulates

SOCIETY

the autumn rain front along the whole Pacific side of Honshu.

The storm's rain is not confined to the region it passes over. A typhoon approaching from the south pushes warm, moist air into the stationary front that has sat near Honshu for most of the month, and the front produces rain along its length.

Sendai is already under rain on Saturday's map, at 23°C and 18°C, the only Tohoku station so marked, and the Pacific coast north of Kanto will receive the storm's northern rain bands on Sunday.

Shizuoka, partly cloudy at 27°C today, sits on the Tokai coast between the Izu Peninsula's 300 millimetres and Kanto's 200, and the prefecture's rivers rise from the mountains behind the coast.

The ground across the whole region is saturated by a month of prolonged rain, and the soil water index that governs landslide warnings is already elevated before the storm's rain begins.

Miyagi, Fukushima and Ibaraki, the three prefectures that felt the latest intensity-1 earthquake, are the same three that will receive the storm's northern rain, a coincidence without connection.

Municipal alert levels apply along the coasts as in Kanto, and the advice to act on Level 3 for those who need time and Level 4 regardless is the same.

Rice harvest delays, already a month behind across eastern Japan, extend along both coasts, and the farmers' concerns Japan Agricultural News reports are not confined to the Kanto plain.

Nagoya and Aichi, where the Asian Games open today, sit far enough west of the Tokai coast's exposure that the host region should escape the worst.

The two days, Sunday and Monday, are the window the advisories name, and the Tuesday improvement they anticipate applies to the coasts as to the capital.

SOCIETY

From 40 to 15: Why a Slower Storm Is a Worse One

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Typhoon No. 25 was moving at around 40 kilometres an hour on Friday and at around 15 on Saturday morning, according to the meteorological agency's positions, and the deceleration is the most consequential change in the storm's behaviour this week.

A storm's rainfall over any point on the ground is a product of its intensity and the time it spends overhead, and a storm moving at 15 kilometres an hour spends nearly three times as long over each point as one moving at 40.

The forecast totals reflect that. Up to 200 millimetres across parts of Kanto in 24 hours and more than 300 on Izu are the quantities a slow-moving storm delivers to ground it crosses at walking pace.

Slow storms are also harder to forecast, since the steering currents that would carry them are weak, and a large forecast cone, which the agency has acknowledged, is the consequence.

The deceleration occurred as the storm intensified, from 996 hectopascals on Thursday to 975 on Saturday, and the combination of a stronger, slower system is the one forecasters least like to see approaching a populated coast.

The Ogasawara Islands, at the storm's closest approach today, receive the first demonstration, with 7-metre waves and 150 millimetres of rain over 24 hours.

Kanto's turn comes on Sunday afternoon, and the storm's speed by then will determine whether the 200 millimetres arrives over a day or over two.

After the possible landfall on Monday the storm is expected to move east of Japan and become extratropical, at which point its speed typically increases again as it is caught by the westerlies.

Ground saturated by a month of prolonged rain cannot absorb what a slow storm delivers, and the landslide and flooding warnings reflect the ground's condition as much as the storm's.

A storm at 15 kilometres an hour is one that residents can prepare for, since it announces itself, and the disaster minister's call to check hazard maps is the preparation the speed allows.

SPORTS

The Asian Games Open in Nagoya, Japan's First in 32 Years, With a Record 932 Athletes and a Target of 78 Golds

The Emperor declared the Games open at Paloma Mizuho Stadium. Wrestler Akari Fujinami carried the flag. Hakuho lit the way the night before. And the run-up produced an anthem mix-up, leaking rooms and a diplomatic apology

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor, with Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games open today with a ceremony at Paloma Mizuho Stadium in Nagoya, the third time Japan has hosted the summer Games and the first in 32 years, since Hiroshima in 1994, according to Nihon Keizai Shimbun and Mainichi Shimbun.

Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress are attending, and the Emperor declares the Games open. Yukihiro Tsutsumi is the ceremony's general director of production. The flag bearer is wrestler Akari Fujinami.

The scale is the largest the Games have reached. More than 15,000 athletes from 45 countries and regions are competing across 43 sports and 469 events, and Japan has entered a record 932 athletes across every sport.

The target Japan has set is to surpass the 78 gold medals won at the 1966 Bangkok Games, the high mark of an era in which Japanese dominance of Asian sport was near total and the field far smaller.

Several events carry a second purpose. Surfing and hockey, among others, serve as qualifiers for the Los Angeles Olympics, which gives their results a weight beyond the Games' own medal table.

The flame reached the ceremony by way of Hisaya-Odori Park on Friday evening, where former yokozuna Hakuho Sho was the final torchbearer, the last leg of a relay that had earlier drawn on figure skaters and a kabuki actor.

Competition has been under way for days, with Japan's men's under-21 football team beating Hong Kong 2-0, the women's volleyball team sweeping Nepal 3-0, and women's handball preliminaries, including Japan against Vietnam, held around the ceremony itself.

From Sunday the programme begins in earnest, with swimming, table tennis, badminton, triathlon, water polo and the martial arts all starting, and the medal table will begin to fill.

The run-up produced the kind of operational trouble that large Games produce. Before the South Korea versus Bangladesh men's hockey match, the North Korean national anthem was mistakenly played, according to Asahi Shimbun.

Water leaks in the accommodation and beds that were too small were also reported, and the appearance of Toyotomi Hideyoshi at a welcoming ceremony drew an expression of regret from South Korea, according to Asahi Shimbun and FNN.

Hideyoshi, the sixteenth-century unifier of Japan born in what is now Nagoya, is a local hero in Aichi and, for Koreans, the man who launched the invasions of the 1590s, which is why a figure the host region regards as its own is a figure the neighbouring delegation regards differently.

An anthem error and a historical figure at a ceremony are the kind of incidents that organising committees apologise for and that the competition then overtakes, and both will be overtaken by Sunday's first medals.

Team Japan's leader, Kosei Inoue, said on Thursday that the team was united, and Mainichi's observation on the same day, that costs have risen and attention has fallen, is the frame the results will be measured against.

Nagoya's weather is favourable for the ceremony, with a high of 26°C under sunny skies, though Typhoon No. 25's approach to eastern Japan over the weekend will affect events scheduled toward the Pacific coast.

Japan last hosted a summer Games in Hiroshima in 1994 and before that in Tokyo in 1958, and the country's third hosting arrives with a delegation, a target and a set of expectations that neither predecessor carried.

SPORTS

SoftBank Clinch a Third Straight Pacific League Title, the Hawks' First Three-Peat in 60 Years

Thursday's 7-1 win over Orix, the ninth in a row, sealed it. Kokubo becomes only the third manager to win three in a row in his first season, and Masayoshi Son was hoisted with the players

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Fukuoka SoftBank's 7-1 victory over Orix on Thursday, their ninth consecutive win, clinched the club's third consecutive Pacific League championship, according to Sports Hochi and Asahi Shimbun. The clinch was confirmed with Seibu's defeat by Nippon-Ham the same evening.

It is the Hawks' first three consecutive titles since relocating to Fukuoka, and the first in 60 years, since the Nankai era, when the club won three in a row in the mid-1960s.

Manager Hiroki Kokubo achieved the three-peat in his first year as manager, becoming only the third person in the league's history to do so, according to Sports Hochi.

Owner Masayoshi Son was hoisted on the shoulders of the players in the doage, the celebratory tossing that Japanese baseball reserves for its champions, an image that will run in every sports section this weekend.

The clinch had been arithmetically imminent since Wednesday's 4-0 win over Orix in ten innings set the magic number at two, and Thursday's result, combined with Seibu's 4-2 loss, took it to zero in a single evening.

Nine consecutive wins is the longest run of the club's season, and the pennant was won in the manner the run suggested: with a relief corps that held games and an offence that found runs when it needed them.

The Pacific League's picture had been settled at the top for weeks, with SoftBank's form leaving considerably less doubt than the Central League race has produced.

A three-peat is rare in a league whose postseason format gives the pennant winner only a one-game advantage in the Climax Series Final Stage, and the Hawks' recent history includes both Japan Series titles and Final Stage exits from positions of comparable strength.

Son's presence in the doage is the detail that distinguishes this celebration. The SoftBank Group founder has owned the club since 2005 and has been visible in its fortunes in a way few Japanese owners are.

The Hawks play Rakuten today at 2 p.m. in Miyagi, the first game as champions, with the regular season's remaining fixtures now about rotation management and rest ahead of the Climax Series.

The Central League race continues, with Hanshin having ended a seven-game slide on Thursday and the postseason places still contested.

For Fukuoka, a city whose baseball identity was built when the club arrived from Osaka in 1989, a three-peat that reaches back to the Nankai Hawks' era connects the two halves of the franchise's history.

SPORTS

Onosato and Kotozakura Reach Five Wins; Kirishima Takes a Second Loss

Day six: the yokozuna won by a pull, the ozeki both moved, and Aonishiki is level at three and three

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Yokozuna Onosato defeated Gonoyama with a pulling technique on the sixth day of the Autumn tournament on Friday, bringing his record to five wins and one loss, according to Yomiuri Shimbun. Ozeki Kotozakura also reached five wins.

Ozeki Kirishima lost to Yoshinofuji, his second defeat, leaving him at four and two. Aonishiki's record is level at three and three. Day seven is today.

Onosato's win came a day after the Yokozuna Deliberation Council publicly urged him to show the confidence of his rank, and a pulling technique, hataki-komi or a relative, is not the frontal force-out the council would have preferred to see.

A win is a win in the standings, and five and one keeps the yokozuna level with Kotozakura at the top, but the manner will be noted by a council that made its expectations explicit this week.

Kotozakura's recovery from Thursday's loss to Minoumi, his first of the tournament, restores the

ozeki to a share of the lead and keeps his own case, for a championship or for promotion, intact.

Kirishima's second loss is the more consequential result. His promotion case required a championship or something close to it, and two defeats in six days against a field that still contains a yokozuna and two ozeki make a championship considerably harder.

Yoshinofuji, who lost to Onosato on day five, beating an ozeki on day six is the kind of result that shapes a tournament's middle week, and it places him among the lower-ranked wrestlers whose upsets have opened this basho.

Aonishiki at three and three has arrested the slide that two consecutive losses had begun, and an ozeki level after six days is defending his rank rather than contending, with eight wins the target that secures it.

