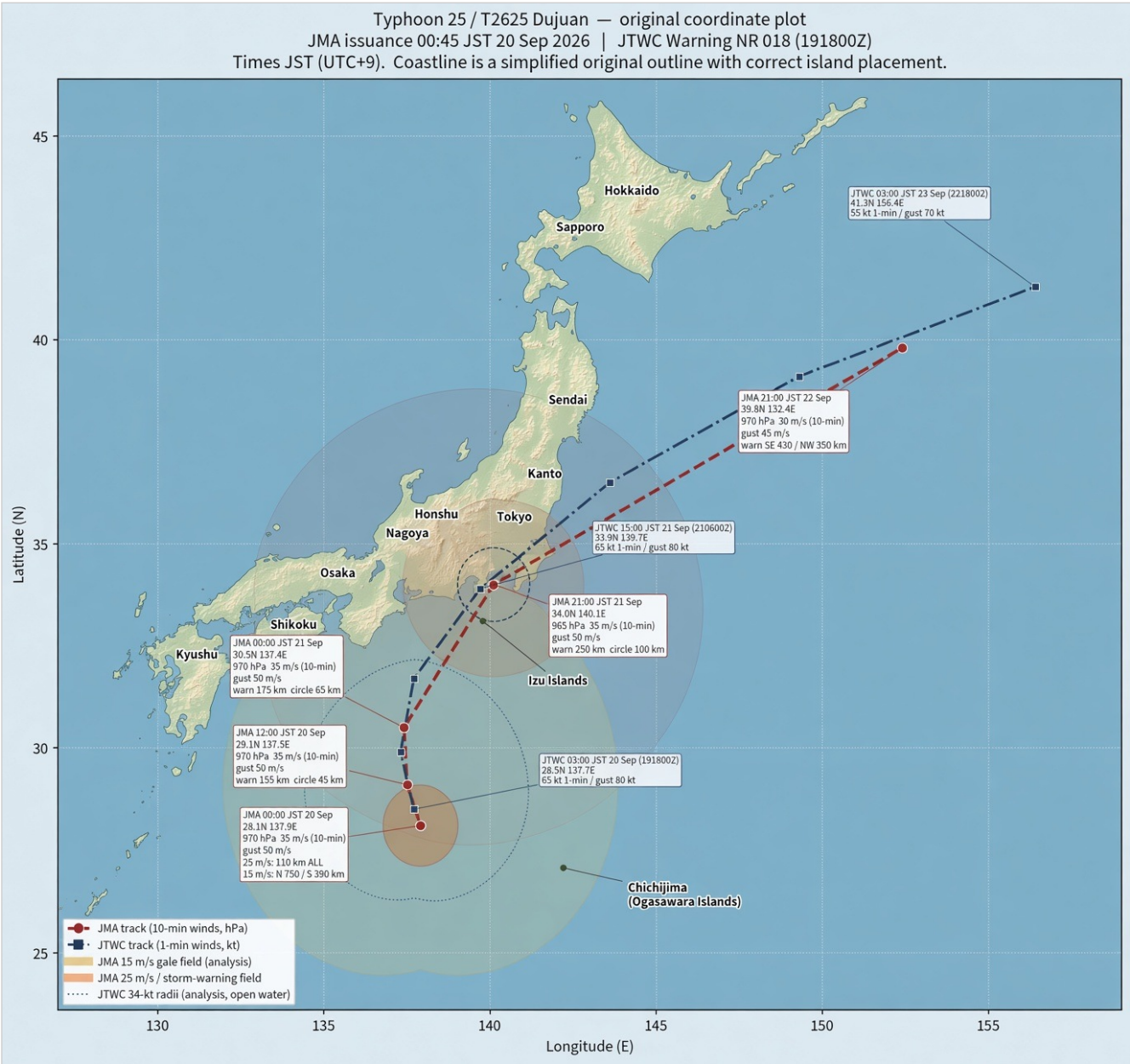


★ TYPHOON 25 TURNS NORTH: 50 M/S GUSTS POSSIBLE MONDAY ★ JR EAST WARNS OF SUSPENSIONS FROM TONIGHT ★ JAPAN BEAT FIJI FOR PACIFIC NATIONS CUP ★ GAMES SWIMMING OPENS IN TOKYO ★

Typhoon No. 25 Turns North for Kanto and Tokai, With Gusts of 50 Metres a Second Possible Monday

Rain bands reach Kanto this afternoon and 300 millimetres is forecast by Monday evening. JR East warns of suspensions from tonight, the Tokyo Game Show has cancelled its final day, and a landslide in Miyazaki has already killed a woman in her 90s

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter, with Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk



Typhoon No. 25, plotted from the Japan Meteorological Agency's 00:45 issuance on Sunday and the Joint Typhoon Warning Center's Warning No. 018. The red track carries the agency's ten-minute sustained winds and central pressures; the blue track carries the American centre's one-minute winds in knots, which read higher for the same storm. The darker shading is the 25-metre-a-second storm-warning field and the lighter shading the 15-metre-a-second gale field, which reaches 750 kilometres north of the centre and 390 south — the reason the rain arrives in Kanto this afternoon, a day before the centre does. Times are JST. Map: WPM Productions

Typhoon No. 25 is approaching the southern coast of Honshu, strengthening as it turns north, and is expected to reach the Kanto and Tokai regions on the afternoon of Monday the 21st with maximum instantaneous wind speeds that may reach 50 metres a second, according to Yomiuri Shimbun and Weathernews.

The Japan Meteorological Agency's 00:45 issuance on Sunday placed the centre at 28.1 degrees north and 137.9 degrees east at midnight, with a central pressure of 970 hectopascals, a maximum sustained wind of 35 metres a second and gusts to 50 metres a second. Winds of 25 metres a second or more extended 110 kilometres in every direction from the centre; the gale field reached 750 kilometres to the north and 390 kilometres to the south.

That asymmetry is the storm's most important feature this morning. A gale field that stretches three-quarters of the way to Honshu ahead of the centre means the weather arrives long before the typhoon does, and the rain now forming over the Pacific is the front's, not the eye's.

The agency's track takes the centre to 29.1 north and 137.5 east by noon today, still at 970 hectopascals, and to 30.5 north and 137.4 east by midnight tonight, with the storm-warning radius widening from 155 kilometres to 175. By 9 p.m. on Monday the forecast places it at 34.0 north and 140.1 east, deepened to 965 hectopascals, with a warning radius of 250 kilometres and a forecast circle of 100.

Those coordinates put the centre off the Pacific coast of Kanto on Monday evening, close enough that the entire region falls inside the warning radius. The Joint Typhoon Warning Center's parallel track, which measures winds over one minute rather than ten, carried the system at 65 knots with gusts to 80 on Sunday morning and holds it at that strength through Monday afternoon.

Rain is the hazard that arrives first. Weathernews expects heavy rain of 30 millimetres an hour or more, mainly along the Kanto coast, with the rain

intensifying at the front before the typhoon itself approaches. NHK and the meteorological agency reported on Sunday morning that the rain bands are expected to reach Kanto this afternoon.

The agency's totals are specific. Until 6 p.m. today, 150 millimetres is expected in Kanto and Izu and 120 millimetres in Tokai. Until 6 p.m. on Monday, 300 millimetres is forecast for Kanto, Izu and Tokai, and 120 millimetres for Tohoku, according to Asahi Shimbun. From noon today to noon on Monday, up to 200 millimetres is expected in parts of Kanto and Izu.

Three hundred millimetres is roughly a month's rain for the region in September, delivered in two days onto ground that has been wet for most of the month.

Wind follows. Maximum wind speeds of 25 metres a second with gusts of 35 are forecast for Kanto-Koshinetsu and Izu today, and gusts of 50 metres a second for Monday. Coastal areas may see average wind speeds above 20 metres a second. Waves of 5 to 8 metres, with swells, are forecast along the Izu and Kanto coasts.

A gust of 50 metres a second is the threshold at which roof tiles leave roofs, scaffolding fails and vehicles are pushed across lanes. It is the number the forecasters have put in front of the public two days early, which is itself a message about their confidence in the track.

The railways have moved first. JR East has warned that services in the Tokyo metropolitan area may be suspended or delayed from the evening of today through to the early morning of Tuesday the 22nd, according to Sankei News, a window of roughly thirty-six hours that covers the whole of the Respect for the Aged Day holiday.

Roads may flood, and the transport disruption is expected to expand from today as the wind strengthens, with cancellations and delays possible on Monday, according to tenki.jp and Sankei News.

The weekend's events have begun to give way. The Tokyo Game Show is being held today at Makuhari

Messe, but its final day on Monday has been cancelled, according to Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun. The Rockin'On festival is proceeding today with its LED screens lowered as a precaution against strong winds, and the organisers said a decision on Monday would be announced by 1 p.m. today.

Fukushima Prefecture moves to a special alert posture from today, with the storm's closest approach expected on Monday.

The first death has already occurred, and it happened far from the forecast track. Multiple landslides struck Nichinan City in Miyazaki Prefecture on Saturday. Two people were buried, and a woman in her 90s was crushed to death, according to Sankei News.

Nichinan sits on Miyazaki's southern coast, where a linear rainband was forecast on Saturday morning, and the slides there are a reminder that the moist southerly flow feeding this storm has been producing its own hazards for days along ground already saturated.

In the Ogasawara and Izu islands, high waves and strong winds are expected to persist even after the typhoon has passed to the north, and vigilance is advised for waves and wind at Hachijojima and the other inhabited islands.

Hokkaido and Okinawa are expected to see little direct effect. Today's map has Sapporo sunny at 20 degrees and Naha sunny at 31, and the same high pressure that has kept the country's two ends clear all week is expected to hold there.

Today's map has Tokyo sunny at 26 degrees as well, which is the shape of the day rather than a contradiction: the morning is fine, the rain bands arrive in the afternoon, and the wind builds through the evening.

After Monday the forecast carries the system northeast and away. The agency's track has it weakening to 30 metres a second by Monday of next week as it moves out over the ocean northeast of Japan, and the Joint Typhoon Warning Center expects it at 55 knots by early Wednesday, well out to sea.

Two unrelated events shared the overnight wires. An earthquake registered a maximum seismic intensity of 3 in the Amakusa and Ashikita areas of Kumamoto Prefecture and the Satsuma area of Kagoshima Prefecture. And the Joban Line suspended services temporarily after a train struck a bear, resuming shortly after midnight, according to Kyodo News.

For households in Kanto the practical instructions have not changed since the government opened its information liaison office at the Prime Minister's Office on Friday: read the municipal hazard map, find the evacuation site before it is needed, and treat the underpasses on the transport ministry's restricted list as closed once the rain starts.

The holiday that was supposed to run five days now has a hole in the middle of it. Households across the region will spend today watching a sky that the map says is sunny, waiting for an afternoon the forecasters have described in unusual detail.

The Prime Minister leaves for New York on Monday, the day of the closest approach.

Japan Beat Fiji to Take the Pacific Nations Cup, Their First Title Since 2019

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan defeated Fiji on Saturday to win the Pacific Nations Cup, their first title in the competition since 2019, and the result led the Sunday sports pages, according to Sankei News and Nikkan Sports.

Beating Fiji is the part that matters. Fijian rugby is built on a running and offloading game that no other

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WEATHER — TOKYO

26°C

Low 19°C · Sun, rain from p.m.

Mon

23°

Tue

25°

Wed

26°

Thu

26°

Rain bands reach Kanto this afternoon; 150 mm by 6 p.m. and 300 mm by Monday evening. Gusts to 35 m/s today, 50 m/s Monday. Full forecast, Page 10.

TODAY IN BRIEF

- Typhoon No. 25 turns north: 970 hPa at midnight, gusts to 50 m/s possible Monday. Rain bands reach Kanto this afternoon; 300 mm forecast by Monday evening.
- JR East warns of suspensions in the Tokyo area from tonight to early Tuesday. Tokyo Game Show cancels Monday; Rockin'On plays on with screens lowered.
- Landslides in Nichinan, Miyazaki, kill a woman in her 90s. Fukushima moves to a special alert posture from today.
- Japan beat Fiji for the Pacific Nations Cup, a first title since 2019. Games swimming opens tonight in Tokyo with seven finals; Ikee competes.
- BOJ rate of 1.25% takes effect Thursday; major banks' ordinary deposits reported going to 0.5%. Rice at 2,971 yen, lowest in about two years.

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MARKETS

Nikkei 225	65,018.95 ▲ 882.70
TOPIX	4,091.14 ▼ 3.05
USD/JPY	low 158 range
Fed target	3.75-4.00%
BOJ rate	1.25% from Sept. 24
Deposits	0.5% reported
Dow	51,682.64 ▼ 95.40
US 10-year	about 5%
Rice, 5kg	¥2,971
Gasoline	¥169.90/litre

SPORTS AT A GLANCE

- Rugby: Japan beat Fiji on Saturday to win the Pacific Nations Cup, their first title since 2019.
- NPB, Saturday: Giants 14-1 Chunichi; DeNA 5-3 Yakult; Hiroshima 5-1 Hanshin; Orix 7-4 Nippon-Ham; Rakuten 5-2 SoftBank; Seibu 4-2 Lotte.
- Sumo: Onosato and Kotozakura reported leading on five wins after Saturday's seventh day. Day 8 today.