With Hoshoryu absent and no wrestler unbeaten since day five, the tournament's lead is shared at five and one between the yokozuna and an ozeki, which is the structure a basho is supposed to have and this one has reached by an unusual route.

The second week's scheduling will bring the leaders against each other, and the bouts among Onosato, Kotozakura and Kirishima will decide the championship.

The tournament runs through the 27th at Ryogoku Kokugikan.

SPORTS

Japan Meet Fiji Today in the Pacific Nations Cup Final

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan's national rugby team faces Fiji today in the Pacific Nations Cup final, having beaten the United States 63-14 in the semi-final.

The final falls on the same day as the Asian Games opening ceremony, giving Japanese sport two marquee events on a single Saturday and the sports pages a division of attention.

Fiji present the problem the semi-final did not. Fijian rugby is built on a running game and offloading skill that no other nation replicates, and Japanese sides that have beaten them have done so by controlling possession and denying the space in which that game thrives.

The 63-14 win over the United States was a statement of the gap between Japan and the American programme, with nine tries describing a side that controlled the ball and converted it at will, but Fiji will not concede possession that way.

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 World Cup runs in 2015 and 2019 established a style based on tempo and fitness, and the current squad's semi-final performance suggested that approach remains intact.

The domestic League One has professionalised the player base, and the national squad drawn from it carries more depth than the sides that produced those earlier performances.

A win would give the national side a title in a year that has otherwise been about rebuilding toward the next World Cup cycle, and a loss to Fiji would be no disgrace against a side of that quality.

The weather is a consideration for any fixture in eastern Japan this weekend, with Typhoon No. 25's rain area expanding across Kanto from tonight, though the final's kickoff precedes the storm's main arrival.

The result will be in Sunday's editions alongside the Games' first medals.

SPORTS

An Anthem, a Warlord and a Leaking Ceiling: The Games' Opening Week of Apologies

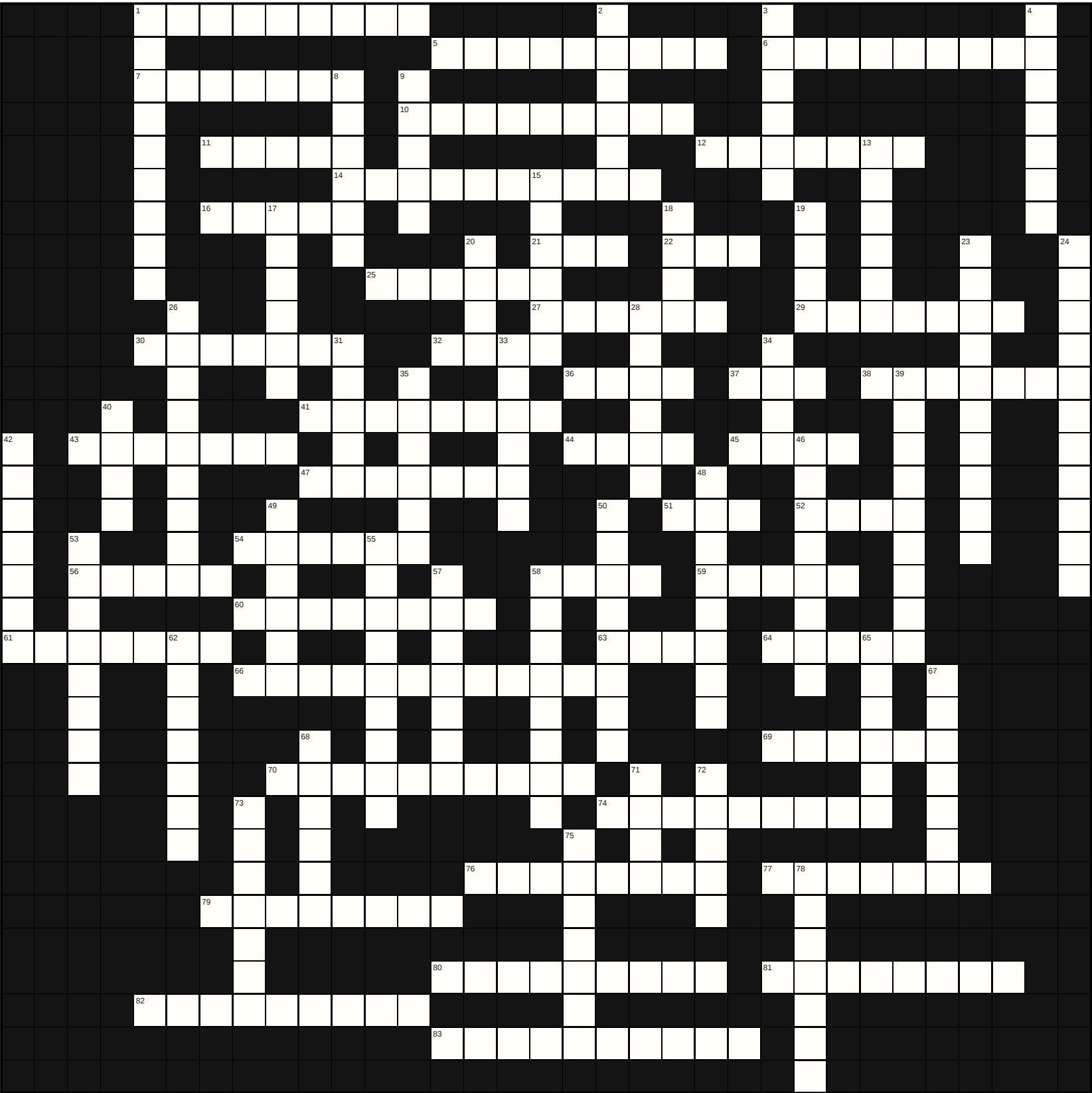
By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Aichi-Nagoya Games open today having already produced the operational incidents that large multi-sport events seem unable to avoid, and Asahi Shimbun's account of them is worth setting out.

Before the South Korea versus Bangladesh men's hockey match, the North Korean national anthem was mistakenly played, an error that in the context of the peninsula's politics is not a small one.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 85 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional / Sunday-level.

ACROSS

- Where the cartoon says the fortune lives (9)
- Warlord whose appearance drew Korean regret (9)
- Country moving visa renewals to a lottery (9)
- Today's opponent in Miyagi (7)
- AI company named in the Nippan report (9)
- Summit partner planned for Tuesday (5)
- It was condemned, per the caption (7)
- Association demanding the facts (10)
- Communist candidate for Yokohama mayor (5)
- Owner hoisted in the doage (3)
- Peninsula that may see 300 millimetres (3)
- Final torchbearer at Hisaya-Odori (6)
- Average that cleared 65,000 (6)
- Airport where an ANA flight diverted (7)
- Division champions five years running (7)
- Peninsula facing a Monday landfall (4)
- What the Bank of Japan delivered on Friday (4)
- Currency that fell through 158 (3)
- Defence minister who spoke of the region's future (7)
- Messe hosting the Game Show (8)
- New chairman of the upper house Budget Committee (7)
- Vissel side that won away (4)
- Golfer who led the ANA Open (4)
- Where the government will put old rice back (7)
- Index down 95.40 on Friday (3)
- Okinawa governor whose child's school was threatened (4)
- Electoral change due by end of October (6)
- Party with five new vice ministers (5)
- Today's rugby final opponent (4)
- Gauge that slipped 3.05 while the Nikkei rose (5)
- Ceremony the Imperial Household Agency considers (8)
- The industrialist's house in the cartoon (7)
- New LDP Fukuoka federation chairman (4)
- Subject of alignment before the US talks (5)
- Ibaraki city postponing a nuclear survey (12)
- ___ Mizuho Stadium, opening ceremony venue (6)
- Island the typhoon passes today (10)
- Ozeki with a second loss (9)
- Onosato's day-six opponent (8)
- New method for working holiday renewals (7)
- Mortgage type that resets (8)
- Tool of the veranda critic (9)
- Director in charge of the ceremony (8)
- Ozeki level at three and three (9)
- Year the rate was last this high, in short (10)

DOWN

- Cancelled at Tokyo German Village (9)
- Metal inside stolen charging cables (6)
- Kind of map the minister wants checked (6)
- Games where Japan won 78 golds in 1966 (7)
- Distributor suspected of a bulk sale (6)
- Kyoto district hosting a greening fair (5)
- Era of the Hawks' last three-peat (6)
- Disaster minister urging hazard maps (6)
- North Korea's was played by mistake (6)
- New is cheaper than old this week (4)
- Restaurant that caught fire in Kitakyushu (4)
- Scorer of Kobe's winner (4)
- Ozeki also at five and one (10)
- Wrestler who beat Kirishima (11)
- Niigata city where a kei car rolled (9)
- Manager with a first-year three-peat (6)
- What Taro Suzuki drew today (5)
- What the High Court told a neighbour to install (6)
- Governor who quickened the pace (4)
- Institution doubling or tripling admission (6)
- Islands at closest approach today (9)
- Team beaten 7-1 in the clinch (4)
- Account earning a tenth of a percent more (7)
- Prime minister bound for New York (8)
- Club that clinched a third straight pennant (8)
- City where a student headbutted a teacher (6)
- New Steering Committee chairman (8)
- Prefecture with a linear rainband forecast (8)
- Telephone call that moved the yen two points (9)
- Paper with an emergency poll at 59% (7)
- Wrestler carrying the flag (8)
- Wednesday's holiday (7)
- Host city of the Asian Games (6)
- Size of the increase, in points (7)
- Star resuming batting on the injured list (6)
- Nagano branch that declined to indict (4)
- Observance beginning Sunday (5)
- Restless Hokkaido volcano (7)
- Window that cracked on the right side (7)
- Yokozuna who won by a pull (7)

Water leaks in the athletes' accommodation and beds that were too small were also reported, complaints that recur at nearly every Games and that organisers address room by room.

The appearance of Toyotomi Hideyoshi at a welcoming ceremony drew an expression of regret from South Korea. Hideyoshi was born in what is now Nagoya and is a local hero in Aichi; he also launched the invasions of Korea in the 1590s, which is why a figure the host region regards as its own is regarded differently by the neighbouring delegation.