THE HOLIDAY WEEKEND

- Today: Games competition opens — swimming in Tokyo (seven finals tonight), table tennis at Toyota, badminton at Ichinomiya, triathlon at Gamagori. Higan begins. Rain reaches Kanto this afternoon.
- Monday: Respect for the Aged Day. The typhoon's closest approach to Kanto and Tokai in the afternoon. Takaichi departs for New York. The Game Show's final day is cancelled.
- Tuesday: Takaichi-Trump summit in New York. Tokyo markets reopen. JR East's suspension window closes in the early morning.
- Wednesday: Autumn Equinox; Games athletics begins. Thursday: the new BOJ rate takes effect.

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ALMANAC

- Sunrise 5:28 a.m. Sunset 5:42 p.m. Day length 12h 14m. Higan begins today. Respect for the Aged Day tomorrow; Autumn Equinox Wednesday. High water, Tokyo Bay, 5:41 a.m. and 6:19 p.m.

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Japan Beat Fiji to Take the Pacific Nations Cup, Their First Title Since 2019

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nation replicates, and sides that beat them do so by controlling possession and denying the space in which that game lives.

Japan arrived in the final having put 63 points on the United States in the semi-final, a result that said more about the gap between the two programmes than about Japan's readiness for a Pacific island side.

The 2019 title came in the year of the home World Cup, when Japan reached the quarter-finals and beat Ireland and Scotland in the pool stage, and the seven years since have been spent rebuilding rather than collecting silverware.

The Pacific Nations Cup has become the competition in which Japan measures itself between World Cups, against the island nations and the United States, and a final against Fiji is the fixture it exists to produce.

The domestic League One has professionalised the player base since 2019, and the squad that won on Saturday carries more depth than the ones that produced the earlier results.

Japan's style has been built on tempo and fitness since the 2015 campaign, an approach that asks a smaller pack to play at a speed that larger opponents cannot sustain for eighty minutes.

A title in a rebuilding year gives the coaching staff something concrete to point at as the squad turns toward the next World Cup cycle.

The timing was fortunate. Saturday's final was played before the worst of the weather, and today's fixtures in eastern Japan are the ones facing a forecast of 30 millimetres an hour along the Kanto coast.

The victory shares Sunday's sports pages with the opening of Asian Games competition, which is a crowded morning for Japanese sport and an unusually good one.

Fiji will have the better of most exchanges against most opponents this season, which is the measure of what Japan did on Saturday.

POLITICS

Takaichi Departs Monday for New York and a Meeting Washington Calls Important

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

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi will be in New York from Monday the 21st to Thursday the 24th and will meet President Trump on Tuesday the 22nd, according to Yomiuri Shimbun. American officials have described the meeting as undoubtedly an important one.

The characterisation is worth noting for its plainness. Officials preparing a leaders' meeting usually reach for more cautious language, and a description of this kind before the fact suggests Washington expects substance rather than symbolism.

The trip's stated purpose is to align views on China ahead of the United States' own talks with Beijing later this month, which places Tokyo in the sequence it has sought at every comparable moment: speaking to Washington before Washington speaks to Beijing.

Semiconductor export controls, rare earth supply and the 15% tariff that now applies to most Japanese exports to the American market all reach Japanese companies through decisions the two larger powers make without Japan in the room.

The Prime Minister will also deliver a speech in the general debate of the United Nations General Assembly, the annual sequence of national statements in which Japanese leaders have consistently pressed for Security Council reform and for nuclear disarmament.

The departure falls on the day Typhoon No. 25 makes its closest approach to Kanto and Tokai, with gusts of 50 metres a second possible and JR East warning of suspensions across the metropolitan area from tonight into Tuesday morning.

A prime minister leaving the country on the morning of a storm is an image her opponents will use, and the government's answer is the machinery it has already assembled: an information liaison office at the Crisis Management Center, a chief cabinet secretary who was retained in the reshuffle, and a disaster management minister who has been briefing since Friday.

Her domestic position is the strongest it has been since the reshuffle. A Yomiuri poll puts cabinet approval at 59%, with 59% approving the appointment of Japan Innovation Party members to the cabinet.

The same poll found respondents naming the economy and employment as a priority at 90% and inflation countermeasures at 85%, which is the mandate she carries to a summit where trade and currency will be present whether or not they are on the agenda.

The Bank of Japan's increase to 1.25% two days before her departure, and the Federal Reserve's own increase against the President's stated wishes three days before that, have left the differential between the two currencies almost exactly where it was.

Whether that comes up in a meeting about China is a question the two delegations will have settled in advance, and the answer will be visible in what each side says afterward.

POLITICS

The Reshuffled Cabinet Formally Begins Work as Vice Ministers Take Up Their Posts

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

The reshuffled cabinet has officially begun its work, with handovers completed and the appointments of vice ministers and parliamentary secretaries now made, closing the process that started with the cabinet's inauguration on Thursday.

Handover ceremonies are brief and formal, and their completion matters chiefly because a ministry without a confirmed minister and deputies is a ministry that cannot make decisions, which for the disaster management and transport portfolios this weekend would have been more than a procedural inconvenience.

Vice ministers and parliamentary secretaries are the tier at which policy is drafted rather than announced, and their distribution among coalition partners is where a cooperation agreement acquires its practical depth.

Five members of the Japan Innovation Party hold posts at that level, a substantial share for a party with a single cabinet seat, and their placement inside ministries gives the junior partner a hand in drafting rather than only a seat at the table where drafts are approved.

In the House of Councillors, Arimura chairs the Budget Committee and Fujikawa the Steering Committee, appointments that complete the reorganisation of the chamber's management before the extraordinary session.

The Budget Committee is where the government's fiscal programme is examined in public and on camera, and its chairman controls the scheduling and the allocation of questioning time.

That control matters this session because the food consumption tax measure, whose five trillion yen annual cost has no named funding source, and a gasoline subsidy programme approaching nine trillion yen will both pass through it.

The Yomiuri poll's finding that 59% approve of the Ishin appointments gives the arrangement a public standing that the opposition, still reorganising under a provisional name, has not yet found a way to contest.

Asahi Shimbun's editorial page warned this week of a loss of deliberation following the personnel changes, an argument aimed at the Steering Committee's control of the chamber's business rather than at any individual appointment.

With the storm arriving on Monday and the Prime Minister abroad from the same morning, the new ministers' first working week will be spent on a disaster response rather than on the legislative programme they were appointed to carry.

POLITICS

Lower House Electoral Reform to Be Settled by a Third-Party Body Before the End of October

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Reform of the House of Representatives electoral system is expected to be decided by a third-party organisation before the end of next month, a timetable that turns a subject Japanese politics has deferred for years into a matter with a date attached.

Electoral reform has historically moved slowly here for a reason that is not mysterious: every change to the system alters the arithmetic that put the incumbents in their seats.

The current design combines single-seat constituencies with proportional representation blocs, and it was itself a reform, introduced in the 1990s to replace multi-member districts that had produced factional competition within parties rather than between them.

Its principal defect is the disparity in the value of a vote between rural and urban constituencies, which has exceeded two to one at several recent elections.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly found that disparity to be in a state of unconstitutionality, a formulation that declares the situation defective without invalidating the election that produced it, and which has kept pressure on the Diet without forcing its hand.

Handing the question to an independent body removes the drawing of boundaries and the allocation of seats from the parties whose fortunes they determine. That is the reform's principle, and it is also why it has taken so long to agree.

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

The opposition parties, meanwhile, are reorganising under a provisional name, which means the parties that would negotiate the details are themselves unsettled.

A decision by the end of October would place a reform outline before a Diet session already carrying a tax measure with an unfunded five trillion yen cost and a defence spending trajectory the bond market has been pricing for a fortnight.

The disparity will be measured again at the next general election, whenever it comes, and whether the new body has changed the arithmetic by then is the only test that will matter.

POLITICS

Okinawa's New Governor Reports Bomb and Assassination Threats, and Responds

Koja, in office less than a week, has also been threatened with damage to his business

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent, Tokyo Bureau

Genta Koja, who took office as governor of Okinawa this month, has received bomb threats, assassination threats and threats to damage his business, and has commented publicly on them, according to Sankei News.

The threats follow the bomb threat made against a school attended by one of his children, reported on Saturday, which demanded that he resign and hold a new election.

Taken together they describe a campaign of intimidation directed at a governor who has held office for less than a week, extending from his official position to his family and to the business he built before entering politics.

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

Okinawa's base politics have been conducted with unusual intensity for decades, and the prefecture's arguments have been fierce, sustained and, until now, conducted in public rather than anonymously.

Threats against a politician's family and livelihood are a different matter from political opposition, and the organised groups that campaign against the relocation have as much reason as anyone to want them investigated and disowned.

Police in the prefecture are investigating. Threats of this kind are prosecuted as intimidation or as obstruction of business, depending on their content and their target.

That the governor chose to speak about them publicly rather than to leave the matter with the police is a decision with its own logic: a threat that is answered in the open loses some of the private force it was meant to have.

The central government confirmed last week that it will cooperate with the new governor and resume dialogue with the prefecture gradually, and nothing in the threats changes that timetable.

Okinawa's politics will remain contested. What is now being tested is whether the contest stays inside the boundaries that politics in Japan has generally observed.

POLITICS

Approval at 59%, and an Electorate That Keeps Naming the Same Two Problems

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

The Yomiuri Shimbun poll that put cabinet approval at 59% after the reshuffle continues to shape the political weekend, chiefly because of what respondents said they wanted rather than whom they said they liked.

The economy and employment were named as a priority by 90% of respondents, and inflation countermeasures by 85%. Nothing else in the survey comes close to those numbers.

An electorate that answers that way is not asking for a reshuffle, a reform of the electoral system or a summit in New York. It is asking about prices, and it is telling a government that its standing depends on them.

That is a comfortable mandate while prices are moving the government's way. Rice has fallen for five consecutive weeks to its lowest in about two years, and the food consumption tax cut is scheduled.

It is an uncomfortable one when they are not. The yen sat in the 158 range at its weakest on Friday, the gasoline subsidy is holding the pump price up at a cost approaching nine trillion yen, and a variable-rate mortgage holder in their twenties is now estimated to face an extra 50,000 yen a year.

The 59% approving the Japan Innovation Party's entry to the cabinet is the more unusual figure. Junior partners entering government normally cost the senior party something, and a clear majority endorsing the arrangement suggests it was received as competence rather than as a bargain.

Emergency polls capture first impressions, and first impressions are not always durable. The reshuffle's contested elements have not yet been examined in the Diet, and the extraordinary session will provide the examination.

The funding question is the one the opposition can press: five trillion yen a year for the tax cut, nine trillion for the fuel subsidy, and long-term borrowing costs at their highest since 1996.

It is a correct argument and a difficult one, because it asks households worried about a grocery bill to worry instead about a bond market they do not follow.

The next regular poll, conducted after the session has begun and the storm has passed, will show whether 59% was a recovery or a moment.

POLITICS

The Extraordinary Session's Agenda Is Now Heavier Than the Calendar That Holds It

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

With the cabinet formally at work and its vice ministers appointed, the extraordinary Diet session inherits an agenda that has grown every day for a week.

The food consumption tax measure sits at the top of it. The rate falls to 1% in April 2027 and to zero for two years after that, at an annual cost of roughly five trillion yen for which no funding source has been named.

The gasoline subsidy, at a record level with a programme budget approaching nine trillion yen, is the second item and the one with no announced end.

The revision of the three security documents is the third, with a reported spending target that contributed

POLITICS

to long-term government bond yields reaching their highest level since 1996 this week.

Electoral reform, now to be settled by a third-party body before the end of October, is the fourth, and it is the one whose outcome changes the composition of the chamber that decides the other three.

The Bank of Japan's increase to 1.25%, effective Thursday, sits underneath all of them, because every quarter-point is a quarter-point on a debt stock that has been accumulating for three decades.

The House of Councillors Budget Committee, chaired by Arimura, is where those threads will be pulled together in public, and the Steering Committee under Fujikawa controls how much time there is to pull them.

Asahi Shimbun's editorial warning about a loss of deliberation was directed at exactly that arrangement, and the government's answer will have to be its conduct rather than its majority.

The opposition's reorganisation, still operating under a provisional party name, has not yet produced the unified questioner that a session of this density would reward.

The typhoon will cost the session's opening week something too. Ministers who expected to spend it preparing legislation will spend it instead on a disaster response.

POLITICS

The Government's Message Before the Storm Is Four Words Long: Read Your Hazard Map

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The disaster management minister, Goshi Hosono, has been asking residents to check their hazard maps since Friday, and with rain bands due in Kanto this afternoon the request has become the government's principal instruction to the public.

A municipal hazard map shows a household's exposure to river flooding, storm surge and landslide, along with the designated evacuation site and the route to it. It is free, it is online, and most households have never opened it.

The government's information liaison office at the Prime Minister's Office Crisis Management Center, opened on Friday, would escalate to a full response headquarters if the forecast approach on Monday materialises as described.

Fukushima Prefecture moves to a special alert posture from today, ahead of a closest approach expected on Monday, and other prefectures on the Pacific side will follow as the rain totals accumulate.

The municipal alert level scale runs from one to five, and disaster officials consistently advise acting at Level 3 for anyone who needs time to move, and at Level 4 regardless, since Level 5 frequently arrives after safe movement has become impossible.

The transport ministry's expanded list of restricted underpasses, published last week after three deaths in submerged vehicles, identifies the road dips that flood fastest and will be closed once rainfall reaches defined thresholds.

Weathernews expects 30 millimetres an hour or more along the Kanto coast today, which is the rate at which drains stop coping and standing water appears on roads that were dry ten minutes earlier.

Tokyo Bay's shape can amplify storm surge when a typhoon passes to the east of it, and the low-lying districts along the bay's shore are the ones the hazard maps mark for it.

Households that have dropped flood cover from their fire insurance to hold down premiums, a trend reported over the past week, are the ones for whom the map's information is most consequential and least welcome.

Reading the map takes ten minutes. It is best done this morning, while the sky over Tokyo is still the sunny one on today's chart.

POLITICS

A Five-Day Holiday Loses Its Middle

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The first five-day Silver Week in eleven years is being taken apart by a storm in the middle of it, with Monday's Respect for the Aged Day now forecast to be the day of the typhoon's closest approach to Kanto and Tokai.

The Tokyo Game Show, which proceeds today at Makuhari Messe, has cancelled its final day on Monday, ending a run that had drawn crowds through the business and public days.

The Rockin'On festival is going ahead today with its LED screens lowered as a precaution against strong winds, and the organisers undertook to announce a decision about Monday by one o'clock this afternoon.

JR East's warning that services in the Tokyo metropolitan area may be suspended or delayed from this evening through to early Tuesday covers the entire remaining holiday for anyone who intended to travel by rail.

A survey published last week found eight in ten households planning to stay close to home this holiday. The forecast has converted that intention into an instruction.

Higan, the seven-day observance around the equinox, began today, and the grave visits that families make during it will be pushed toward the week's second half in the regions the storm reaches.

Western Japan keeps its weekend. Today's map is sunny from Hiroshima through Fukuoka to Kagoshima, and the National Urban Greening Fair in Kyoto Tamba is open in clear weather.

The Asian Games, which begin their first full day of competition today across Aichi and Tokyo, sit mostly outside the storm's reach, though the swimming is in Tokyo and the outdoor events on the Pacific side will be watched closely.

Hotel cancellations across eastern Japan have already occurred, and the losses fall on an industry that had been counting on a rare five-day break to fill rooms in a shoulder season.

Wednesday's Autumn Equinox, on the improving side of the forecast, is what the holiday now has left, and a good deal of the country's rearranged plans have landed on it.

POLITICS

The Security Documents Revision Continues Beneath the Week's Louder Arguments

By William | Senior Political Analyst

The revision of Japan's three security documents proceeds on an accelerated timetable, with Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi having said that the revision will determine the future of the country and the region.

The documents cover the national security strategy, the defence build-up programme and the force structure. They were last revised in 2022 in a package that introduced counterstrike capability and named China as the principal strategic challenge in unusually direct language.

This revision arrives with a reported spending target of 3.5% of output attached to it, a figure that contributed to long-term bond yields reaching their highest level since 1996 this week.

Defence spending at that level would place Japan among the larger military budgets in the world by absolute size, which is a political fact before it is a fiscal one.

The Prime Minister's summit with President Trump on Tuesday is the first opportunity to test whether American expectations of Japanese spending match what Tokyo intends to write down.

Personnel remains the constraint that money does not solve. Recruitment has fallen short of targets for years in a shrinking working-age population, and equipment without crews is an accounting entry rather than a capability.

The loss of a Global Hawk surveillance aircraft off Tottori last week left a gap in maritime surveillance that will take considerably longer to fill than it took to create.

Alliance coordination shapes the documents substantially, since Japanese capability is planned to complement American forces rather than to duplicate them.

Koizumi's retention in the reshuffle means the minister who has run the process will be the one who brings it to the cabinet table, which is a continuity the coalition's new arrangement did not disturb.

The documents' fiscal implications will land in the same Budget Committee that must also account for a five trillion yen tax cut and a nine trillion yen fuel subsidy.

POLITICS

What a Japanese Prime Minister Says at the General Assembly

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

Prime Minister Takaichi's speech in the United Nations General Assembly's general debate this week follows a form that Japanese leaders have used for decades and which is read mainly for its departures.

The general debate is the annual sequence of national statements that opens the Assembly's session. Each leader speaks for a set period to a hall that is rarely full and a record that is permanent.

Japanese speeches have consistently pressed for reform of the Security Council, on which Japan has sought a permanent seat for decades, and have affirmed the country's commitment to nuclear disarmament as the only nation to have suffered atomic attack.

This year's will be read for what it says about the Gulf conflict in its seventh month, and specifically about a United Nations investigation team's finding that an attack on an Iranian school amounted to an American war crime.

That finding places Japan's principal ally at the centre of the Assembly's attention days before the Prime Minister meets the American president, which is a narrow space in which to write a speech.

The language chosen will be examined as closely in Washington as in the hall, and a Japanese leader who says nothing about the finding will be reported as having said nothing.

Security Council reform has been a Japanese objective since the 1990s and has advanced not at all, which does not stop it being restated, because the restatement is the claim.

Development assistance, disaster risk reduction and maritime order under law are the other durable Japanese themes, and the last of those connects directly to this weekend's collision in the South China Sea.

The speech is the public face of the trip. The summit on Tuesday is its purpose, and the two audiences are entirely different.

Japanese prime ministers have delivered this speech in stronger and weaker domestic positions. At 59% approval, this one arrives in the stronger half of that range.

POLITICS

The Opposition Reorganises Under a Provisional Name While the Government Sits at 59%

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Japan's opposition parties continue to reorganise under a provisional party name, with further realignment under consideration, as the government's approval rating sits at 59%.

Realignment is a recurring feature of opposition politics here, and it has generally followed defeat rather than preceded victory, which is the pattern this round repeats.

The structural problem is the electoral system. Single-seat constituencies reward consolidation and punish division, which means opposition parties that cannot combine cannot win, whatever their aggregate support.

The proportional representation blocs, introduced as a concession to smaller parties, have become the mechanism that makes realignment survivable, since a party that loses its constituencies can retain members through the list.

That combination has produced decades of opposition parties that merge, split and rename without accumulating the institutional depth a governing alternative requires.

The Japan Innovation Party's decision to enter the cabinet removed the largest potential partner from the opposition side, and the finding that 59% approve of that entry closed off the obvious line of attack.

The argument that remains available is fiscal: five trillion yen a year for the food consumption tax cut with no funding source, nine trillion for the fuel subsidy, and long-term borrowing costs at their highest since 1996.

It is correct, and it asks voters worried about grocery prices to worry instead about a bond market, which is a harder sell than any government has had to make in reverse.

Electoral reform, now due to be settled by a third-party body before the end of October, will change the arithmetic all of this is conducted in, and no party yet knows in which direction.

A provisional name is a placeholder for a decision that has not been made, and the extraordinary session will arrive before it is.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: A Government's First Real Test Arrives Three Days After It Was Sworn In

By William | Senior Political Analyst

The cabinet completed its handovers on Friday and will face, on Monday, a typhoon whose forecast gusts of 50 metres a second and 300 millimetres of rain arrive on the same morning the Prime Minister leaves for New York.

There is no good way to schedule that, and there is a well-worn way to manage it. The chief cabinet secretary chairs the crisis machinery in the Prime Minister's absence; the disaster management minister runs the substantive response; the prefectures issue the evacuation orders that actually reach households.

Each of those posts is filled, which is the practical argument for the continuity the reshuffle preserved at the centre of the cabinet even while it changed the ministries around it.

What a government can do before a storm is narrow and specific. It can move the forecasting agency's warnings into the news cycle early, which has happened: the 50 metres a second figure was published two days ahead.

It can prompt the railways to announce their intentions early, which JR East has done with an unusual thirty-six-hour window covering tonight through Tuesday morning.

It can get event organisers to decide early, which the Tokyo Game Show did by cancelling Monday, and which the Rockin'On organisers promised to do by one o'clock this afternoon.

And it can tell households to read a hazard map, which the disaster management minister has been doing since Friday and which most households, by the officials' own assessment, still will not do.

What it cannot do is change where the rain falls. The death in Nichinan on Saturday, a woman in her 90s crushed in a landslide hundreds of kilometres from the forecast track, is the reminder that the hazard is not confined to the cone on the map.

The political consequence, if there is one, will not be decided by the storm but by the week after it: whether the transport network recovers, whether the flooding stays within what the drains were built for, whether anyone dies in a submerged underpass again.

A prime minister at 59% who returns from New York to a competently handled storm keeps her number. One who returns to a preventable failure will find that an electorate naming prices and jobs as its priorities is perfectly capable of adding a third item.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: What Tokyo Wants From Tuesday Is Sequence, Not Agreement

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

The Prime Minister's meeting with President Trump on Tuesday has a modest formal agenda and an immodest purpose, and the two should not be confused.

The formal agenda is alignment on China before the United States holds its own talks with Beijing later this month. The purpose is to ensure that whatever Washington and Beijing agree, it is not agreed in ignorance of what it does to Japan.

That is a smaller ambition than a treaty and a larger one than a photograph. It rests on the assumption that a briefed president is a better outcome for Japan than an unbriefed one, which is the assumption Japanese diplomacy has operated on for decades.

The specific exposures are easy to list. Semiconductor equipment makers in Japan are affected directly by American export controls. Rare earth supply is a Chinese instrument. The 15% tariff on Japanese exports to the American market cut the surplus with the United States by roughly 80% in August.

American officials calling the meeting undoubtedly important, as Yomiuri reports, is a signal that

ANALYSIS

Washington intends to use it for something, and the something is most likely a request rather than an offer.

Defence spending is the usual request. Japan's revision of its three security documents is under way, with the defence minister saying the revision will determine the future of the country and the region, and a reported 3.5% of output target has already moved the bond market.

Currency may come up without being on any list. The Federal Reserve raised rates on Wednesday against the President's stated wishes; the Bank of Japan raised rates on Friday; and the yen ended the week almost exactly where the differential left it, in the 158 range at its weakest.

The Gulf conflict will be in the room whether or not it is on the paper, particularly after a United Nations investigation team characterised an attack on an Iranian school as an American war crime.

A Japanese prime minister standing at the General Assembly podium the day before that meeting must find language that satisfies an alliance and an international legal commitment at the same time, which is a narrower gap than it sounds.

Tuesday's measure of success will not be a communiqué. It will be whether, when Washington next speaks to Beijing, the things Japan needs are already inside the American position.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: Japan's Stake in the AI Argument Is Measured in Books and Megawatts

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

The argument about artificial intelligence that reaches Japan is not primarily about model governance. It is about inputs, and Japan supplies two of them in quantity while importing the third.

The first is electricity, and it is the binding one. Data centres built for this technology draw power at densities earlier computing did not approach, and each requires grid connection equipment sized for loads the surrounding network was not designed to carry.

That equipment is ordered years ahead from a small number of manufacturers, and Hitachi Energy's 82 billion yen transformer plant in Mississippi, announced this month, is a bet on a demand curve that equity markets have spent a fortnight arguing about and order books have already settled.

The second input is content. The Japan Book Publishers Association's outstanding request to the distributor Nippan, over reported bulk sales of books to an artificial intelligence company, is the Japanese instance of a question every publishing industry is now asking.

Japanese copyright law's provisions on information analysis have been read as permissive toward machine learning, a reading publishers dispute and have asked the government to clarify, and the dispute will be settled in Japan whichever way the American litigation goes.

The Tokyo Game Show, whose final day was cancelled this weekend because of the typhoon, represents a second Japanese industry sitting on a large stock of intellectual property with the same unresolved question attached to it.

The third input is compute, and Japan imports nearly all of it. The country's semiconductor revival at Kumamoto and in Hokkaido is aimed at the manufacturing layer rather than at the design of the accelerators that training runs on.

That dependence is why export controls decided in Washington matter more to Japanese AI capability than any domestic statute, and why the Prime Minister's meeting on Tuesday has a technology dimension that will not appear in any communiqué.

Japan's own framework has been promotion-first, encouraging development and utilisation and declining to impose a licensing regime, which means the constraints on Japanese developers are physical and commercial rather than legal.

The practical question for policy here is therefore not whether to regulate the frontier. It is whether the country is being paid properly for what it supplies to it.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: A Country Holding a Games in Two Different Weathers

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

The Asian Games begin their first full day of competition today across a country that is experiencing two entirely different Sundays.

In Aichi, where most of the programme sits, the map shows Nagoya sunny at 25 degrees, the triathlon at Gamagori is proceeding as an Olympic continental qualifier, and the table tennis and badminton halls are indoors and untroubled.

In Tokyo, where the swimming has been placed, rain bands are due this afternoon, heavy rain of 30 millimetres an hour is forecast along the Kanto coast, and JR East has warned that trains may stop from this evening.

The pool itself is indoors and unaffected. The audience is not, and a seven-final evening session that depends on a rail network under a suspension warning is an organisational problem that no venue design solves.

Splitting a Games across two metropolitan regions is normally a logistical convenience and an audience calculation. This weekend it is a weather hedge that nobody planned.

The decision that organisers face over the next twenty-four hours is the one the Tokyo Game Show has already taken and the Rockin'On festival will take by one o'clock this afternoon: hold today, and decide about tomorrow before the audience starts travelling.