That the organisers did not anticipate the objection says something about how differently the same history is held on either side of the strait, and the expression of regret, delivered diplomatically, was the appropriate response.

None of these incidents affects competition, and all of them will be overtaken by Sunday's first medals, which is the pattern such Games follow.

They nonetheless supply the frame Mainichi Shimbun described on Thursday, of increased costs and decreased attention, since the attention that does arrive is drawn to what went wrong before it is drawn to what went right.

Team leader Kosei Inoue's statement that Team Japan is united was made against exactly this backdrop, and the delegation's results from Sunday will determine whether the Games are remembered for the anthem or for the medals.

The Emperor's declaration at Paloma Mizuho Stadium today marks the formal transition from preparation to competition, and organising committees generally find that the second phase is easier to manage than the first.

A North Korean delegation is attending, and the anthem error is the kind of incident that its presence makes more sensitive rather than less.

SPORTS

Hakuho Carries the Flame Its Final Leg Through Hisaya-Odori Park

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Former yokozuna Hakuho Sho was the final torchbearer of the Asian Games relay on Friday evening at Hisaya-Odori Park in central Nagoya, the last leg before the flame reached today's opening ceremony.

The choice places the most decorated wrestler in sumo's history at the culmination of a relay that had drawn on figure skaters Riku Miura and Ryuichi Kihara and on kabuki actor Kankuro Nakamura, a sequence that has woven Japanese sport and performing arts into the event's ceremonial prelude.

Hakuho's record of 45 top-division championships stands above any other in the sport, and his career, which began in Mongolia and ended with Japanese citizenship and a stable of his own, embodies the international character that the Games celebrate.

His relationship with the sumo establishment has not been uncomplicated, and his selection for the relay's final leg is a recognition of his standing that the sport's own institutions have not always extended so readily.

Hisaya-Odori Park runs through the centre of Nagoya beneath the television tower, and its selection as the final venue placed the flame in the city's civic heart rather than at a sporting facility.

Torch relays have become the standard prelude to multi-sport games, and their routes and participants are chosen to say something about the host region beyond its capacity to stage competition.

The relay's participants have said something specific: that Japanese sport draws on a range of disciplines and figures beyond the Games' own programme, and that its ceremonial culture includes the ring and the stage.

Today's ceremony at Paloma Mizuho Stadium, with the Emperor declaring the Games open and wrestler Akari Fujinami carrying the flag, completes the sequence the relay began.

For sumo the choice arrives during the Autumn tournament, in which Onosato, the current yokozuna, has been publicly urged by the deliberation council to show the confidence of his rank, and the sport's greatest champion carrying a flame across Nagoya is a reminder of what that confidence looked like.

The flame's journey ends today, and the competition it announces begins in earnest on Sunday.

SPORTS

932 Athletes, 43 Sports, 469 Events and a Target Set in Bangkok in 1966

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan has entered a record 932 athletes across every sport at the Aichi-Nagoya Games, according to Nihon Keizai Shimbun and Mainichi Shimbun, in a competition of more than 15,000 athletes from 45 countries and regions contesting 43 sports and 469 events.

The target the delegation has set is to surpass the 78 gold medals won at the 1966 Bangkok Games, a mark that has stood as the high point of Japanese performance at the Games for sixty years.

The 1966 figure was set in a very different competition. The field was smaller, China did not compete, and Japanese dominance of Asian sport was near total across the disciplines then contested.

Surpassing it in a field that now includes China, which remains the overwhelming favourite in the overall medal table, and South Korea, whose programme has matched Japan's across many disciplines, would represent a substantially greater achievement than the original.

The record entry of 932 reflects both the breadth of the programme, at 43 sports the Games' widest, and a deliberate decision by the Japanese Olympic Committee to field a full delegation on home soil.

Home advantage is measurable in multi-sport games, with host nations consistently exceeding their away performances through familiar venues, no travel and crowd support in sports where momentum matters.

Japan Sport Council officials have 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.

Surfing and hockey, among other events, serve as qualifiers for the Los Angeles Olympics, which gives their results a consequence beyond the Games and raises the stakes for the athletes concerned.

The Games' breadth beyond the Olympic programme, with teqball, cricket and the regional sports the Games have always admitted, favours the depth that China's programme has built across more disciplines than any competitor matches.

Whether 78 is surpassed will be known on October 4, and the medal table's first entries arrive on Sunday.

SPORTS

From Sunday the Games Begin in Earnest: Swimming, Table Tennis, Badminton and the Martial Arts

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Today's competition around the opening ceremony includes women's handball preliminaries, with Japan playing Vietnam, and from Sunday the programme opens across swimming, table tennis, badminton, triathlon, water polo and the martial arts.

Swimming is where Japan's medal expectations are most concentrated in the first week, with a programme whose depth has produced consistent international results across recent Olympic cycles.

Table tennis and badminton are disciplines in which China's dominance is most complete and in which Japanese medals of any colour represent a genuine achievement against that standard.

The martial arts, with judo foremost among them, carry the weight of expectation that comes with being the sport's country of origin, and Kosei Inoue's presence as team leader is a reminder of what Japanese judo has been.

Triathlon's early placement gives the Games an outdoor event whose conduct will depend on the weather, and Typhoon No. 25's approach to eastern Japan over the weekend is a variable for any competition scheduled toward the Pacific coast.

Nagoya itself is forecast to stay clear through the weekend, with a high of 26°C today and the storm's direct effects concentrated to the east, which favours the host region's venues.

Football continues with Japan's under-21 men facing Kyrgyzstan on Sunday after their 2-0 opening win over Hong Kong, and the Nadeshiko women's team in the preliminary league.

Women's volleyball resumes after the 3-0 sweep of Nepal, and beach volleyball's progress alongside the indoor competition reflects the Games' breadth.

Baseball opens on Monday with the Samurai Japan amateur team against China at Toyohashi, on Respect for the Aged Day and the day the typhoon may make landfall on the Boso Peninsula, though Aichi sits well west of the expected track.

SPORTS

The medal table's first entries will arrive on Sunday evening, and the question of whether Japan can approach the 78 golds of 1966 begins to be answered.

SPORTS

Kokubo Joins a List of Three: A Three-Peat in a Manager's First Season

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Hiroki Kokubo's achievement of a third consecutive Pacific League title in his first year as manager places him among only three people in the league's history to have done so, according to Sports Hochi.

The distinction is a specific one: inheriting a club that has won two consecutive pennants and delivering a third, which requires both a strong squad and a manager who does not disrupt what produced it.

Kokubo's own playing career, as a slugger for the Hawks and Giants and as a national team manager, gave him a standing in Fukuoka that made the succession natural rather than contested.

A manager taking over a champion faces a particular pressure. Any decline is attributed to him, any success to his predecessor, and the only outcome that escapes both readings is the one Kokubo has produced.

The Hawks' three-peat is also their first since relocating to Fukuoka in 1989 and the first in 60 years, since the Nankai era, which connects the current club to the franchise's Osaka history.

The Nankai Hawks of the mid-1960s, under the management of Kazuto Tsuruoka, were among the dominant clubs of their era, and a three-peat that reaches back to them places the current squad in that company.

Masayoshi Son's presence in the doage, hoisted with the players, is unusual for a Japanese owner and characteristic of one whose involvement in the club has been visible since he acquired it in 2005.

The club's pitching depth and relief corps have been the foundation of the run, and the nine-game winning streak that produced the clinch is the longest of the season.

The Climax Series will test whether the pennant translates into a Japan Series appearance, since the Final Stage's one-game advantage is substantial without being decisive.

The Hawks play Rakuten today in Miyagi, the first game of a champion's remaining schedule, which is now about rotation management and rest.

SPORTS

Two Losses in Six Days Leave Kirishima's Promotion Case Needing a Championship

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Ozeki Kirishima's loss to Yoshinofuji on day six, his second of the tournament, leaves him at four and two and changes the arithmetic of his promotion case.

The customary benchmark for promotion to yokozuna is two consecutive championships or an equivalent record, and the flexibility in that phrase is where the Yokozuna Deliberation Council's discretion lives.

A four-and-two record after six days does not end a championship pursuit, but it places him a bout behind Onosato and Kotozakura at five and one, and the second week's bouts against both are where the gap would need to close.

Yoshinofuji's win, a day after losing to Onosato, is the kind of result that shapes a tournament's middle week and places the lower-ranked wrestler among those whose upsets have opened this basho.

Kirishima's day-three loss to Takayasu had already removed the possibility of an unblemished record; Friday's removes the margin for a further slip.

The council's attention this week has been on Onosato, publicly urged to show the confidence of his rank, and its assessment of Kirishima will be made against the same standard of manner as well as result.

A strong runner-up finish following a championship has been accepted for promotion before, and Kirishima's path now runs through that argument rather than through a second title.

The scheduling convention will bring him against Onosato and Kotozakura in the second week, and two wins there would restore a case that two losses have

weakened.

Aonishiki, level at three and three, is no longer a championship contender and is defending his rank, which changes the calculation for the bouts among the ozeki.

Day seven is today, and each of Kirishima's remaining bouts will be read against a benchmark that has moved further away.

SPORTS

A Win by a Pull: Onosato Answered the Council in the Standings, Not in the Manner

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Onosato's day-six win over Gonoyama came by a pulling technique, according to Yomiuri Shimbun, and the manner of it deserves comment because the Yokozuna Deliberation Council made manner its subject this week.

The council's public urging that Onosato show the confidence of a yokozuna followed his day-four loss to Takayasu, and his day-five response, a yorikiri force-out over Yoshinofuji, was the kind of win the council wanted.

A pulling technique is different. It describes a wrestler who steps back or aside at the initial charge and slaps or pulls the opponent down as his momentum carries him forward, and it wins bouts without embodying the frontal power the rank is supposed to represent.

Yokozuna have won by pulls throughout the sport's history, and no rule forbids it, but the technique invites the criticism that the wrestler avoided the contest rather than winning it.

Five and one is five and one in the standings, and Onosato remains level with Kotozakura at the top, which is the position that matters for the championship.

The council's remark will nonetheless follow him, and a second pulling win in the coming days would be read differently from a second force-out.

Gonoyama's own charge, and whether the pull was a tactical response to it or a habit, is the kind of question the sport's commentators will debate through the second week.