Monday's Games programme includes baseball at Toyohashi, which sits in Aichi well west of the storm's track, and the outdoor events on the Pacific side are the ones to watch for changes.

There is a compensating effect. A survey last week found eight in ten households intending to stay close to home this holiday, and warning-level rain converts that into an audience indoors with a television.

The Games' organisers have been told all month that costs are up and attention is down. A captive national audience on a wet holiday Sunday is not how anyone would choose to fix that, but it is what they have.

The swimming finals begin this evening, and the first medals of a home Games will be decided while half the country listens to the rain.

INTERNATIONAL

Philippine Vessel and Chinese Coast Guard Ship Collide in the South China Sea

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

A Philippine ship and a Chinese Coast Guard vessel have collided in the South China Sea, the latest in a series of confrontations in waters that both countries claim.

Collisions of this kind have become a recurring feature of the dispute, typically occurring during Philippine resupply missions to positions the country maintains within its claimed exclusive economic zone.

Each side routinely attributes the contact to the other's manoeuvring, and the absence of any agreed mechanism for establishing facts means the accounts rarely converge.

The Chinese Coast Guard operates vessels substantially larger than most of the Philippine ships involved, which makes any contact dangerous for the smaller vessel and its crew.

For Japan the South China Sea matters directly. A large share of the country's energy imports and trade with Southeast Asia passes through those waters, and the principle at stake, that maritime claims are settled by law rather than by size, is the same principle Japan relies on in the East China Sea.

Japan has deepened its security cooperation with the Philippines in recent years, supplying coast guard vessels and concluding agreements that allow the two countries' forces to train together.

The Prime Minister's meeting with President Trump on Tuesday is explicitly intended to align views on China before the United States holds its own talks with Beijing, and maritime conduct in these waters is one of the subjects that alignment covers.

An international tribunal ruled in 2016 that China's expansive claims had no basis in the law of the sea. Beijing rejected the ruling and has continued to operate as though it did not exist.

The pattern of these incidents has been escalation followed by de-escalation, with neither side seeking a confrontation beyond what it can control.

Each collision nonetheless raises the chance of a casualty, and a death at sea would be considerably harder for either government to manage quietly.

INTERNATIONAL

Two Students Killed in Shooting at a Philippine High School

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Two students were killed in a shooting at a high school in the Philippines, in an attack that has drawn attention across the region.

School shootings are rare in the Philippines and rarer still across East and Southeast Asia, where firearms regulation is generally strict and civilian ownership is low.

The Philippines is a partial exception, with a larger number of privately held firearms than most of its neighbours, a legacy of decades of insurgency, private security arrangements and loose enforcement in some provinces.

For Japanese readers the event registers against a domestic context in which firearms are almost entirely absent from civilian life and school violence takes different forms.

Japan's own week included a junior high school student arrested in Sendai for headbutting a teacher and thirteen people injured when a student discharged bear spray at a school in Iwate.

Those incidents and this one belong to different categories of harm, but they share the question that follows every school incident anywhere: what was known beforehand, and by whom.

Philippine authorities will investigate the attacker's access to the weapon, which in cases of this kind is usually the most consequential finding.

Schools across the region respond to such events with reviews of their own security arrangements, and the measures adopted tend to persist long after the incident that prompted them.

The Philippines has been in the regional news this weekend for a second reason, after a Philippine vessel collided with a Chinese Coast Guard ship in the South China Sea.

Two families have lost children, which is the part of the story that the geopolitics around it should not obscure.

INTERNATIONAL

Russia Holds Its First Parliamentary Elections Since the Invasion

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Russia is holding its first parliamentary elections since the invasion of Ukraine, a vote conducted under conditions that bear little resemblance to a competitive contest.

Opposition parties have been dissolved, their leading figures imprisoned, exiled or dead, and independent media have been closed or driven abroad under laws criminalising accurate descriptions of the war.

Elections under these conditions serve a purpose other than choosing a government. They demonstrate the state's capacity to organise a nationwide process and produce a result that confirms the existing arrangement.

The State Duma has functioned as an endorsing body rather than a legislature for years, and the vote's outcome was not in question before it began.

International observation of Russian elections has effectively ceased, which means the vote will be reported through official figures and through whatever independent monitoring survives inside the country.

For Japan the vote is relevant chiefly as a signal about the war's domestic political base. A leadership that stages an election is a leadership confident enough to conduct one.

Japan has aligned with the sanctions imposed by other Group of Seven countries while continuing to take liquefied natural gas from the Sakhalin projects, a position it defends on energy security grounds.

That position is now exposed to an American sanctions bill allowing tariffs of up to 100% on countries importing large volumes of Russian energy, which could reach Japan's procurement.

The Northern Territories dispute remains unresolved, and what limited dialogue existed on it ended with the invasion.

The results will be announced in due course, and they will tell observers more about the state's intentions than about the electorate's.

INTERNATIONAL

United States to Sell F-35s to Saudi Arabia

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

The United States is to sell F-35 fighter aircraft to Saudi Arabia, a decision that alters the military balance in a region already in the seventh month of conflict.

The F-35 is the most advanced combat aircraft the United States exports, and access to it has been tightly controlled, with Israel the only Middle Eastern operator until now.

American law has long required that arms sales to the region preserve Israel's qualitative military edge, and any F-35 sale to another regional state has to be reconciled with that requirement.

Saudi Arabia's interest in the aircraft has been consistent for years, and its pursuit has been tied to broader arrangements involving security guarantees and regional diplomacy.

The Gulf conflict provides the immediate context. Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline has been damaged, with three pumping stations affected, and the Strait of Hormuz remains contested.

Japan imports the overwhelming majority of its crude from the Gulf, which makes the security of these states a direct Japanese interest rather than a distant one.

Japan is itself an F-35 operator, with one of the largest planned fleets outside the United States, and it is building a sustainment presence for the aircraft in the region of its own alliance.

Export decisions of this kind also reach Japanese defence industry, which participates in international programmes under constraints that its American partners do not face.

A United Nations investigation team's characterisation of an attack on an Iranian school as an American war crime sits alongside this sale in the same week's reporting, and the juxtaposition will be noted at the General Assembly.

Congressional review procedures apply to major foreign military sales, and the timetable from announcement to delivery for an aircraft of this complexity is measured in years.

INTERNATIONAL

Why a Collision in the South China Sea Is a Japanese Story

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

A collision between a Philippine vessel and a Chinese Coast Guard ship registers in Japan more strongly than the distance would suggest, for three connected reasons.

The first is trade. A large share of Japan's energy imports and its commerce with Southeast Asia passes through the South China Sea, and any disruption there reaches Japanese supply chains directly.

The second is precedent. The principle contested in those waters, that maritime claims are determined by law rather than by the size of the vessel enforcing them, is the same principle Japan relies on around the Senkaku Islands.

The third is partnership. Japan has deepened security cooperation with the Philippines in recent years, supplying coast guard vessels and concluding arrangements that allow the two countries' forces to train together.

An international tribunal ruled in 2016 that China's expansive claims had no basis in the law of the sea. Beijing rejected the ruling and has operated since as though it does not exist.

The pattern of incidents has been escalation followed by de-escalation, with both sides managing the confrontations to stay below the threshold that would demand a military response.

What makes each collision dangerous is that the margin is physical. A ship several times the size of another cannot make contact with it safely, whatever either captain intends.

INTERNATIONAL

A death at sea would be considerably harder for either government to contain, and it is the outcome that every observer of these incidents has been expecting for several years.

The Prime Minister's meeting with President Trump on Tuesday is intended to align views on China, and maritime conduct is among the subjects that alignment is meant to cover.

Japanese policy has been to support the Philippines materially while avoiding any direct involvement in the confrontations themselves, a line that becomes harder to hold as the incidents accumulate.

INTERNATIONAL

Month Seven in the Gulf, Counted in Yen

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

The Gulf conflict entering its seventh month is, for Japan, primarily an energy and price story, and the arithmetic reaches every household through the same three channels.

The first is crude, which has stayed above \$100 a barrel, priced in dollars and converted into yen at an exchange rate that touched the low 158 range on Friday.

The second is the gasoline subsidy, which holds the pump price near 170 yen a litre at a programme cost approaching nine trillion yen, and which is the state absorbing the first channel on households' behalf.

The third is the Bank of Japan's interest rate, raised to 1.25% on Friday partly on the strength of exactly these imported cost pressures.

The conflict's physical events matter to those numbers. Three pumping stations on Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline have been damaged, and the Strait of Hormuz remains contested.

The United States' decision to sell F-35 aircraft to Saudi Arabia arrives in the same week, altering a regional balance in which Japan has an interest and no influence.

A United Nations investigation team's finding that an attack on an Iranian school amounted to an American war crime arrives in the same week too, days before a Japanese prime minister addresses the General Assembly.

Japan imports the overwhelming majority of its crude from the Gulf, which makes these states' stability a direct national interest rather than a foreign policy preference.

Diplomatic contacts in Oman on shipping arrangements through the strait have continued, and any narrow technical agreement there would reach Japanese insurers and shipowners quickly.

Seven months is long enough for the conflict to have become the background condition of Japanese economic policy rather than an event within it.

ECONOMY

After the Rate Rise, the Only Question the Sunday Papers Are Asking Is How Fast the Next One Comes

The policy rate of 1.25%, decided Friday and effective Thursday, is the highest in about 31 years. Major banks are reported to be taking ordinary deposit rates to 0.5%

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

The Bank of Japan's decision on Friday to raise its policy rate to 1.25%, effective on the 24th, dominated the Sunday morning newspapers and their commentary, according to Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun, and the focus has already moved past the decision itself to the pace of what follows.

The level is the highest in approximately 31 years, since April 1995. The interval since the previous increase in June is the shortest of Governor Kazuo Ueda's tenure, and that detail is what has turned a single quarter-point into a question about a series.

Ueda's own formulation at Friday's press conference, that rates will continue to be raised depending on the situation, commits the bank to a direction while withholding a schedule, which is precisely why the weekend commentary has been about pace.

The immediate consequence for households arrived through the banks. Major banks' ordinary deposit interest rates are reported to be moving to 0.5%, according to TV Asahi News, which would be the highest return on an ordinary account in a generation.

On the other side of the ledger, rising variable mortgage rates are estimated to increase loan

payments by about 50,000 yen a year for borrowers in their twenties, according to Sankei News, with concerns also reported about the cash flow of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Those two figures describe the transition's asymmetry in a single line: a deposit rate that finally pays something, and a mortgage payment that rises by more than the deposit will earn for most households.

Small and medium-sized firms are the quieter half of that story. They borrow at floating rates tied to short-term benchmarks, they hold thinner cash buffers than large corporates, and they employ most of the country's workers.

The currency did not cooperate with the decision. After the government and the Bank of Japan conducted rate checks, the yen temporarily appreciated by more than one yen; Yomiuri Shimbun also reported it being sold down to the low 158 range on the same day.

With Tokyo closed for the weekend and Monday's holiday, the currency's response to the increase has not yet been properly tested, and the first full session will not come until Tuesday.

The Nikkei 225's close of 65,018.95 yen on Friday, up 882.70 points in a third consecutive daily gain, is the level the market carries into that session.

The New York Dow closed down 95.40 points at 51,682.64 on Friday, with the ten-year Treasury yield again around 5%, which is the American half of the differential that the Bank of Japan's quarter-point did not close.

What the bank will weigh before its next meeting is the same list it weighed before this one: crude above \$100 a barrel, a currency in the high 150s, and inter-company prices that have stayed elevated long enough to reach consumers.

It now also has a rice price falling for a fifth consecutive week and a gasoline subsidy holding one of the country's most visible prices artificially still.

Depending on the situation, as a phrase, covers all of that. The market will spend the next several weeks trying to work out which part of it the bank weighs most.

ECONOMY

Ordinary Deposits Reported Heading to 0.5%, a Number Most Savers Have Not Seen in Their Adult Lives

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Major banks' ordinary deposit interest rates are reported to be moving to 0.5% following the Bank of Japan's increase, according to TV Asahi News, a level that for a large part of the depositing public is simply unfamiliar.

Ordinary deposits in Japan paid effectively nothing for the better part of two decades. A rate of 0.001% was common, which on a million yen produced ten yen a year, less than the fee for a single out-of-network cash withdrawal.

At 0.5%, the same million yen earns 5,000 yen a year before tax. That is not a return that changes a household's circumstances, but it is the first time in many savers' working lives that leaving money in a current account has not been a slow loss.

Japanese households hold an unusually large share of their financial assets in cash and deposits, a habit formed during deflation, when holding cash was a rational response to prices that fell.

The Bank of Japan's flow of funds data this month showed household holdings of stocks and investment trusts overtaking insurance for the first time, a shift that happened in part because deposits paid nothing. A deposit that pays 0.5% competes differently.

For the banks, deposit rates are a competitive decision rather than an automatic one. They have raised lending rates faster than deposit rates through the normalisation, which has widened margins.

That gap narrows as competition for deposits returns, and the majors moving together to 0.5% is the clearest sign yet that the competition has.

Older households, whose savings were accumulated across decades of zero rates and whose income partly depends on what those savings earn, are the clearest beneficiaries.

Younger households are on the other side of the same change, since the 50,000 yen a year that Sankei News estimates for borrowers in their twenties is a larger

sum than most of them hold in deposits. The new policy rate takes effect on Thursday, and individual banks will confirm their own deposit terms around that date.

ECONOMY

Fifty Thousand Yen a Year: The Estimated Cost of Normalisation for a Borrower in Their Twenties

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

Rising variable interest rates are estimated to increase housing loan payments by about 50,000 yen a year for borrowers in their twenties, according to Sankei News, with the same report noting concerns about the cash flow of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Fifty thousand yen a year is roughly 4,200 yen a month. It is not a catastrophe for most households, and it is the first instalment of a series rather than the whole bill.

Borrowers in their twenties are the most exposed group because they are the most recent. They bought after fourteen consecutive years of rising Tokyo land values, they borrowed the largest multiples of their income, and they chose variable rates because fixed rates carried a premium that decades of falling rates had made look like a waste of money.

Japanese variable-rate mortgages reset their interest twice yearly but adjust the monthly payment only every five years, with a convention capping any increase at 125% of the previous payment.

Between adjustments, a higher rate changes the composition of the payment rather than its size: more of each instalment goes to interest and less to principal, which quietly extends the life of the loan.

That is why the estimated figure and the felt figure differ. Many borrowers will not see 50,000 yen appear on a statement; they will see the same payment retiring less of the debt.

The cumulative path matters more than any single step. The policy rate has travelled from below zero to 1.25% in a little over two years, and the increases reach household payment schedules with a lag measured in years.

For small and medium-sized enterprises the transmission is faster. They borrow at floating rates, refinance more often, and hold smaller buffers, which is why the cash flow concerns arrived in the same report.

Banks have been competing hard for mortgage business through the low-rate years, and the terms extended during that competition are now being tested by a rate cycle none of the borrowers modelled.

The Yomiuri poll's finding that 85% of respondents name inflation countermeasures as a priority suggests households have already made the trade: they would rather pay more on the mortgage than more at the till.

ECONOMY

Rice Falls for a Fifth Straight Week to 2,971 Yen, the Lowest in About Two Years

New rice is cheaper than old rice, and the government has begun buying back stockpiled grain

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The average price of a five-kilogram bag of rice has fallen to 2,971 yen, the lowest in about two years and the fifth consecutive week of decline, according to TBS and Asahi Shimbun.

Beneath the headline figure sits an inversion that the rice market has not seen in living memory: new rice from this year's harvest is selling for less than last year's old rice.

The cause is on both sides of the wholesale ledger. Wholesalers are paying low purchase prices for the new crop, while agricultural cooperatives hold last year's rice at the elevated prices they paid during the shortage.

A shopper standing in front of the two bags therefore sees the fresher product at the lower price, which is a bargain for the shopper and a problem for whoever is holding the older stock.

The government's buyback of stockpiled rice has now begun, absorbing inventory into the strategic reserve that the cooperatives could not sell without taking a loss.

The reserve was established after the poor harvest of 1993 sent Japan looking abroad for rice, and it is designed to buy in years of plenty and release in

years of shortage, which is exactly what it is now doing.

The cost falls on a general budget already carrying a gasoline subsidy programme approaching nine trillion yen and a food consumption tax cut whose five trillion yen annual cost has no named source.

For households the fall is the most tangible piece of good news in a year of price stories, and rice is the commodity Japanese shoppers watch more closely than any other.

For farmers it is the opposite. Low wholesale prices were agreed for a crop that a month of prolonged rain had already delayed, and Typhoon No. 25 is now moving toward the fields where the remainder of it is still standing.

Rice bankruptcies have run at a record pace this year, and a harvest damaged after its price was set arrives at farms with very little cushion.

The Agriculture ministry, under a minister appointed only this week, must set the buyback's scale and price, and those two decisions will determine who ends up absorbing the loss the inversion has created.

ECONOMY

The Yen Gained a Yen on a Telephone Call, Then Gave Ground Again

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

After the government and the Bank of Japan conducted rate checks on Friday, the yen temporarily appreciated by more than one yen, according to TBS. Yomiuri Shimbun reported the currency being sold down to the low 158 range on the same day.

Both things happened, and the sequence is the point. A currency that falls to 158 on the day its central bank raises rates, recovers a yen on a telephone call and then drifts again is a currency being held up by official attention rather than by arithmetic.

A rate check is the step below intervention. Officials ring dealers at major banks and ask the price at which they would trade, and the call itself carries the message, because a government asking the price is a government that may be about to pay it.

No yen are bought in a rate check. The move of more than one yen was produced entirely by a market that is positioned heavily against the currency and nervous about being caught in a genuine intervention.

Actual intervention, when it comes, is conducted by the Bank of Japan as the finance ministry's agent, selling dollars from the reserves, and it is confirmed only afterward if at all.

Coordinated intervention with the United States Treasury, of the kind conducted earlier this month, is more effective than unilateral action because it removes any suspicion that the two governments are working at cross purposes.

The differential is what drives the underlying pressure. The Federal Reserve raised its target range to 3.75%-4.00% on Wednesday and the ten-year Treasury yield sits around 5%, against a Japanese policy rate that will be 1.25% from Thursday.

A quarter-point in Tokyo on Friday and a quarter-point in Washington on Wednesday left the gap almost exactly where it started the week.

With the weekend and Monday's holiday closing Tokyo, the market has had no full opportunity to price the Japanese increase, and Tuesday's session will do it alongside the storm's damage and the outcome of the summit in New York.

The finance minister's customary formulation, that the authorities are watching with a high sense of urgency, will be repeated until either the currency turns or the next telephone call is placed.

ECONOMY

American Sanctions Bill on Russia Threatens 100% Tariffs on Big Energy Buyers, and Japan Is Watching

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

A bill imposing sanctions on Russia has passed in the United States, allowing for tariffs of up to 100% on countries that import large volumes of Russian energy, according to Kyodo News. The measure could have repercussions for Japan's own energy procurement.

Japan's exposure runs through the Sakhalin projects in the Russian Far East, from which it has continued

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to take liquefied natural gas throughout the conflict in Ukraine, on the argument that the volumes are essential to its energy security.

That position has been tolerated by Washington through successive rounds of sanctions, with carve-outs negotiated where Japanese participation was judged to matter more than the revenue denied to Moscow.

A blanket tariff mechanism aimed at large importers is a cruder instrument, and its application depends on how the legislation defines a large importer and how much discretion it leaves to the administration.

Japan imports almost all of its primary energy, and the Gulf conflict in its seventh month has already pushed crude above \$100 a barrel, with a gasoline subsidy programme approaching nine trillion yen holding down the visible domestic price.

Losing Sakhalin volumes would mean replacing them in a global liquefied natural gas market that is already tight, at prices set by the same conflict, converted at a yen in the high 150s.

The timing places the question in front of the Prime Minister days before she meets President Trump, and energy security is the kind of issue that is raised privately rather than in a joint statement.

European buyers went through this adjustment earlier and at greater cost, replacing pipeline gas with seaborne cargoes and restructuring their entire supply picture within two years.

Japan's utilities hold long-term contracts rather than buying on the spot market, which provides some protection against price spikes and very little against a legal prohibition.

The bill's practical effect will depend on implementation rather than on its text, which is the standard qualification attached to sanctions legislation everywhere.

ECONOMY

Markets, Rates and Prices at a Glance

Compiled by the Economics Desk

BANK OF JAPAN: policy rate raised to around 1.25% on Sept. 18, effective Sept. 24. Highest in approximately 31 years, since April 1995. Governor Ueda: increases will continue depending on the situation.

DEPOSITS: major banks' ordinary deposit interest rates reported moving to 0.5% (TV Asahi News).

MORTGAGES: rising variable rates estimated to add about 50,000 yen a year for borrowers in their twenties (Sankei News). Concerns reported over small and medium-sized enterprise cash flow.

NIKKEI 225 (Sept. 18 close): 65,018.95 yen, up 882.70, a third consecutive gain. The level the market carries into Tuesday's session.

CURRENCY: yen temporarily appreciated by more than one yen after government and Bank of Japan rate checks; also reported sold to the low 158 range.

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

RICE: five-kilogram average 2,971 yen, lowest in about two years, a fifth consecutive weekly fall. New rice below old rice. Government buyback of stockpiled rice has begun.

GASOLINE: subsidy continues at record levels; programme budget approaching 9 trillion yen.

COFFEE: Starbucks to raise prices in Japan from October, citing bean costs.

MARKETS CLOSED: Tokyo is closed Saturday, Sunday and Monday's Respect for the Aged Day holiday. Trading resumes Tuesday.

WEEK AHEAD: Prime Minister Takaichi in New York Sept. 21-24, meeting President Trump on the 22nd. New policy rate effective Sept. 24. Autumn Equinox holiday Wednesday.

ECONOMY

The Fuel Subsidy Stays at a Record, and Nobody in Government Wants to Be the One to End It

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Gasoline subsidies continue at record-high levels, with a programme budget approaching nine trillion yen, and no announced end date.

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

It was introduced as a temporary measure and has been extended repeatedly, which is the usual fate of temporary measures whose underlying conditions do not resolve.

The Gulf conflict in its seventh month is that condition, and the passage of an American sanctions bill allowing 100% tariffs on large buyers of Russian energy adds a second source of pressure on the same supply picture.

For transport and logistics, the subsidy functions as a brake on an inflation that would otherwise reach the price of every delivered item, which is why withdrawing it is politically harder than introducing it was.

Nine trillion yen belongs beside the five trillion yen annual cost of the food consumption tax cut, and neither has a named funding source in a budget whose long-term borrowing costs reached their highest since 1996 this week.

The Bank of Japan justified Friday's rate increase partly by reference to high oil prices, and a subsidy that hides one visible price does not change the underlying pressure the bank is responding to.

The Yomiuri poll's 85% naming inflation countermeasures as a priority describes the constituency the subsidy serves, and it is a large one.

The reappointed economic ministers describe their fiscal posture as responsible and proactive, and the Budget Committee will spend the extraordinary session examining the first of those two words.

Every week the programme continues adds to a total that will eventually have to be accounted for in a budget rather than in a press conference.

ECONOMY

What the Bank of Japan Will Be Watching Before It Decides Again

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

With the increase to 1.25% decided and effective from Thursday, the question that has replaced it is the pace of the next move, and the bank has given the market a list rather than a date.

Governor Ueda's phrase, that rates will continue to be raised depending on the situation, is a commitment to direction without a commitment to timing, which is deliberate.

The situation, as the bank has described it, has three components. Crude oil above \$100 a barrel, a yen that has weakened sharply, and inter-company prices that have stayed high long enough to threaten consumer prices.

Wage growth is the fourth and the one the bank treats as decisive, because a rate cycle justified by imported costs alone would be tightening into a shock rather than into an expansion.

The spring wage negotiations are months away, and the bank's judgment before then rests on the surveys and the regional reports that its branch managers compile.

The currency has already told the bank something uncomfortable: a quarter-point increase did not prevent the yen reaching the low 158 range on the day it was announced.

That is the differential at work. The Federal Reserve's target range is 3.75% to 4.00% and the American ten-year yield is around 5%, against a Japanese policy rate that will be 1.25% from Thursday.

Closing a gap of that size with quarter-point steps would take years, which is why the currency responds to the expected path rather than to any single decision.

On the other side of the ledger, rice has fallen for five consecutive weeks and the food consumption tax cut arrives in 2027, both of which reduce measured inflation without reducing the pressure the bank cites.

The interval since June was the shortest of Ueda's tenure. The market's working assumption is that the next interval will not be longer, and the bank has said nothing to discourage it.

ECONOMY

The Arithmetic of Normalisation, in Two Household Ledgers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Two figures from this weekend's reporting describe the same policy change from opposite ends of a household's balance sheet, and they are worth setting side by side.

Major banks' ordinary deposit rates are reported to be moving to 0.5%. Variable mortgage rates are estimated to add about 50,000 yen a year to payments for borrowers in their twenties.

A household with two million yen in an ordinary account earns an additional 10,000 yen a year at 0.5%, before tax, compared with almost nothing at the rates that prevailed until recently.

A household with a 35 million yen variable mortgage pays considerably more than that in additional interest once the increases reach its payment schedule.

Very few households are in both positions at the same scale. Savings are concentrated among older households, and mortgage debt among younger ones, which is why a single policy change produces opposite headlines.

The age gradient is the political fact inside the economic one. Normalisation transfers income from borrowers to savers, and in Japan that means from the working young to the retired old.

The five-year payment adjustment convention on Japanese variable mortgages blunts the immediate effect, letting the composition of the payment shift before its size does.

That convention also disguises the cost. A borrower whose payment has not changed may be retiring meaningfully less principal each month without noticing until the loan's end date moves.

For small and medium-sized enterprises, which Sankei News reported alongside the mortgage estimate, there is no such convention. Floating-rate business debt reprices quickly and in full.

The rice price falling for a fifth week and the food tax cut in 2027 sit on the other side of the same household ledger, which is the part of the arithmetic the Yomiuri poll's 85% is responding to.

ECONOMY

What the Rice Reserve Is For, and Why It Is Buying Now

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

The government's buyback of stockpiled rice, now under way, uses a mechanism created after the failed harvest of 1993 sent Japan looking abroad for a grain it had always grown for itself.

The reserve holds rice against the possibility of a shortage, buying from the market in ordinary years and releasing in poor ones, and rotating the stock so that older grain leaves as newer grain arrives.