Sumo's kimarite list records the winning technique of every bout, and the distribution of a yokozuna's techniques across a tournament is examined as a measure of his condition.

With Hoshoryu absent, Onosato carries the institutional expectations of the rank alone, which is why the council's attention has been so close and its statement so early.

Day seven is today, and the technique will be read as closely as the result.

SPORTS

Under-21s Face Kyrgyzstan on Sunday With a 2-0 Start Behind Them

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan's under-21 men's football team plays its second Group A match against Kyrgyzstan on Sunday, having beaten Hong Kong 2-0 in the opening fixture at Toyota Stadium.

The Nadeshiko women's team is in the middle of its preliminary league matches, having opened with an 8-0 win over Thailand and followed it with a further group win.

Asian Games men's football is an age-group competition, which means the squads are drawn from players on the way up rather than established internationals, and results can be less predictable than the seniors' would be.

A 2-0 opening win establishes the position without settling it. Group qualification frequently turns on goal difference, and Sunday's fixture will determine whether Japan's path through the group is comfortable or contested.

South Korea's 4-1 win over Qatar in the opening round sets up the rivalry that has defined this competition, with the two countries' age-group sides meeting in finals more often than any other pairing.

Sunday's match falls on the day Typhoon No. 25's rain reaches warning level across Kanto, though Aichi's venues sit well west of the storm's expected track and the host region's forecast is favourable.

The women's tournament proceeds toward 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.

Both tournaments run through the Games' second week, with the finals among the events that close the competition on October 4.

Toyota Stadium and the region's other football venues will host fixtures throughout, and the schedule will adjust if the storm's track shifts west.

SPORTS

Women's Volleyball Builds on the Nepal Sweep as Beach Volleyball Progresses

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Japan's women's volleyball team, having opened with a 3-0 victory over Nepal, continues its group campaign as the Games formally open, with beach volleyball also under way.

The women's programme is pursuing its first Asian Games gold in 48 years, a figure that reaches back to the era in which Japanese women's volleyball dominated the sport and won Olympic gold in Tokyo in 1964 and Montreal in 1976.

A 3-0 sweep of Nepal, with sets of 25-8, 25-12 and 25-11, established the gap between Japan and the opponents it faces in the group; 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.

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 a place at the Los Angeles Olympics through the Asian Championship, 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 outdoor discipline is the one most exposed to the weekend's weather, though the host region's forecast is favourable and the typhoon's effects are concentrated to the east.

The 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 Amateurs Open Against China on Monday at Toyohashi

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

The Samurai Japan amateur team begins its Asian Games campaign on Monday the 21st at Toyohashi against China, according to the Games schedule, with training intensified during the squad's camp.

Asian Games baseball is contested by amateur and semi-professional squads rather than by NPB's professionals, which is why the question of suspending the professional season for the 2028 Olympics is a separate matter under consideration by the owners.

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, provides the most recent measure of the rivalry at youth level.

Monday's opener falls on Respect for the Aged Day and on the day Typhoon No. 25 may make landfall on the Boso Peninsula, though Toyohashi in eastern Aichi sits well west of the storm's expected track.

SoftBank's clinch of a third consecutive Pacific League title on Thursday gives Japanese baseball a professional champion in the same week its amateurs open their Games campaign.

Akimi Iijima, nominated as NPB's next commissioner, will take office in December with the Olympic question among the first on his desk, and the amateurs' performance will shape the argument about whether the professionals should be asked to play.

Toyohashi and Okazaki, the venues for the baseball tournament, extend the Games' footprint across Aichi beyond Nagoya.

The tournament's schedule brings the strongest fixtures toward its close, with the group stage establishing the bracket.

SPORTS

Dodgers Champions of Their Division a Fifth Time; Ohtani Resumes Batting on the Injured List

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Los Angeles Dodgers have won their division for a fifth consecutive year, and Yoshinobu Yamamoto commented on the clinch, according to the weekend baseball coverage. Shohei Ohtani remains on the injured list and has resumed 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 on the clinch, that he had worked hard all year, reflects a season in which he anchored a rotation that absorbed sustained attrition.

Ohtani's resumption of batting is the first rung of a hitter's return ladder, tee work with no pitch recognition or timing demand, and the progression from there is standardised through soft toss and live batting practice.

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 October's compressed environment.

Roki Sasaki's return to pitching has been under discussion, which would restore a further Japanese arm to a staff planning for the playoffs.

Japanese attention on the club has grown to the point where Dodgers results run in domestic sports sections alongside NPB's own races, and this weekend they run beside SoftBank's three-peat.

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.

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.

Ohtani's next step in the progression will be the item the Japanese coverage follows most closely.

SPORTS

Vissel Kobe's Away Win and Kashiwa's Progress Carry Into a Crowded Weekend

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Vissel Kobe's opening away win in the AFC Champions League Elite East Division, with Muto scoring the winner, and Kashiwa Reysol's progress in the same group stage carry into a weekend in which Japanese football has fixtures at every level.

An away win in the opening round of Asian competition is the result Japanese clubs most often fail to produce, given a domestic calendar that leaves them playing continental fixtures at a different point in their season from their opponents.

Muto's winner gave Kobe a start that the club's recent domestic form had suggested was possible, with the striker's finishing the difference in a match decided by a single goal.

Kashiwa's progress follows their fixture against Jeonbuk, one of Korean football's most decorated clubs, in a rivalry the competition's league-phase structure guarantees will recur.

SPORTS

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.

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.

The Asian Games' under-21 tournament draws on the same player pool the J.League clubs develop, and Sunday's fixture against Kyrgyzstan will feature players whose clubs are simultaneously contesting the league and the continent.

Continental success carries commercial value through prize money and qualification for the Club World Cup, which has grown considerably in scale.

League-phase standings will take shape over the coming rounds, with progression to the knockout stage the objective for both Japanese sides.

The J.League's own fixtures this weekend will be affected by the typhoon in eastern Japan, with clubs in Kanto watching the forecast.

SPORTS

The ANA Open Continues in Hokkaido as the Tokyo Game Show Asks What Makes Japanese Games Great

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Domestic golf tours including the ANA Open continue through the weekend, with Taihei Sato having led after an opening 66, and the Tokyo Game Show is under way with a feature asking what is so great about Japanese games, according to Asahi Shimbun.

The ANA Open is played in Hokkaido, the one part of the country the typhoon is expected to leave untouched, with Sapporo forecast sunny at 24°C today and clear autumn weather continuing.

That favours scoring, and the tournament's final rounds will be contested under conditions the rest of eastern Japan will not enjoy this weekend.

The Tokyo Game Show, at Makuhari Messe in Chiba, sits in the storm's path, with the rain area expanding across Kanto from tonight and warning-level falls forecast from Sunday afternoon, which will affect attendance on the show's public days.

Asahi's feature question, what is so great about Japanese games, arrives in a week when the reported sale of books by Nippan to an AI company raised the related question of who controls Japanese cultural exports and their use.

Japanese games are among the country's most valuable intellectual property, with franchises whose characters and worlds have global recognition that few other Japanese exports match.

The show's business days precede its public days, and the industry's announcements this year have been shaped by the same generative AI questions that publishing is now confronting.

Chiba's exposure to the storm, with the Boso Peninsula the forecast landfall point on Monday, places Makuhari among the venues most affected by the weekend's weather.

Golf and games are the weekend's two domestic events outside the Asian Games, and both proceed under weather that could not be more different.

Sato's lead, and whether the field closes on it, will be reported in Sunday's editions.

SPORTS

Scoreboard and Fixtures

Compiled by the Sports Desk

ASIAN GAMES, AICHI-NAGOYA: Opening ceremony today at Paloma Mizuho Stadium. 45 countries and regions, 15,000+ athletes, 43 sports, 469 events. Japan: record 932 athletes; target to surpass 78 golds (Bangkok 1966). Flag bearer: Akari Fujinami (wrestling). Final torchbearer (Sept. 18): Hakuho Sho.

ASIAN GAMES RESULTS: Men's U-21 football, Japan 2-0 Hong Kong; South Korea 4-1 Qatar. Women's volleyball, Japan 3-0 Nepal. Women's football, Japan in preliminary league after 8-0 v Thailand. Women's handball preliminaries today incl. Japan v Vietnam.

ASIAN GAMES SCHEDULE: Sunday — swimming, table tennis, badminton, triathlon, water polo, martial arts begin; men's U-21 football, Japan v Kyrgyzstan. Monday — baseball, Samurai Japan (amateur) v China, Toyohashi. Athletics from Sept. 23. Games close Oct. 4.

SUMO, AKI BASHO DAY 6 (Sept. 18): Onosato (Y) def. Gonoyama by pulling technique, 5-1. Kotozakura (O) won, 5-1. Kirishima (O) lost to Yoshinofuji, 4-2. Aonishiki (O) 3-3. Day 7 today.

NPB, PACIFIC LEAGUE: SoftBank clinched a third consecutive championship on Sept. 17 (7-1 v Orix, ninth straight, with Seibu's loss to Nippon-Ham). First Hawks three-peat in 60 years. Today: SoftBank v Rakuten, 2 p.m., Miyagi.

NPB, CENTRAL LEAGUE (Sept. 17): Hanshin 7-2 Hiroshima, ending a seven-game losing streak. DeNA 2-1 Yakult. Race for postseason places continues.

RUGBY: Pacific Nations Cup final, Japan v Fiji, today. Semi-final: Japan 63-14 United States.

MLB: Dodgers clinch a fifth consecutive division title. Ohtani (IL) has resumed batting. Sasaki return under discussion.

FOOTBALL, ACL ELITE EAST: Vissel Kobe won away (Muto). Kashiwa Reysol progressing.

GOLF: ANA Open continues in Hokkaido; Taihei Sato led after a first-round 66.

OTHER: Tokyo Game Show under way at Makuhari Messe. National Urban Greening Fair open in Kyoto Tamba, 750,000 visitors expected.

SPORTS

The Greatest Champion and the Sport's Uneasy Embrace

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Hakuho Sho's selection as the final torchbearer for the Asian Games, carrying the flame through Hisaya-Odori Park on Friday evening, is a recognition that the sport he dominated has extended more warily than the Games did.

His 45 top-division championships are the most in sumo's recorded history, and the margin over the next wrestler is large enough that the record is unlikely to be approached.

Born in Mongolia, he entered the sport as a teenager, reached yokozuna in 2007 and held the rank for fourteen years, a longevity that itself set records.

His career was accompanied by friction with the sport's establishment over conduct in the ring and after it, with the Yokozuna Deliberation Council and the Japan Sumo Association both issuing criticism during his active years.

After retirement he took Japanese citizenship and established a stable of his own, and his relationship with the association has continued to be marked by the tension between his standing and the institution's expectations.

That the Games chose him for the relay's final leg reflects a recognition, outside the sport, of what his career represented: an international athlete who reached the summit of Japan's most traditional sport and stayed there longer than anyone.

The choice arrives during an Autumn tournament in which the current yokozuna, Onosato, has been publicly urged by the council to show the confidence of his rank, a reminder that the council's attention to yokozuna conduct did not begin with Hakuho and has not ended with him.

Sumo's international character, with wrestlers from Mongolia, Ukraine and elsewhere at its highest ranks, is the sport's own version of what the Games celebrate, and Hakuho embodied it.

The flame's final leg through central Nagoya placed the sport's greatest champion at the culmination of a relay that had drawn on figure skating and kabuki, a sequence that said something about how Japan presents its sporting culture to the region.

The ceremony he lit the way for opens today, and the tournament he once dominated continues at Ryogoku through the 27th.

SPORTS

Why Hideyoshi at a Welcoming Ceremony Drew an Apology

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

South Korea's expression of regret over the appearance of Toyotomi Hideyoshi at an Asian Games welcoming ceremony, reported by Asahi

Shimbun and FNN, concerns a figure whose meaning differs entirely on the two sides of the strait.

In Aichi, Hideyoshi is a local hero. Born to a peasant family in what is now Nagoya, he rose to unify Japan in the sixteenth century, built Osaka Castle and left a legacy of administration and ambition that the region celebrates in festivals, statues and school curricula.

In Korea, Hideyoshi is the man who launched the invasions of 1592 and 1597, which devastated the peninsula, destroyed cities and palaces, and are remembered as among the most destructive episodes in Korean history.

A welcoming ceremony that presented Hideyoshi as a symbol of the host region presented, to the Korean delegation, the architect of an invasion, and the expression of regret was the diplomatic form of pointing that out.

That the organisers did not anticipate the objection says something about how differently the same history is held, and about the gap between a region's sense of its own past and its neighbours' sense of it.

The incident joins the mistaken playing of the North Korean anthem before a South Korea versus Bangladesh hockey match, an error of a different kind that the same delegation experienced.

Japan-Korea relations have improved in recent years through leader-level engagement and cooperation on regional security, and incidents of this kind are managed rather than allowed to escalate.

The Games' organisers will have apologised, and competition will overtake the incident by Sunday, but the episode is a reminder that hosting a regional event means presenting the host to a region that remembers.

The Japan-Korea rivalry that defines much of the Games' competition, in football, baseball and beyond, is conducted in that context.

For the delegations the matter is closed; for the historians it is a small illustration of a large and continuing difference.

SPORTS

Paloma Mizuho: The Stadium That Opened the Games

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Paloma Mizuho Stadium, where the Emperor declared the Asian Games open today, is Nagoya's principal athletics venue and the centrepiece of a Games spread across Aichi Prefecture.

The stadium was rebuilt for the Games, replacing a facility that had hosted the region's athletics for decades, and its naming reflects the corporate sponsorship model that Japanese public venues have adopted.

Its location in Mizuho Ward, south of the city centre, places it within the urban area rather than at its edge, and the ceremony's audience reached it by the subway lines that serve the district.

The stadium will host the athletics programme from the 23rd, beginning with race walking, and the events in which Japan's medal expectations are concentrated in the second week.

Haruka Kitaguchi's javelin, following her national record of 68.92 metres earlier this month, will be among the athletics events the home crowd anticipates most.

The Games' other venues are distributed across the prefecture, with Toyota Stadium hosting football, Toyohashi and Okazaki hosting baseball, and facilities in Nagoya and its surrounding cities hosting the indoor disciplines.

That distribution reflects the Games' scale, with 43 sports and 469 events requiring more venues than any single city could provide, and it extends the event's economic effect across the region.

Aichi's industrial base gave organisers a logistical advantage that a comparable prefecture without it would have lacked, and most venues were existing rather than built for the purpose.

The stadium's weather for the opening ceremony is favourable, with Nagoya sunny at 26°C, and the region's forecast keeps it clear through the weekend while eastern Japan takes the storm.

The closing ceremony on October 4 will return to the same stadium, and the medal table by then will have decided how the Games are remembered.

SPORTS

The Pennant Is Won. Here Is What It Buys.

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

SoftBank's third consecutive Pacific League championship, clinched on Thursday, settles the pennant and leaves the postseason exactly as uncertain as it was before.

The Climax Series admits the top three clubs in each league. The second and third-place finishers meet in a best-of-three First Stage, hosted by the second-place club, and the survivor faces the pennant winner in a best-of-six Final Stage.

The pennant winner enters the Final Stage with one win already credited, which is the entire advantage that a regular season of sustained superiority buys.

That advantage is substantial without being decisive, and clubs that won the pennant comfortably have lost the Final Stage often enough to keep the format a subject of argument.

A clinch changes how a club manages its remaining fixtures, with pitching rotations adjusted to align the strongest starters with the postseason and regulars rested to arrive healthy.

SoftBank's game against Rakuten today in Miyagi is the first of those fixtures, and its lineup will indicate how the manager intends to use the remaining schedule.

For Seibu and the clubs below, the meaningful competition continues for second and third place and the hosting rights that second place carries.

The Central League race remains the closer of the two, with Hanshin having ended a seven-game slide and DeNA and Yomiuri still contesting the postseason places.

The Japan Series follows the Climax Series, matching the two league champions in the competition that determines the national title, and a Hawks three-peat in the Pacific League would need a Japan Series to become a national dynasty.

The format that made the pennant rare will make the postseason uncertain, and that is by design.

SPORTS

Manner and Result: The Two Things the Council Watches

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Yokozuna Deliberation Council's public urging that Onosato show the confidence of his rank, issued this week, has given each of his subsequent bouts a second reading alongside the result: the manner.

His day-five yorikiri force-out over Yoshinofuji was the manner the council wanted, a frontal win that embodied the rank's straightforward power. His day-six win over Gonoyama by a pulling technique was a win in the standings and a question in the manner.

The council is a body of outside figures drawn from business, academia and the arts, and its recommendations carry no formal force and considerable weight, since a yokozuna's standing rests on the expectation that the rank is held by someone capable of competing at its level.

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.

Its 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 Onosato's position as the sole yokozuna competing, with Hoshoryu absent and the rank's institutional expectations concentrated on one wrestler.

Five and one after six days is a championship position, level with Kotozakura, and the council will weigh the record alongside the techniques by which it was compiled.

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.

Hakuho's selection as the Games' final torchbearer on Friday is a reminder that the council's relationship

SPORTS

with the sport's champions has never been simple, and that its criticism of the greatest of them was frequent.

Day seven is today, and the kimarite will be read as closely as the result.

SPORTS

Akari Fujinami Carries the Flag: A Wrestler Who Has Not Lost in Years

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Wrestler Akari Fujinami carries Japan's flag into Paloma Mizuho Stadium today, according to Nihon Keizai Shimbun and Mainichi Shimbun, a choice that places the delegation's most dominant athlete at the head of its record 932.

Fujinami's winning streak in international freestyle competition has run for years and across senior world championships and the Olympics, a record of consistency that few athletes in any discipline can match.

Flag bearers are chosen to represent the delegation's character as well as its prospects, and a young wrestler from Mie Prefecture who has not been beaten in senior competition represents both.

Wrestling is among the sports in which Japan's Asian Games medal expectations are most concentrated, and the women's freestyle programme has been the country's most reliable source of Olympic gold across recent cycles.

The choice of a woman to carry the flag continues a pattern the Japanese Olympic Committee has followed at recent Games, and it aligns with a delegation in which women's sports carry a large share of the medal prospects.

Fujinami's own competition comes later in the programme, and the flag-bearing role adds a public dimension to a Games she enters as the favourite in her category.

Kosei Inoue, the team leader, said this week that Team Japan is united, and the flag bearer is the visible expression of that statement.

The ceremony's general director, Yukihiro Tsutsumi, has drawn on Japanese performing arts and regional culture in a production that the flag bearer's entry anchors.

For Mie, a prefecture adjoining Aichi, Fujinami's role gives the neighbouring region a place in the ceremony that the host prefecture's own athletes share.

The flag enters the stadium today, and the wrestling begins in the second week.

SPORTS

Tsutsumi's Ceremony: A Film Director Stages the Region's Entry

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Yukihiro Tsutsumi, the film and television director, is the general director of production for today's opening ceremony at Paloma Mizuho Stadium, bringing a career in commercial cinema to the staging of the region's largest event.

Opening ceremonies have become productions in their own right, judged for their staging as closely as the Games are judged for their competition, and the choice of a director known for popular entertainment rather than for ceremony signals the tone the organisers sought.

Tsutsumi's work spans television drama and feature film across three decades, and his facility with large-scale production is the qualification the role requires.

The ceremony's elements include the parade of delegations, the Emperor's declaration, the flag bearer's entry and the arrival of the flame that Hakuho carried through Hisaya-Odori Park on Friday.

Aichi's regional culture, from the Nagoya castle and the region's festivals to the industrial heritage that built the prefecture's economy, supplies the material a production of this kind draws on.

The Hideyoshi episode at a welcoming ceremony, which drew South Korea's regret, illustrates the difficulty: the region's history is the production's material, and the region's history is not held the same way by every delegation in the stadium.

Nagoya's weather, sunny at 26°C, favours an outdoor production, and the storm approaching eastern Japan is far enough away that the ceremony proceeds without the contingency planning Tokyo's events required this weekend.

The closing ceremony on October 4 will return to the same stadium, and its tone will be shaped by what the medal table says by then.

Ceremonies of this kind are watched by audiences far larger than any single event's, and Tsutsumi's production is the Games' first impression on the region.

For a director whose career has been in the entertainment the Tokyo Game Show celebrates this weekend, the ceremony is a different kind of audience.