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

This year the flow has reversed, and it has reversed into an unusual market condition: new rice selling below old rice, with the five-kilogram average at 2,971 yen after five consecutive weekly falls.

The cause is the gap between what wholesalers are paying for this year's crop and what cooperatives paid for last year's, which they still hold at the higher figure.

Buying that older grain into the reserve resolves the cooperatives' position by taking inventory off their hands, and it removes the stock that has been competing unfavourably with the new crop on the shelf.

For shoppers the immediate consequence may be that the inversion narrows, since removing the cheap old rice removes the comparison that made the new crop look expensive in relative terms.

For farmers the buyback does nothing about the wholesale price of the new crop, which is the number that determines their income and which was set before a typhoon began moving toward the fields.

The cost falls on a general budget that is also carrying a fuel subsidy approaching nine trillion yen and a tax cut worth five trillion a year.

Rice policy has been political in Japan for a century, and a reserve that buys in a year of falling prices is doing exactly what it was designed to do, at a price that will appear in a budget line.

ECONOMY

What a Washed-Out Holiday Costs

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

The first five-day Silver Week in eleven years was expected to be a substantial week for domestic tourism, and a typhoon arriving in its middle removes a large part of that in the space of two days.

Hotel cancellations across eastern Japan have already occurred, and accommodation is the least recoverable part of the holiday economy: an unsold room night cannot be sold later.

Transport revenue follows. JR East's warning of suspensions from this evening to Tuesday morning covers the outbound and return legs of most holiday journeys in the Kanto region.

Events carry their own losses. The Tokyo Game Show has cancelled Monday, and a trade show's public day represents revenue for exhibitors, caterers, staffing agencies and the venue itself.

Retail behaves differently. Households that stay home still spend, on groceries, delivery and the things people buy when they are indoors, which cushions the aggregate figures while leaving specific businesses exposed.

The regional pattern is uneven. Western Japan's weather today is clear from Hiroshima to Kagoshima, and the Kyushu Shinkansen has just resumed full services, which will capture some of the traffic the east loses.

The National Urban Greening Fair in Kyoto Tamba, expecting 750,000 visitors across its run, is open in exactly the weather that eastern events have lost.

Agriculture takes a different kind of loss. The rice still standing in fields across eastern Japan faces 300 millimetres of rain and damaging wind, after a harvest already delayed by a month of rain.

Insurance covers some of this and not most of it, and event cancellation cover in particular is expensive and unevenly held.

The compensating effect is Wednesday. The Autumn Equinox falls on the improving side of the forecast, and a good deal of the rearranged holiday has landed on it.

ECONOMY

Tuesday's Session Will Price Four Days of News at Once

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Tokyo's markets are closed today and tomorrow, and Tuesday's session will be the first opportunity to price a weekend that has been unusually full.

The Bank of Japan's increase to 1.25%, decided on Friday after the market had largely anticipated it, has not yet been tested across a full trading day.

The currency is the first question. The yen touched the low 158 range on Friday and recovered more than a yen after rate checks, and three days of American trading will move it again before Tokyo reopens.

The storm is the second. The typhoon's closest approach to Kanto and Tokai is forecast for Monday afternoon, and damage assessment will be under way as the market opens.

Insurers, railways, retailers and construction companies are the sectors that move on a storm, in different directions, and the size of any move depends on damage that has not happened yet.

The summit in New York is the third. The Prime Minister meets President Trump on Tuesday, Japan time, which means the market trades the expectation rather than the outcome.

The fourth is accumulated American news: the Dow's close at 51,682.64, a ten-year Treasury yield around 5%, and a sanctions bill on Russia that could reach Japanese energy procurement.

The Nikkei carries 65,018.95 into that session, after three consecutive gains and a rise of more than 1,300 points intraday on Friday before it settled at 882.70.

The index remains roughly 11% below its June high of 72,831.73, a gap created by the repricing of artificial intelligence shares that has dominated Tokyo trading this month.

A market closed for three days while the news accumulates usually opens with more volatility than

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the individual items would justify.

ECONOMY

Sakhalin Is Where the Russia Sanctions Bill Would Reach Japan

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

The American sanctions bill allowing tariffs of up to 100% on large importers of Russian energy reaches Japan through a specific place: the Sakhalin projects in the Russian Far East.

Japan has continued to take liquefied natural gas from Sakhalin throughout the conflict in Ukraine, arguing that the volumes are essential to energy security and that surrendering the stakes would hand them to other buyers.

That position has been accommodated through successive sanctions rounds, with carve-outs negotiated where Japanese participation was judged to matter more than the revenue denied to Moscow.

Sakhalin's advantage is geography. The cargoes travel a short distance to Japanese terminals, which makes them cheaper and more reliable than alternatives and avoids the Strait of Hormuz entirely.

That last point has gained value with every month of the Gulf conflict, now in its seventh, with crude above \$100 a barrel and the strait contested.

A blanket tariff mechanism aimed at large importers is a blunter instrument than the carve-outs that have protected the Japanese position so far.

Its practical effect depends on how the legislation defines a large importer and how much discretion it leaves to the administration, which is the standard qualification on any sanctions law.

European buyers went through the equivalent adjustment earlier, replacing pipeline gas with seaborne cargoes at considerable cost within about two years.

Japan's utilities hold long-term contracts rather than buying on the spot market, which protects them from price spikes and not at all from a legal prohibition.

The Prime Minister meets President Trump on Tuesday, and energy security is exactly the kind of subject raised in a leaders' meeting and absent from the statement afterward.

ECONOMY

The AI Repricing That Took 11% Off the Nikkei Is the Backdrop to Today's Cartoon

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

The Nikkei's close of 65,018.95 on Friday leaves it roughly 11% below the high of 72,831.73 set in June, and the gap was created almost entirely by a repricing of artificial intelligence-related shares.

That repricing has dominated Tokyo trading this month, producing sessions in which the price-weighted Nikkei moved sharply while the broader TOPIX barely moved at all.

The mechanism is the index's construction. A handful of high-priced technology and growth names carry disproportionate weight in the Nikkei, so a move in those names produces a headline the wider market does not share.

Friday's session was an example in reverse: the Nikkei rose 882.70 points while the TOPIX fell 3.05, a rally concentrated in exactly the names that had been sold hardest.

The argument underneath the volatility is whether capital expenditure on artificial intelligence continues at its current rate, which is the same argument the right-hand panel of today's cartoon is drawn around.

Order books suggest one answer. Grid equipment manufacturers are selling transformers and switchgear years forward, and Hitachi Energy is spending 82 billion yen on an American plant to make more of them.

Equity markets have been arguing about a different question, which is whether the companies buying that equipment will earn a return on it, and the two questions have different time horizons.

Japanese exposure runs through semiconductor equipment makers, materials suppliers, electrical manufacturers and the trading houses and investment groups holding stakes in the firms themselves.

That breadth is why an argument conducted mostly in American markets moves Tokyo indices so sharply, and why the Nikkei has been the more volatile of the two domestic benchmarks.

Tuesday's session reopens into the same argument, with three days of American trading to absorb first.

ECONOMY

This Weekend's Household Ledger: Rice Down, Deposits Up, Mortgages Up, Coffee Up in October

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

A household reading the Sunday papers can assemble its own arithmetic from the week's figures, and the sum runs in several directions at once.

Rice is down. A five-kilogram bag averages 2,971 yen, the lowest in about two years and a fifth consecutive weekly decline, with new rice selling below old.

Deposits are up. Major banks are reported to be taking ordinary deposit interest rates to 0.5%, which on two million yen produces about 10,000 yen a year before tax.

Mortgages are up. Variable rates are estimated to add about 50,000 yen a year for borrowers in their twenties, spread across the reset schedule the loan follows.

Coffee is up from October, with Starbucks citing rising bean prices, which are set in dollars and converted at a yen that touched the low 158 range on Friday.

Fuel is unchanged, held near 170 yen a litre by a subsidy whose programme cost approaches nine trillion yen, which works out at roughly 70,000 yen for every person in the country.

The food consumption tax falls to 1% in April 2027 and to zero for two years after that, worth several thousand yen a month to a typical household and five trillion yen a year to a budget with no named source for it.

The holiday has a cost of its own this weekend, in cancelled hotel bookings, an abandoned Monday at the Tokyo Game Show and travel that will not happen.

For a household on the Pacific side, the largest figure on this week's ledger has not been calculated yet, and it is the damage the storm does between this afternoon and Monday night.

The poll finding that 85% of respondents name inflation countermeasures as a priority is this arithmetic expressed as politics.

BUSINESS

Starbucks to Raise Coffee Prices in Japan From October as Bean Costs Climb

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Starbucks will raise its coffee prices in Japan from October, citing rising bean prices, according to TBS.

Coffee is an imported commodity priced in dollars, which means a Japanese chain faces two increases at once: the global bean price and the exchange rate that converts it, with the yen in the high 150s.

Global arabica prices have been driven up by weather in the major producing countries and by the structural squeeze of rising demand against constrained supply, and the effect has reached retailers in every importing market.

For Japanese consumers the increase lands in a category that has been unusually stable. Coffee chains here have competed on experience and location rather than on headline price, and increases have historically been small and infrequent.

It also lands in the same autumn as a food consumption tax cut, which reduces the tax on groceries but does nothing for prepared drinks consumed in a shop, where the higher rate applies.

The Yomiuri poll finding that 85% of respondents name inflation countermeasures as a priority describes the environment a price increase enters, and a cup of coffee is one of the most visible prices in a household's week.

Convenience store coffee, which has taken a substantial share of the daily market with prices well below the cafés, will be watched for whether it follows.

The Bank of Japan's case for raising rates rests partly on exactly this mechanism: import costs converted at a weak exchange rate, passed through inter-company prices, arriving eventually at the counter.

A single chain's pricing decision is not evidence of anything on its own, but it is the kind of decision the

bank cites when it explains why it is acting.

The increase takes effect in October, which gives the chain a month of business before it and gives customers a month to notice the notice.

BUSINESS

Kikkoman Opens a Third American Plant, Targeting 4-5% Annual Revenue Growth in North America

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

Kikkoman has opened its third factory in the United States and is targeting annual revenue growth of 4% to 5% in North America, according to Sankei News.

The company has manufactured in the United States since the 1970s, when it built a plant in Wisconsin on the then-unusual theory that soy sauce would become an American pantry staple rather than a specialty import.

That theory has been correct for fifty years, and a third plant is the most concrete evidence of it: capacity added to serve demand that no longer depends on Japanese cuisine to explain itself.

Producing in the market it sells to also insulates the company from the 15% tariff now applied to most Japanese exports to the United States, which cut the trade surplus with the American market by roughly 80% in August.

That insulation is the strategic argument for overseas plants, and it is the same argument Japanese carmakers made when they built American capacity in the 1980s under a different kind of trade pressure.

The weak yen cuts the other way. A company earning dollars and reporting in yen benefits from translation at 158, which flatters North American results before a single additional bottle is sold.

Fermentation is a slow, capital-intensive process, and brewing soy sauce properly takes months, which means a new plant's output arrives on a schedule set by biology rather than by demand.

Growth of 4% to 5% a year is a modest, compounding target of the kind that consumer staples companies set and that markets reward for its predictability.

Nissan's stated aim of one million units of domestic production as an export base, reported this week, is the opposite bet: that the currency makes production in Japan the better place to build.

Both can be right. A carmaker sells a product whose tariff treatment and shipping economics differ entirely from a bottle of soy sauce, and the two companies are answering different questions about the same exchange rate.

BUSINESS

Tesla Shows the CyberCab in Japan for the First Time, on Display Only

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Tesla has unveiled its CyberCab in Japan for the first time, with showings in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, according to Sankei News. The vehicle is not permitted for use on public roads here.

A vehicle designed without a steering wheel or pedals cannot be registered under Japanese road transport law as it stands, which is why the showing is a display rather than a demonstration.

The gap between what the vehicle is and what the law permits is the entire content of the event. Manufacturers show vehicles in markets where they cannot yet operate them in order to shape the conversation that changes the rules.

Japan has moved on autonomous driving in stages, permitting limited hands-off operation under defined conditions and running driverless services in restricted zones with operators and safety cases attached.

A vehicle with no controls at all is a different regulatory object. It removes the fallback on which every existing framework depends: a human who can take over.

The domestic industry has approached the same question from the opposite direction, with Japanese manufacturers building driver-assistance systems that keep a person legally in charge while doing progressively more of the work.

Japan's demographics make the argument for autonomy unusually concrete. Rural bus and taxi services are contracting for want of drivers, and the population that most needs them is the one least able

to drive itself.

Cost is the counter-argument. A vehicle that cannot carry a driver has to be reliable enough that no driver is needed, and the engineering required to reach that standard has repeatedly proved more expensive than forecast.

For now the CyberCab in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya is an exhibit, and its most likely effect is on the meetings that follow rather than on any road.

Japanese regulators have historically moved deliberately on vehicle safety and have rarely been embarrassed by the pace.

BUSINESS

Talks Under Way on Lifting the Ban on Raw American Potatoes, and Growers Are Uneasy

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Discussions are under way on lifting Japan's ban on imports of raw potatoes from the United States, according to NTV News. Domestic producers have raised concerns about pests and diseases and about a decline in domestic sales.