SPORTS

Surfing and Hockey Carry a Second Prize: A Place in Los Angeles

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Surfing and hockey, among other events at the Aichi-Nagoya Games, serve as qualifiers for the Los Angeles Olympics, according to Nihon Keizai Shimbun and Mainichi Shimbun, which gives their results a weight beyond the Games' own medal table.

Olympic qualification through continental games is a mechanism the international federations use to distribute places by region, and a gold medal in a qualifying event carries an Olympic berth alongside the Asian title.

For hockey, the Asian Games champion typically qualifies directly for the Olympics, which makes the tournament in Aichi the most consequential fixture the region's hockey nations will play before Los Angeles.

Surfing's inclusion reflects the sport's recent addition to the Olympic programme, and Japan's coastline and competitive depth make the country a contender in a discipline in which it hosted the sport's Olympic debut.

The South Korea versus Bangladesh men's hockey match, before which the North Korean anthem was mistakenly played, was among the qualifying tournament's early fixtures, and the error's context includes the stakes the tournament carries.

Japan's men's volleyball team has already secured a Los Angeles place through the Asian Championship, and the Games' qualifying events are where other Japanese squads will pursue theirs.

The weather is a consideration for surfing, an outdoor event whose conditions the typhoon's approach to the Pacific coast will affect if it is scheduled on the eastern shore.

The Japanese Olympic Committee's decision to field a record delegation on home soil is partly explained by the qualifying opportunities the Games present.

For athletes in qualifying events the Games are two competitions at once, and a medal that does not carry a berth is a different result from one that does.

Los Angeles is two years away, and the places decided in Aichi over the coming fortnight are the first that Japanese teams can secure.

SPORTS

Kotozakura's Quiet Five-and-One Keeps His Own Case Alive

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Ozeki Kotozakura's fifth win on day six, following his first loss to Minoumi on day five, restores him to a share of the lead at five and one and keeps a case that the tournament's attention on Onosato and Kirishima has left in the background.

An ozeki who wins a championship with a strong record, or finishes as a strong runner-up following a championship, has a promotion case of his own, and Kotozakura's position at the top of the standings places him in that conversation.

His day-five loss to Minoumi was his first of the tournament and came on the day Onosato responded to the council with a force-out, which is why the attention went elsewhere.

Five and one after six days, level with the yokozuna, is the position from which championships are won, and the second week's scheduling will bring him against both Onosato and Kirishima.

Kotozakura's grandfather held the rank of yokozuna, and the family's standing in the sport gives his own

pursuit of it a resonance the sport's followers note.

The Yokozuna Deliberation Council's attention this week has been on Onosato's manner, and a second ozeki compiling a championship record without incident is exactly the contrast the council's remarks implied.

Kirishima's second loss on day six leaves Kotozakura as the ozeki with the cleaner record, and the two will meet in the second week with their respective cases at stake.

With Hoshoryu absent, the tournament's structure is a yokozuna and three ozeki, and the bouts among them will decide it.

A championship for Kotozakura would be his first at the rank and the first step toward the promotion the family history anticipates.

Day seven is today, and the ozeki's bout will be read for whether the loss to Minoumi was an aberration or a signal.

SPORTS

Inoue's Word for the Delegation Was United. Sunday Will Test It.

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Kosei Inoue, the team leader for Japan's record delegation of 932, said on Thursday that Team Japan is united, and the word will be tested from Sunday when the medal events begin.

Inoue's own career, an Olympic judo champion in Sydney and later the national men's coach who rebuilt the programme after a disappointing London Games, gives the statement a specific authority.

A delegation of 932 across 43 sports is not a team in any operational sense, and unity is a statement of expectation rather than of fact, aimed at athletes who will compete alone or in small groups over a fortnight.

The target of surpassing 78 golds, the 1966 Bangkok figure, is the delegation's shared objective, and whether it is approached will depend on the disciplines Inoue's own sport leads.

Judo is where Japan's expectations are highest, as the sport's country of origin, and the martial arts begin on Sunday.

Swimming, gymnastics and athletics carry the other large expectations, and the second week's athletics programme at Paloma Mizuho, including Kitaguchi's javelin, is where the medal table's shape will be decided.

The run-up's incidents, from the anthem error to the Hideyoshi apology, are the kind of distraction a team leader's statement is meant to set aside.

Mainichi's observation that costs have risen and attention has fallen is the frame Inoue's statement was made against, and the typhoon over Kanto this weekend has not helped.

A strong first week of results is the only argument that converts attention, and the delegation's leadership knows it.

The Games close on October 4, and the word united will have been tested 469 times by then.

CULTURE

National Urban Greening Fair Opens in Kyoto Tamba, Expecting 750,000 Visitors

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The National Urban Greening Fair has opened in Kyoto Tamba, with an expected attendance of 750,000 people, according to Sankei News.

The fair is a long-running national event held in a different prefecture each year, combining garden displays, horticultural exhibitions and the promotion of urban greenery, and its arrival in Kyoto's Tamba region places it in a rural setting rather than in the city.

Tamba, north of Kyoto city, is known for its agricultural produce, its black beans and chestnuts, and its autumn, which the fair's timing is designed to catch.

An expected attendance of 750,000 over the fair's run makes it among the largest events in the region's calendar, with the holiday weekend its first major test.

The Kansai region's forecast is favourable, with Kyoto cloudy at 26°C and the typhoon's effects concentrated to the east, which gives the fair's opening weekend the weather that eastern Japan's

events have lost.

Households across western Japan who had planned to travel east may redirect toward events like this one, which is the asymmetric effect of weather on a holiday.

The fair's theme of urban greening addresses a question Japanese cities have taken up as summers have lengthened and heat has become a public health concern, with tree canopy and green space the measures municipalities are pursuing.

Kyoto's own tourism pressures, which have prompted entry charges at several sites, make a fair in Tamba a way of directing visitors toward the prefecture's less crowded districts.

The fair runs through the autumn, with its later weeks coinciding with the foliage season that the month's overcast weather has complicated.

For a weekend that a typhoon has rearranged, a garden fair in clear weather west of the storm is the kind of event that benefits from the rearrangement.

CULTURE

What's So Great About Japanese Games? The Question Asahi Asked at Makuhari

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

The Tokyo Game Show is under way at Makuhari Messe, and Asahi Shimbun's special feature asks what is so great about Japanese games, a question the industry has been answering for forty years and that the week's news has given a new edge.

Japanese games are among the country's most valuable cultural exports, with franchises whose characters and worlds have a global recognition that few other Japanese products match, and the show is the industry's annual demonstration of that.

The answer to Asahi's question has historically been craft: a design tradition that emphasises mechanics, character and a coherence of world that the industry's founders established and its successors maintained.

The question has a new edge because the reported sale of books by Nippan to an AI company raised, in publishing, the question that games face too: who controls Japanese cultural property and its use in training the systems that may one day generate it.

The show's business days precede its public days, and the industry's announcements this year have been shaped by generative AI on both sides, as a tool developers use and as a threat to the intellectual property they hold.

Makuhari Messe sits in Chiba on the Boso Peninsula, and the show's public days fall under a forecast of warning-level rain from Sunday afternoon and a possible landfall on Monday, which will affect attendance.

Japan's games industry has faced competition from studios in South Korea, China and elsewhere that have adopted its methods, and the question of what remains distinctively Japanese is one the feature engages.

The Asian Games opening in Nagoya today includes esports among the events the Games have admitted, a recognition of the medium that Japanese companies did more than any to create.

For a weekend that a typhoon has rearranged, an indoor event in a convention hall is among the more robust, though the journey to Chiba on Sunday will be the difficulty.

The feature's answer, whatever it is, will be read by an industry that has been asked the question by every generation of players and has kept finding new ways to reply.

CULTURE

Higan Begins Tomorrow, and the Storm Will Decide Which Day Families Visit

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Higan, the seven-day observance centred on the Autumn Equinox, begins tomorrow and runs through the following Saturday, and this year's opening days fall under a typhoon forecast that will shift many families' grave visits to the week's second half.

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.

CULTURE

Families visit graves, clean memorial sites, replace flowers and light incense, and temples hold services through the week, practices that vary in detail by region and family but share a common shape.

Ohagi, sweet rice dumplings coated in red bean paste and named for the bush clover that blooms in the season, are the food most associated with the observance, offered at altars and graves and eaten afterward.

Warning-level rain across Kanto on Sunday and a possible landfall on Monday will keep families indoors on the observance's first days, and the improving forecast for Tuesday and Wednesday will concentrate cemetery visits into fewer days.

Respect for the Aged Day on Monday and the Autumn Equinox on Wednesday give the week two public holidays around which the observance is organised, and this year the first falls on the storm's possible closest approach.

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, and the health ministry's consideration of premium changes for wealthy older residents gives it a policy one.

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.

The rice the ohagi are made from is the rice whose harvest the storm threatens and whose price has fallen into the 2,000 yen range for the first time in two years, a connection between field and altar the observance has always carried.

Cemeteries and temple grounds will see their heaviest traffic of the year in the week's second half, and municipalities in some areas will arrange additional transport once the storm has passed.

CULTURE

A Book Is Sold Twice: The Question the Nippan Report Poses for Reading Week

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Reading Week, the campaign publishers and libraries have run each autumn since 1947, opens in a year when the reported bulk sale of books by Nippan to an AI company has given the question of what a book is for a new answer.

A book sold to a reader is sold once, for the purpose of being read. A book sold in bulk to a company that will scan it into a training corpus is sold for a purpose the author and publisher may never have contemplated when they set the price.

The Japan Book Publishers Association's demand for confirmation of the facts, following Asahi Shimbun's report, is the industry's way of asking whether the second sale was the distributor's to make.

Japanese copyright law's provisions on information analysis have been read as permissive toward machine learning, and publishers have contested that reading and asked the government to clarify, which places the dispute in a legal environment that has not settled.

For authors the question is whether their work has entered a corpus without their consent, and whether any consideration reached them, and the answer determines whether the reported sale is a commercial matter or a grievance.

The distribution system through which the books travelled has been under strain for years, with bookshop closures leaving many municipalities without one, and a distributor finding a buyer for surplus stock is a business looking for revenue.

The Tokyo Game Show at Makuhari this weekend, with Asahi asking what is so great about Japanese games, engages the same question from the industry that has the most to lose if the answer is used to generate substitutes.

Reading Week's premise, that books are read by people, is not challenged by a machine reading them, but the premise that the reading is what the book was sold for is.

Libraries, which lend books without selling them, are the institutions that have thought longest about the difference between access and ownership, and their voice in the dispute will be worth hearing.

The campaign opens as it always has, with the season's recommended titles, and with a question its

founders in 1947 could not have imagined.

CULTURE

West of the Storm: Kansai's Weekend Under Clear Skies

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

While eastern Japan reads hazard maps, western Japan has a holiday weekend, and the National Urban Greening Fair's opening in Kyoto Tamba, with 750,000 visitors expected, is the largest of the events it can enjoy.

Saturday's map shows Kyoto cloudy at 26°C, Osaka and Kobe partly cloudy at 26°C and 27°C, and Hiroshima sunny at 27°C, weather that eastern Japan's events have lost to the typhoon.

Weather has an asymmetric effect on a holiday, redirecting rather than cancelling, and households in Kansai who had planned to travel east may keep their plans local, while those in Kanto who cannot travel at all stay home.

The Asian Games' venues in Aichi, forecast clear, and the fair in Tamba give the country's centre and west two large events under favourable skies.

Higan begins on Sunday, and Kansai's temples and cemeteries will see the observance proceed on its first days while Kanto's families wait for Tuesday.

Kyoto's tourism pressures, which have prompted entry charges at several sites, make a fair in Tamba a way of directing visitors toward the prefecture's less crowded districts.

Tamba's autumn produce, black beans and chestnuts among them, supplies the fair's food, and the region's harvest has not faced the delays that prolonged rain imposed on eastern Japan.

Kansai's rice harvest is further along than Kanto's, and the price paradox that has new rice cheaper than old applies on Kansai's shelves as on Tokyo's.

The second half of the holiday, Tuesday and Wednesday, may see the country's weather even out, with the storm past and the east recovering what it lost.

For a weekend that a typhoon has divided, the fair in Tamba is where the fortunate half of the country is going.

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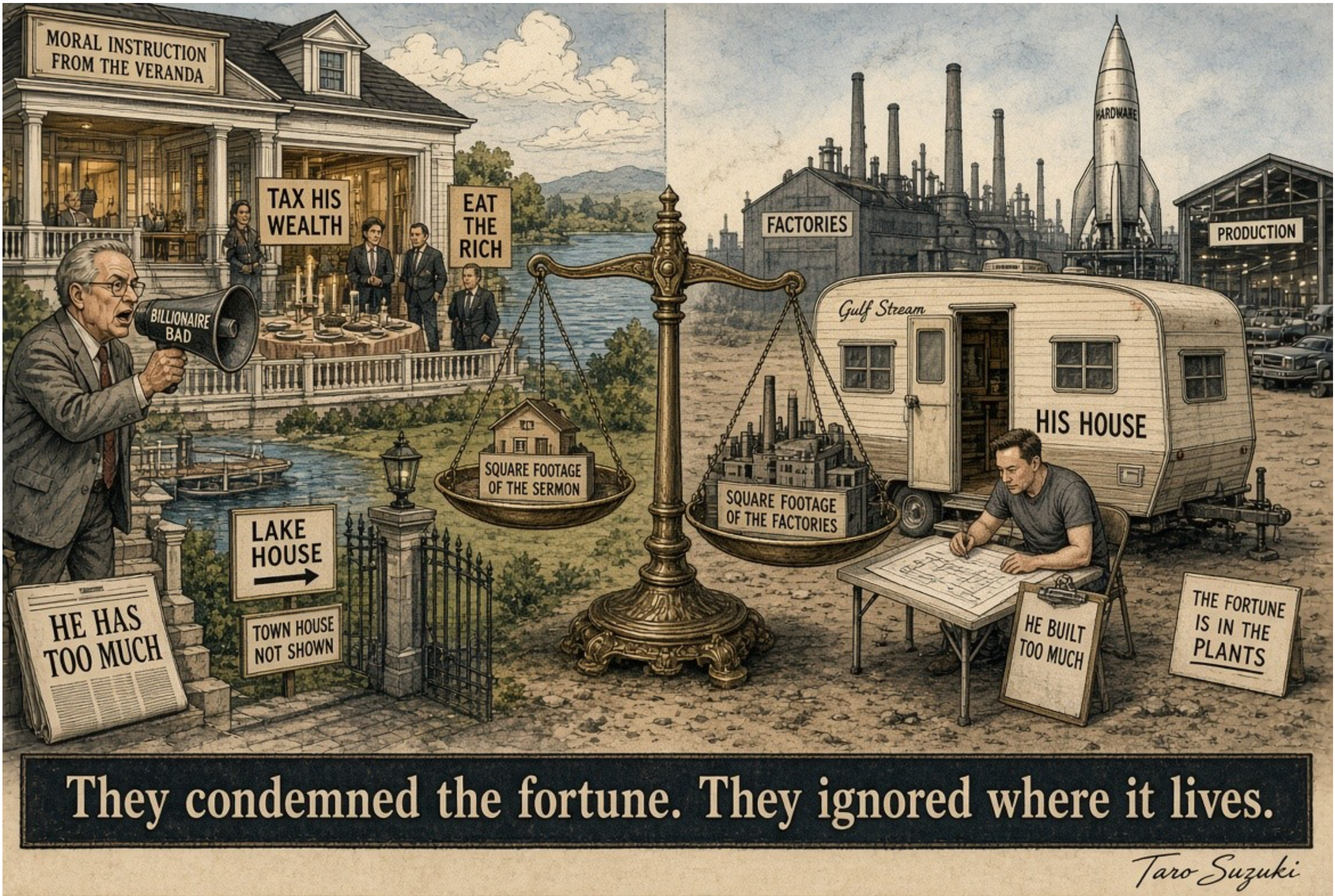
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EDITORIAL & OPINION



"They condemned the fortune. They ignored where it lives."
Cartoon by Taro Suzuki

EDITORIAL

They Condemned the Fortune. They Ignored Where It Lives.

Taro Suzuki's cartoon weighs a sermon against a factory and finds the factory heavier. He is right about where large fortunes sit, and wrong about what that settles

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki's cartoon this morning is a scale, and the scale is rigged in the way scales in cartoons always are: by what the artist chose to put on each pan.

On the left is a veranda. A man in a suit shouts BILLIONAIRE BAD through a megaphone from the porch of a large lakeside house, its sign reading MORAL INSTRUCTION FROM THE VERANDA. Guests behind him at a candlelit table hold placards reading TAX HIS WEALTH and EAT THE RICH. A newspaper on the ground says HE HAS TOO MUCH. A signpost points to the LAKE HOUSE, and a smaller one notes TOWN HOUSE NOT SHOWN. On the scale's left pan sits a small house labelled SQUARE FOOTAGE OF THE SERMON.

On the right is an industrial landscape. Smokestacks, a rocket marked HARDWARE, buildings labelled FACTORIES and PRODUCTION, rows of vehicles. A man in a t-shirt works at a folding table over blueprints beside a small travel trailer, its side reading HIS HOUSE. Placards beside him say HE BUILT TOO MUCH and THE FORTUNE IS IN THE PLANTS. On the scale's right pan sits a cluster of factories labelled SQUARE FOOTAGE OF THE FACTORIES, and the pan is down.

The caption: they condemned the fortune. They ignored where it lives.

The argument is one that has been made in defence of industrial wealth since there was industrial wealth to defend, and the cartoon makes it with unusual economy. A fortune held as ownership of factories is not a pile of money. It is the factories. Taxing it means taxing them, and the people who work in them, and the things they make. The critic on the veranda, meanwhile, lives in a house whose square footage exceeds the industrialist's trailer by a considerable margin, and his sermon costs nothing to deliver.

That argument deserves a fair hearing, and it deserves the correction it always needs.

The fair hearing first. Suzuki is right that the largest fortunes are held predominantly as equity in operating companies rather than as cash, property or consumption, and that the popular image of wealth, the lake house and the candlelit table, describes the critic's world more accurately than the industrialist's. He is right that a wealth tax levied on the value of factory shares is, in economic substance, a claim on the factory. He is right that the moralising is frequently delivered by people whose own comfort is not on the table.

And he is right, in a way that this week's Japanese news makes specific, that the fortune lives in the plants. Nissan's president said this week that the company aims for one million units of domestic production and regards Japan as an important export base. Hitachi Energy is investing 82 billion yen in a transformer plant. The Bank of Japan's flow of funds data, reported this week, shows that Japanese households now hold more in stocks and investment trusts than in insurance for the first time. The fortune that lives in the plants is, increasingly, everyone's.

That last point is the one the cartoon does not draw and the one that complicates its argument most. The man at the folding table owns the factories in the picture. In Japan the factories are owned, in substantial part, by pension funds, life insurers and the households whose savings have shifted toward equities under a policy that encouraged exactly that shift. A tax on the fortune in the plants is, in that country, a tax on the retirement of the people who work in them. Suzuki's argument is stronger here than he knows.

Now the correction.

The cartoon proves that the fortune lives in the plants. It does not prove that the fortune cannot be taxed, only that taxing it is a claim on productive assets rather than on consumption, and every tax is a claim on something. Corporate income tax is a claim on the plants' output. Property tax is a claim on the land they stand on. Capital gains tax is a claim on the fortune

when it is realised. The question a serious fiscal debate asks is not whether the fortune lives in the plants but which claim on it does least damage and most good, and a cartoon that treats the location of wealth as the end of the argument has stopped where the argument begins.

The second correction concerns the trailer. HIS HOUSE, the small travel trailer beside the folding table, is doing a great deal of work, and it is the part of the drawing that an honest reader should distrust most. A fortune held in factories confers power regardless of where its holder sleeps. It confers the power to decide where the factories are, what they make, whom they employ and on what terms, and that power is the reason fortunes of this scale are contested. The man in the trailer is not less powerful for the trailer. He is, if anything, more persuasive.

Suzuki has drawn a modesty that disarms, and he has drawn it opposite a hypocrisy that repels, and the reader is invited to conclude that the fortune's defenders are honest and its critics are not. That is a judgment about character, not about tax policy, and the two are not the same.