Japan currently admits American potatoes in processed form, for chips and fries, while restricting raw tubers on plant-health grounds. Raw potatoes can carry soil-borne pathogens and pests that processed product cannot.

Those concerns are not merely commercial. A pathogen that establishes itself in Japanese soil is effectively permanent, and the country's potato production is concentrated in Hokkaido, where a single introduction would reach a large share of the crop.

Growers' second concern is the straightforward one. Imported raw potatoes would compete directly with domestic ones in the fresh market, which is the part of the business that has not already been ceded to imports.

Agricultural market access has been the hardest chapter of every trade negotiation Japan has conducted, and potatoes belong to the category of specific commodities that get resolved one at a time, usually under pressure.

The timing places the discussion alongside the Prime Minister's summit with President Trump on Tuesday, though the talks are a separate technical process conducted between agriculture officials.

Plant-health restrictions are permitted under international trade rules where they rest on scientific assessment, which is why disputes of this kind turn on the quality of the risk analysis rather than on the politics.

Japanese consumers have shown a consistent preference for domestic produce and a willingness to pay for it, which limits how much of the fresh market an import would actually take.

The Agriculture ministry is simultaneously managing a rice buyback, a harvest threatened by a typhoon and a new minister's first week, which is a crowded desk for a technical negotiation.

Any change would be phased and conditioned, as previous openings have been, with treatment requirements and inspection regimes attached.

BUSINESS

The Publishers' Request for Answers From Nippan Is Still Outstanding

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

Allegations that Nippon Shuppan Hanbai sold books in bulk to the artificial intelligence company Anthropic remain unresolved, with the Japan Book Publishers Association's request for confirmation of the facts still outstanding.

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 single publisher or retailer commands.

A distributor selling surplus stock is ordinary commerce. What makes the reported transaction contentious is the buyer's presumed purpose and the publishers' view that their rights extend to it.

Japanese copyright law contains provisions on the use of works for information analysis that have been read as permissive toward machine learning. Publishers have contested that reading and asked the

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government to clarify it.

The industry's consignment model, under which bookshops return unsold copies to the distributor, means large quantities of physical books pass back up the chain each year, with pulping the usual destination.

Selling those books instead of destroying them is, on its face, the better commercial and environmental outcome. The dispute is about whether the revenue from that sale was the distributor's to collect.

For authors the question is whether their work entered a training corpus without consent and whether any consideration reached them, and the answer depends on contracts most of them have never read.

Today's cartoon on the editorial page takes up the same industry from a different angle, examining the distance between what the largest AI companies asked legislators for last year and what their bankers are preparing this autumn.

The Tokyo Game Show at Makuhari, whose final day has been cancelled because of the typhoon, represents another Japanese industry with a large stock of intellectual property and the same unresolved question about its use.

Nippan's answer, when it comes, will determine whether this proceeds as a commercial dispute between two businesses or as the test case Japanese publishing has been expecting.

BUSINESS

The Quiet Half of the Rate Story Is the Small Firm With a Floating Loan

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

Sankei News reported concerns about the cash flow of small and medium-sized enterprises alongside its estimate of higher mortgage payments, and the two halves of that sentence describe very different exposures.

Small and medium-sized firms employ about seven in ten Japanese workers. They borrow at floating rates tied to short-term benchmarks, refinance more frequently than households, and hold thinner cash reserves.

When the policy rate moves, their interest costs follow within months rather than years, and there is no five-year payment adjustment convention to smooth the path.

Many of these firms have been operating on margins compressed from both ends: input costs raised by a weak yen and imported energy, and selling prices constrained by customers who resist increases.

Labour costs have risen too, which is the outcome the Bank of Japan has been waiting for and which is felt as a cost rather than as evidence by the firm paying it.

The spring wage negotiations that the bank watches as a test of sustainable wage growth are conducted most visibly at large employers, and the question has always been whether increases reach the smaller firms where most people work.

Government support measures have tended to arrive as subsidised lending, which addresses a liquidity problem by adding to the debt that is becoming more expensive.

Regional banks, whose lending books are concentrated in exactly these borrowers, benefit from wider margins and carry the credit risk if the borrowers falter.

Business failures have been rising across several sectors this year, with rice-related bankruptcies at a record pace, and a rate cycle adds pressure to firms already close to the line.

The Bank of Japan's phrase about proceeding depending on the situation includes this situation, even though it rarely makes the front page.

BUSINESS

Regulatory Capture: An Old Idea Behind Today's Cartoon

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

The argument in today's editorial page cartoon rests on an idea that economists have been describing formally since the 1970s and informally for far longer: that regulators come to serve the industries they regulate.

The mechanism is not corruption. It is information and attention. An industry knows its own technology

better than any ministry, and it has a permanent, concentrated interest in the rules, while the public's interest is diffuse and intermittent.

Over time that asymmetry pulls the rules toward what the established firms find workable, which is usually what they are already doing.

Licensing regimes are the clearest example, because a licence is a barrier by design. It keeps out the incompetent, which is the point, and it also keeps out the new, which is the cost.

The test that distinguishes a protective rule from a protectionist one is whether the obligation scales with the risk or with the activity. Rules that bind only systems above a defined capability threshold leave small developers alone; rules that bind any deployment do not.

Japan has examples in both directions. Consultative rulemaking between ministries and industry produced world-class safety standards in several sectors, and it also produced the arrangements that allowed falsified seismic data to persist at a nuclear plant until this month.

The difference in those cases was not whether industry was in the room. It was whether anyone representing the public was in it too, and whether the resulting rules could be checked from outside.

Artificial intelligence presents the problem in an acute form because the technical frontier is understood in detail by perhaps a few thousand people, most of whom work for the firms that would be regulated.

Japan's own framework has taken a promotion-first approach without a licensing requirement, which sidesteps the capture question and leaves the country dependent on rules written elsewhere.

The practical defence against capture is publication: thresholds, definitions and exemptions written down where anyone can read them and argue with them.

BUSINESS

Why a Prospectus Is Full of Warnings the Same Company Would Not Repeat on Stage

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

The right-hand panel of today's cartoon shows an offering document promising that artificial intelligence infrastructure leads the future, and the joke depends on the reader not knowing what else is in such a document.

Securities law in every major market requires an issuer to disclose the risks of its business in specific terms, and the risk-factor section of a technology prospectus routinely runs to dozens of pages.

Those sections are written by lawyers whose purpose is to make later complaints impossible, which means they describe competition, technical failure, regulatory change, dependence on suppliers and the possibility that the business never becomes profitable.

An issuer that omits a material risk is exposed to liability that no safety hearing can create, and underwriters conduct their own diligence for exactly that reason.

The result is a document that is simultaneously a marketing instrument and a confession, and readers who only see the cover reasonably conclude it is only the first.

Japanese listings work the same way, with disclosure obligations under the Financial Instruments and Exchange Act and the Tokyo Stock Exchange's own listing requirements.

The distinction between forward-looking statements and statements of fact is central. A company may project, provided it says it is projecting and explains what could make the projection wrong.

This is why a chief executive can warn legislators about a technology's dangers and file a document describing its commercial promise without necessarily contradicting themselves in law.

Whether the two positions contradict each other in spirit is a fair question, and it is the question the cartoon asks.

For investors the practical advice is the oldest in the market: the interesting part of a prospectus is the part the roadshow does not mention.

BUSINESS

The Electricity Question Sitting Under Every AI Argument

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Whatever is decided about the governance of artificial intelligence, the technology's physical constraint is electricity, and that constraint reaches Japan through both its grid and its manufacturers.

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

That equipment is built to order over years from grain-oriented electrical steel produced by a limited number of mills, and order books extend well beyond any single quarter of market sentiment.

Hitachi Energy's investment of approximately 82 billion yen in a transformer plant in Mississippi, reported this month, is a Japanese group's bet that the demand outlasts the argument about it.

For Japan's own grid, the same shortage applies. Semiconductor fabrication in Kumamoto and Hokkaido, offshore wind development and any domestic data centre construction all queue for the same heavy electrical equipment.

Japan's electricity supply has been constrained since the nuclear fleet was idled after 2011, and restarts have proceeded slowly, with Chubu Electric withdrawing its Hamaoka application this month after falsified seismic data was discovered.

Nuclear restarts use existing grid connections, which is an argument in their favour on timing grounds that the Hamaoka withdrawal removed for that plant.

The Bank of Japan's increase to 1.25% raises the financing cost of all of this, and a manufacturer committing tens of billions of yen at 1.25% rather than at zero is making a judgment about demand durability.

None of these constraints is affected by a licensing regime, which is why Japan's policy conversation about artificial intelligence keeps returning to infrastructure rather than to rules.

The country that supplies the equipment has a different stake in this technology from the country that writes the rules, and Japan is mostly the former.

BUSINESS

The Clause at the Centre of Japan's AI Copyright Argument

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Japan Book Publishers Association's unanswered request to the distributor Nippan turns, eventually, on a provision of Japanese copyright law concerning the use of works for information analysis.

That provision has been read as unusually permissive toward machine learning by international standards, allowing works to be used in analysis that does not involve enjoying their expression.

Publishers and authors have contested the breadth of that reading for years and have asked the government to clarify its limits, particularly where the output competes with the works that were analysed.

The clause was drafted before generative systems existed, with data mining and search indexing in view, which is the ordinary fate of technology law.

The dispute over the reported bulk sale of books adds a second question that the copyright provision does not address: whether a distributor holding physical stock on consignment may sell it for that purpose at all.

That is a contract question rather than a copyright one, and it will turn on agreements between publishers and distributors that were written with bookshops rather than training corpora in mind.

Japanese publishing's consignment model means large volumes of physical books flow back up the chain unsold each year, and what happens to them has not previously been a matter of public interest.

For authors, the practical question is whether their work entered a training set without consent and whether any payment reached them, and most will not know the answer without being told.

Litigation in the United States has produced settlements involving the acquisition of books, which is the context in which a large Japanese purchase would be examined.

A clarification from the government, which publishers have requested, would settle more than this single dispute, which is presumably why it has not been quick to arrive.

BUSINESS

The Distribution System at the Centre of the Nippan Dispute Was Already Under Strain

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The reported sale of books by Nippan to an artificial intelligence company, still unanswered before the Japan Book Publishers Association, concerns a distribution system that has been contracting for two decades.

Japanese publishing runs through two dominant distributors, which handle the physical movement of books, the settlement of accounts and the returns that the consignment model generates.

Under consignment, bookshops return unsold copies rather than buying them outright, which transfers inventory risk up the chain and produces an enormous annual flow of books travelling backwards.

What happens to those returns has never been a matter of public interest. Pulping has been the usual destination, and its economics were unremarkable while print sales were healthy.

They are no longer healthy. Bookshop closures have left many municipalities without a single general bookshop, and distributors' margins have narrowed with the volumes they carry.

A distributor finding a buyer willing to pay for books in bulk is, in that context, a business under pressure taking a commercial opportunity.

The dispute is over whether the opportunity was the distributor's to take, which is a question about contracts written when the only conceivable buyer was a reader.

Japanese copyright law's provisions on information analysis sit behind the contract question and have been read as permissive toward machine learning, a reading publishers dispute.

Reading Week, the autumn campaign publishers and libraries have run since 1947, opens this year with the industry arguing about what a book is for.

Nippan's answer will determine whether this proceeds as a commercial disagreement or as the test case the industry has been expecting.

BUSINESS

The Shops Have Their Own Forecast, and It Runs About Six Hours Ahead of the Rain

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

Japanese retailers have been reading typhoon forecasts as commercial documents for a long time, and the pattern they plan around is well established.

Demand moves forward. Households buy water, bread, batteries and food that needs no cooking in the hours before a storm, which produces a sharp peak and then an equally sharp collapse.

Convenience stores feel it first because they are nearest, and the categories that empty are narrow and predictable, which is why chains adjust their deliveries rather than their whole assortment.

The collapse that follows is the harder part of the arithmetic. A day of warning-level rain removes almost all discretionary foot traffic from high streets and shopping centres.

Department stores and restaurants take the loss directly, and it is not recoverable, since a meal not eaten on Monday is not eaten twice on Tuesday.

Delivery services absorb part of the shift, and they do so under conditions that raise their own costs and, past a certain wind speed, their own safety questions.

Staffing is the operational problem. A retailer whose employees commute by train has to decide, today, whether tomorrow's shifts can be filled at all, with JR East warning of suspensions from this evening.

Many chains now close stores pre-emptively during major storms, a practice that was uncommon a decade ago and that followed both safety reviews and a change in what customers expected.

The holiday raises the stakes. The first five-day Silver Week in eleven years was supposed to deliver a strong weekend of domestic trade, and the eastern half of it is being lost.

BUSINESS

Western Japan keeps its weekend in clear weather, which will show up in the aggregate figures and conceal how unevenly the week was distributed.

COURTS

What the Law Does About Threats Against a Governor

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The bomb threats, assassination threats and threats to damage his business reported by Okinawa's new governor engage several distinct offences in Japanese criminal law.

Intimidation covers threats to a person's life, body, freedom, reputation or property, and it applies whether or not the person making the threat has any capacity to carry it out.

Forcible obstruction of business applies where a threat disrupts the operation of a business or an institution, which is the provision most often used when a bomb threat causes a building to be evacuated.

Threats against a school, as in the case reported on Saturday involving a school attended by one of the governor's children, engage the same provisions with the additional element that children are placed at risk.