The third correction concerns the veranda. The cartoon's critic is a caricature, and caricature is the cartoonist's trade, but the argument he is made to represent is not made only by people in lakeside houses. It is made by people who work in the factories and notice that the fortune in the plants has grown faster than their wages. It is made by people who pay a consumption tax on food, at 8% until April 2027 and 1% for two years after that, and who ask why the fortune in the plants is asked for less. Their sermon has no veranda. It has a grocery bag.

None of this is an argument for the wealth tax the placards demand. It is an argument that the question is harder than either pan of the scale admits, and that a country whose government has just approved a five trillion yen tax cut with no funding source, whose gasoline subsidy budget approaches nine trillion yen, and whose long-term borrowing costs reached their highest since 1996 this week, will be having this argument soon whether it wants to or not.

Where does Japan's fortune live? The Bank of Japan's data answer the question with a precision the cartoon cannot. It lives in deposits, still the largest share of

household wealth, earning a tenth of a percent more from Thursday than before. It lives in equities, now larger than insurance, whose value the Nikkei measured at 65,018 on Friday. It lives in the land beneath Tokyo, which has risen in value for fourteen consecutive years. And it lives in the plants, in Aichi and Kyushu and Kumamoto and, this week, in Mississippi.

A government that needs five trillion yen will look at all of those, and each is defended by a cartoon of its own. The deposits are the savings of the elderly. The equities are the retirement of the middle. The land is the family home. The plants are the jobs. Every fortune lives somewhere, and every somewhere has a sermon.

Suzuki's scale weighs the sermon against the factory and finds the factory heavier. It is heavier. It is also the thing the sermon is about, and the cartoon's cleverness is in making that seem like a contradiction when it is the whole point.

The critic on the veranda has too much house, and the industrialist in the trailer has too much factory, and the question neither of them is asking, because the cartoon does not let them, is who decides what too much means and by what claim. That question is decided in parliaments, and Japan's opens an extraordinary session shortly with a tax measure whose hardest question no one has answered.

The caption says they condemned the fortune and ignored where it lives. The reply is that they know exactly where it lives. That is why they are condemning it. The veranda is a distraction, drawn by an artist who knows that a reader shown a hypocrite will forget to ask whether the hypocrite has a point.

He has a point. It is not the one on his placard. It is the one in the grocery bag the cartoon left out.

Japan has its own history with this question, and it is worth remembering because the cartoon's American imagery obscures it. The fortunes that built modern Japanese industry were concentrated in the zaibatsu, the family conglomerates whose factories, banks and trading houses were dissolved after the war precisely because the fortune lived in the plants and the plants had been turned to a purpose the country could not survive. The dissolution was not a sermon from a veranda. It was a decision that a fortune of that scale,

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wherever it lived, was a political fact.

What replaced the zaibatsu was a system of cross-shareholdings, corporate groups and dispersed ownership in which the fortune in the plants belonged to no single family, and Japan spent half a century as a country with very large companies and comparatively few very large fortunes. That arrangement has been unwinding for two decades as cross-shareholdings were sold, governance reforms pushed companies toward returns, and founders of the newer companies accumulated stakes of a kind the postwar system had discouraged.

The man at the folding table in Suzuki's drawing is an American type, but Japan now has his counterparts, and the question of what claim the state has on fortunes held as founder equity is one the tax system has answered only partially. Capital income is taxed at a flat rate well below the top rate on earned income, which is why the largest fortunes pay a lower effective rate than the salaried professionals who serve them, a pattern the finance ministry's own data describe and that successive governments have declined to address.

That is where the grocery bag comes in. A household paying 8% on its food, a young couple facing higher payments on a variable mortgage from Thursday, a retiree earning a tenth of a percent more on deposits, and an industrialist paying a flat rate on capital gains are not on the same scale, and the cartoon's veranda is a way of not drawing them.

The state's response this week was instructive in its scale. The health ministry is considering higher long-term care premiums for high-income residents over 65. The government is raising admission to national art museums by two or three times. These are the places the state reaches when it needs revenue without a tax debate: a limited group of wealthy elderly, and the visitors to a museum. Neither touches the fortune in the plants, and neither comes within an order of magnitude of five trillion yen.

So the argument the cartoon starts will be had in the extraordinary session, whether or not it is had honestly. A government that has cut the food tax, extended the fuel subsidy and set a defence trajectory the bond market has priced will need to say where the money comes from, and the honest answers are the four places the Bank of Japan's data locate the country's wealth: deposits, equities, land and plants. Each has its sermon. Each has its defenders. The cartoon has drawn one of them, sympathetically, and called the others hypocrites.

The fortune in the plants is real, and it is the residue of building, and a state that taxes it carelessly will find it has taxed the building too. That is Suzuki's point and it is correct. The fortune in the grocery bag is real as well, and it is smaller, and it is taxed at every checkout, and the people who carry it are not on the veranda. That is the point the cartoon needed a second panel for.

There is a defence of the industrialist that the cartoon does not need to make because the factories make it for him: the things in the picture exist because someone built them, and the fortune that lives in them is the residue of that building. A society that taxes the residue until the building stops has taxed itself into the veranda's world, where the square footage is all sermon. That is a real risk, and countries that have tried aggressive wealth taxes have generally found the fortune leaves before the tax arrives.

But the defence has a limit, and the limit is the one the man in the trailer would recognise if he looked up from the blueprints. The factories are in a country. The country built the roads the trucks drive on, educated the engineers at the folding table, and defends the sea lanes the rocket's components travel by. The fortune lives in the plants, and the plants live in a state, and the state's claim on them is not a sermon. It is the rent.

How much rent is the argument. Suzuki has drawn the tenant as modest and the landlord as a scold, and it is a good drawing, and it is half the picture.

They condemned the fortune. They ignored where it lives. Yes. And the artist condemned the critics and ignored where they shop.

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ADDITIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF
MARKETS CLOSED UNTIL TUESDAY: Tokyo markets are closed for the weekend and Monday's Respect for the Aged Day holiday. Tuesday's session will be the first to price the storm, the Prime Minister's summit in New York and three days of American trading after Friday's rate checks.

NEW POLICY RATE FROM THURSDAY: The Bank of Japan's increase to around 1.25% applies from the 24th. Major banks are expected to announce ordinary deposit rate changes of about 0.1% in the days that follow.

FUKUOKA MAYORAL RACE: Four candidates are in the field for the city's mayoral election after the incumbent's decision not to run. The Liberal Democratic Party's prefectural federation is now chaired by Atsushi Koga.

MORE SPORTS AND CULTURE NOTES
ASIAN GAMES FIRST MEDALS SUNDAY: Swimming, table tennis, badminton, triathlon, water polo and the martial arts begin on Sunday, producing the Games' first medals. Athletics opens at Paloma Mizuho Stadium on Sept. 23.

SOFTBANK'S REMAINING SCHEDULE: With the Pacific League pennant clinched, the Hawks' remaining fixtures are expected to be used for rotation management ahead of the Climax Series Final Stage, in which the pennant winner starts with a one-win advantage.

NATIONAL URBAN GREENING FAIR: The fair in Kyoto Tamba is open through the autumn, with an expected attendance of 750,000.

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR
SATURDAY, SEPT. 19: Asian Games opening ceremony, Paloma Mizuho Stadium, Nagoya. Rugby Pacific Nations Cup final, Japan v Fiji. Typhoon No. 25 nearest the Ogasawara Islands. Aki Basho day seven. SoftBank v Rakuten, Miyagi, 2 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 20: Higan begins. Asian Games swimming, table tennis, badminton, triathlon, water polo and martial arts begin. U-21 football, Japan v Kyrgyzstan. Warning-level rain in Kanto from the afternoon.

MONDAY, SEPT. 21: Respect for the Aged Day; markets closed. Possible Boso Peninsula landfall. Prime Minister Takaichi departs for New York. Asian Games baseball, Samurai Japan v China, Toyohashi.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 22: Takaichi-Trump summit planned in New York. Tokyo markets reopen.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 23: Autumn Equinox Day. Asian Games athletics begins.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 24: New Bank of Japan policy rate of around 1.25% takes effect. Prime Minister returns from New York.

THROUGH SEPT. 27: Aki Basho grand sumo tournament continues daily at Ryogoku Kokugikan.

THROUGH OCT. 4: 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): 65,018.95, up 882.70 points or 1.38%; up more than 1,300 points intraday.

TOPIX (Friday close): 4,091.14, down 3.05 points.

YEN: low 158 range at its weakest Friday; high 156 range after government and Bank of Japan rate checks.
NY DOW (Friday close): 51,682.64, down 95.40. US 10-year Treasury yield around 5%.

BOJ POLICY RATE: around 1.25% from Sept. 24, raised from around 1.00% on Sept. 18.

FED TARGET RANGE: 3.75%-4.00% after Wednesday's increase.

52-WEEK NIKKEI HIGH: 72,831.73, set June 22, 2026.

TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC ADVISORIES
OGASAWARA ISLANDS: Closest approach of Typhoon No. 25 today. Wave heights of 7 metres and winds exceeding 25 metres a second. Ferry services suspended until seas allow.

IZU PENINSULA AND ISLANDS: Heavy rain, high waves and strong winds Sunday and Monday. Total rainfall may exceed 300 millimetres on the peninsula. Izu City is restricting access to some tourist areas.

MOUNT TOKACHI, HOKKAIDO: Eruption alert at Level 3. Volcanic earthquakes temporarily increased; the Sapporo Regional Meteorological Observatory continues its vigilance. Mountain entry is restricted.

MIYAZAKI: A linear rainband may form in the south of the prefecture this morning. Rain expected until around noon, clearing by evening.

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PUBLIC NOTICES
TYPHOON ADVISORY: Typhoon No. 25 makes its closest approach to the Ogasawara Islands today and is expected to bring warning-level rain to Kanto from Sunday afternoon, with a possible landfall on the Boso Peninsula on Monday. The Japan Meteorological Agency asks the public to change holiday plans flexibly. Residents are urged to check municipal hazard maps and to treat restricted underpasses as closed during heavy rain.

TRANSPORT ADVISORY: Rail operators in Kanto are expected to announce any planned suspensions on Sunday for Monday's services once the storm's track is confirmed. Travellers to the Izu Peninsula should note that Izu City is restricting access to some tourist sites.

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