Anonymous threats made electronically are investigated through the communications records they leave, and Japanese police have become considerably more effective at tracing them over the past decade.

Sentences for intimidation are modest by the standards of violent offences, which reflects a legal tradition that treats the completed harm as the measure rather than the fear created.

Threats against elected officials have increased in several countries, and Japan's experience of political violence in recent years has changed how seriously such reports are treated.

Protection arrangements for prefectural governors are a matter for prefectural police, and their scale is adjusted according to assessed risk rather than to the office itself.

A governor who chooses to speak publicly about threats makes a calculation that publicity deters more than it encourages, which is a judgment the evidence does not settle in either direction.

The investigation will proceed on the communications records, and prosecutions in cases of this kind typically follow months rather than weeks after the threats are made.

COURTS

Power Harassment in Japanese Law, and Why Small Towns Produce the Hardest Cases

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The special committee finding that Manazuru Town's mayor committed power harassment applies a concept that Japanese employment law defines with some precision.

The statutory definition has three elements: conduct that takes advantage of a superior position, that exceeds what is necessary and appropriate for the work, and that harms the working environment of the person subjected to it.

All three must be present, which is what distinguishes harassment from ordinary, uncomfortable management, and the third element is why the effect on the employee matters as much as the intent of the superior.

Obligations on employers to prevent it took effect for large companies in 2020 and for small and medium-sized ones in 2022, and municipal governments are covered as employers of their own staff.

The law requires prevention measures, complaint procedures and protection against retaliation. It does not create a criminal offence, which means the consequences are employment consequences and political ones.

When the person complained of is a directly elected mayor, the ordinary employment machinery does not reach them, which is why assemblies establish special committees to investigate instead.

Small municipalities produce the hardest cases because there is nowhere to go. Staff numbers are small, the working relationships are long, and an employee cannot transfer to another department that does not exist.

The remedies available to an assembly are censure, a formal resolution, or a no-confidence motion requiring a supermajority, which a mayor may answer by dissolving the assembly rather than resigning.

That escalation path is why disputes of this kind in small towns can consume a year of municipal government and end with an election nobody wanted.

The staff who brought the complaints continue working in the same offices throughout, which is the part of the process that serves them least well.

SOCIETY

Landslides Bury Two in Nichinan; a Woman in Her 90s Is Killed

Miyazaki's southern coast took the first casualties of a storm still hundreds of kilometres offshore

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Multiple landslides struck Nichinan City in Miyazaki Prefecture on Saturday. Two people were buried and a woman in her 90s was crushed to death, according to Sankei News.

The deaths occurred far from the forecast path of Typhoon No. 25, which was several hundred kilometres to the southeast at the time, and that distance is the most important fact about them.

A typhoon's hazard is not confined to its cone. The moist southerly flow that feeds a northward-moving storm is drawn across a much wider area, and where it meets the autumn rain front it produces rain bands that behave like separate weather systems.

Southern Miyazaki was under exactly such a forecast on Saturday morning, with the meteorological agency warning that a linear rainband might form in the prefecture's south within a matter of hours.

Nichinan's terrain does the rest. Steep slopes descend almost directly to a narrow coastal plain, and settlements sit at the bottom of valleys that concentrate whatever falls on the hills above them.

Landslide risk is governed by the soil water index, a measure of how much water the ground is already holding, and ground across Kyushu has been accumulating water through a month of unusually persistent rain.

When the index passes a threshold, slopes that have stood for decades fail without warning, which is why landslide warnings are issued for areas rather than for specific hillsides.

The victim's age places her in the group that these events kill most often. Older residents in rural districts live in the houses closest to the slopes, are least able to move quickly when an evacuation order arrives, and are most likely to be at home when it does.

Municipal alert levels run from one to five, and disaster officials advise acting at Level 3 for anyone who needs time, precisely because Level 5 arrives after safe movement has become impossible.

Search and recovery operations at sites of this kind are slow and dangerous, since the same slope that failed once can fail again onto the people clearing it.

The storm that contributed to Saturday's rain is now moving toward Kanto and Tokai, where 300 millimetres is forecast by Monday evening on ground that is no drier.

SOCIETY

JR East Warns of Suspensions Across the Tokyo Area From Tonight Until Tuesday Morning

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

JR East has warned that trains in the Tokyo metropolitan area may be suspended or delayed from this evening through to the early morning of Tuesday the 22nd, according to Sankei News.

A thirty-six-hour window is an unusually long warning for a Japanese railway, and its length is the point: it covers the whole of the Respect for the Aged Day holiday and the return journeys that would normally follow it.

Planned suspensions were introduced as standard practice after storms in which trains were halted mid-route and passengers were stranded in stations overnight, and the principle is that an announced cancellation is safer than an improvised one.

Operators set their thresholds by wind speed and rainfall rather than by the storm's category, which is why a gust forecast of 50 metres a second for Monday matters more to a railway than the pressure

at the centre.

Above roughly 25 metres a second, trains on exposed elevated sections and coastal lines are stopped, because a crosswind on a viaduct is a derailment risk rather than a comfort problem.

Private railways and the subway operators set their own thresholds, and the metropolitan network's interdependence means a suspension on one line propagates into congestion on the others.

Airports publish their own cancellations, typically the evening before, and travellers with Monday flights from Haneda or Narita should expect decisions today.

Roads may flood, according to tenki.jp and Sankei News, with the disruption expanding from today as the wind builds.

The transport ministry's expanded list of restricted underpasses, published last week after three deaths in submerged vehicles, identifies the road dips that close first when the rain reaches defined thresholds.

Anyone whose Monday depends on a train should assume today that the train will not run, and rearrange accordingly while the trains are still running.

SOCIETY

Kyushu Shinkansen Runs Its Full Route Again, 52 Days After the Kumamoto Earthquake

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The Kyushu Shinkansen has fully resumed service 52 days after the Kumamoto earthquake, according to Asahi Shimbun, restoring the high-speed line that runs the length of the island.

Fifty-two days is a long interruption for a Japanese high-speed line and a short one for the damage an earthquake does to elevated track, which has to be inspected, realigned and certified metre by metre before a train runs on it at speed.

The Kyushu Shinkansen connects Hakata in Fukuoka with Kagoshima-Chuo, and its closure forced traffic onto conventional lines, buses and roads for nearly two months.

For the communities along the route the restoration matters most for the ordinary journeys it carries: hospital appointments, university terms, business travel and the family visits that a holiday week like this one generates.

Japanese railways have developed earthquake responses that assume damage rather than hope against it, with systems that cut power and brake trains on the first tremors detected, before the destructive waves arrive.

The 2016 Kumamoto earthquakes derailed an out-of-service Shinkansen train and closed the line for about six weeks, and the lessons from that recovery shaped the pace of this one.

Reopening in time for the Silver Week holiday restores a travel option for one of the busiest periods of the domestic calendar, and it does so for the half of the country the typhoon is not reaching.

Kyushu's weather today is clear, with Fukuoka sunny at 28 degrees and Kagoshima at 28, while the eastern half of the country prepares for rain.

That contrast is likely to be visible in the bookings, as households in western Japan travel and households in Kanto stay home.

Aftershock activity and the condition of the repaired sections will be monitored as services return to their normal timetable.

SOCIETY

Eleven Cases of Abuse Confirmed at a Niigata City Kindergarten

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Eleven cases of child abuse have been identified at a kindergarten in Niigata City, according to TV Asahi News.

A figure of eleven at a single institution describes something other than an isolated incident. It describes either a pattern of conduct by one person over time or conduct by more than one, and in either case a failure of the supervision that should have caught it.

Japanese childcare facilities are licensed and inspected, with staffing ratios, qualification requirements and reporting obligations set out in regulation, and the inspection regime is the mechanism that is supposed to surface exactly this.

Abuse at childcare facilities has been reported with increasing frequency in recent years, and the rise

reflects both greater willingness to report and a sector under sustained staffing pressure.

That pressure is structural. Childcare pay in Japan has trailed the national average for years, turnover is high, and facilities operating with the minimum qualified staff have little margin when someone leaves.

None of that excuses what happened, and the regulatory response does not treat it as an excuse. It does explain why the sector's problems recur in different institutions rather than resolving.

The prefectural and municipal authorities will conduct their own examination alongside any criminal investigation, and licensing consequences follow separately from prosecution.

For the families involved, the immediate questions are about their own children and about how long the conduct continued before it was identified.

The incident arrives in a week in which a driverless vehicle rolled into a line of kindergarten children in Tokamachi, elsewhere in Niigata, injuring five, and the two together will put the prefecture's early childhood provision under scrutiny.

Reporting obligations require staff who suspect abuse to notify the authorities, and whether those obligations were met here is likely to be central to the examination.

SOCIETY

Special Committee Finds Manazuru's Mayor Committed Power Harassment

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

A special committee has confirmed that the mayor of Manazuru Town committed power harassment, concluding an inquiry into conduct in the small Kanagawa Prefecture municipality.

Power harassment is a defined concept in Japanese employment law, covering conduct that uses a superior position to exceed what is necessary for work and that harms the working environment of those subject to it.

Legislation obliging employers to prevent it took effect for large companies in 2020 and for smaller ones in 2022, and municipal governments are covered as employers of their own staff.

A special committee of a municipal assembly is the instrument councils use when an allegation concerns the mayor, since the mayor is directly elected and cannot be dismissed by the council through ordinary management processes.

The committee's finding is not in itself a legal penalty. It is a formal determination that carries political weight and that opens the routes the assembly has: censure, a resolution, or in the most serious cases a no-confidence motion.

A no-confidence vote requires a supermajority, and a mayor who loses one may dissolve the assembly instead of resigning, which is why such disputes in small municipalities can run for months.

Small towns are where these conflicts surface most sharply. Staff numbers are small, working relationships are close and long-standing, and there is nowhere for an employee to transfer away from a difficult superior.

Manazuru is a coastal town of a few thousand people on the Sagami Bay side of Kanagawa, the kind of municipality where the administration and the community overlap almost completely.

The staff who brought the complaints will continue to work in the same offices while the political consequences are worked out, which is the part of these cases that the procedure handles least well.

What the assembly does next is a matter for the assembly, and the mayor's response will determine how long that process takes.

SOCIETY

Jehovah's Witnesses Effectively Accept Blood Transfusions, Ending a Decades-Long Conflict With Japanese Medicine

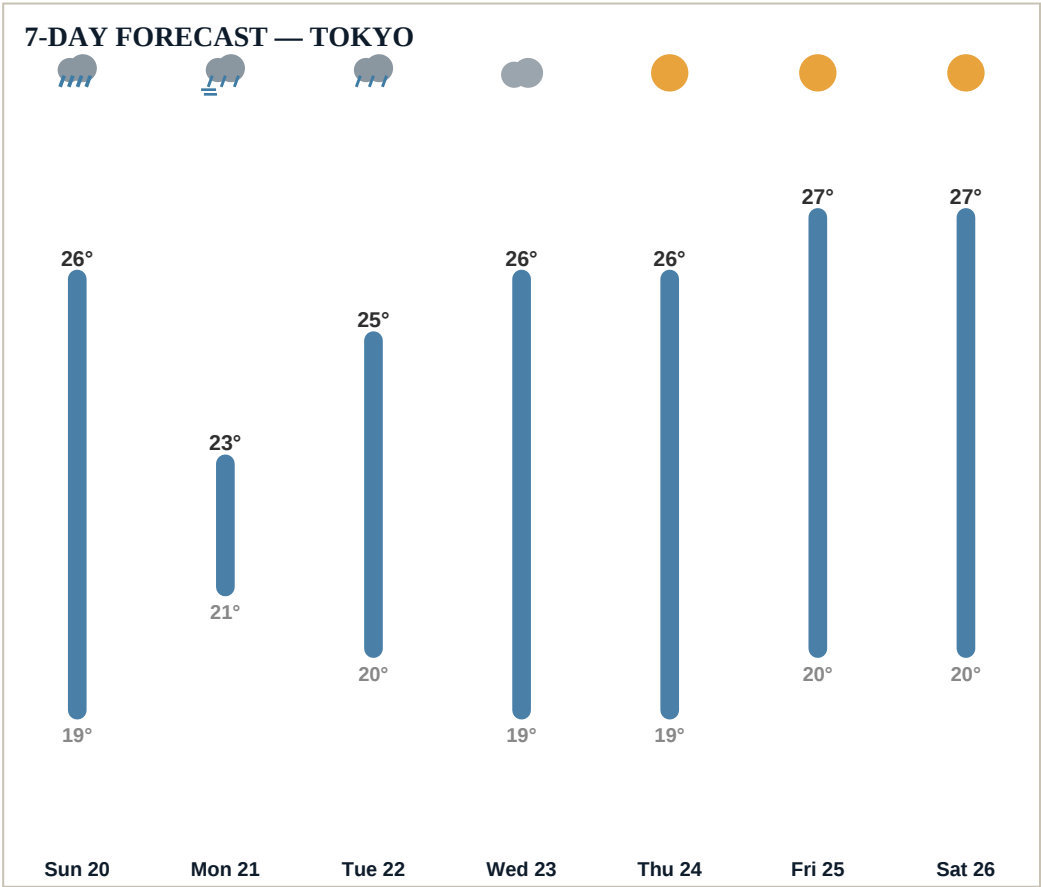
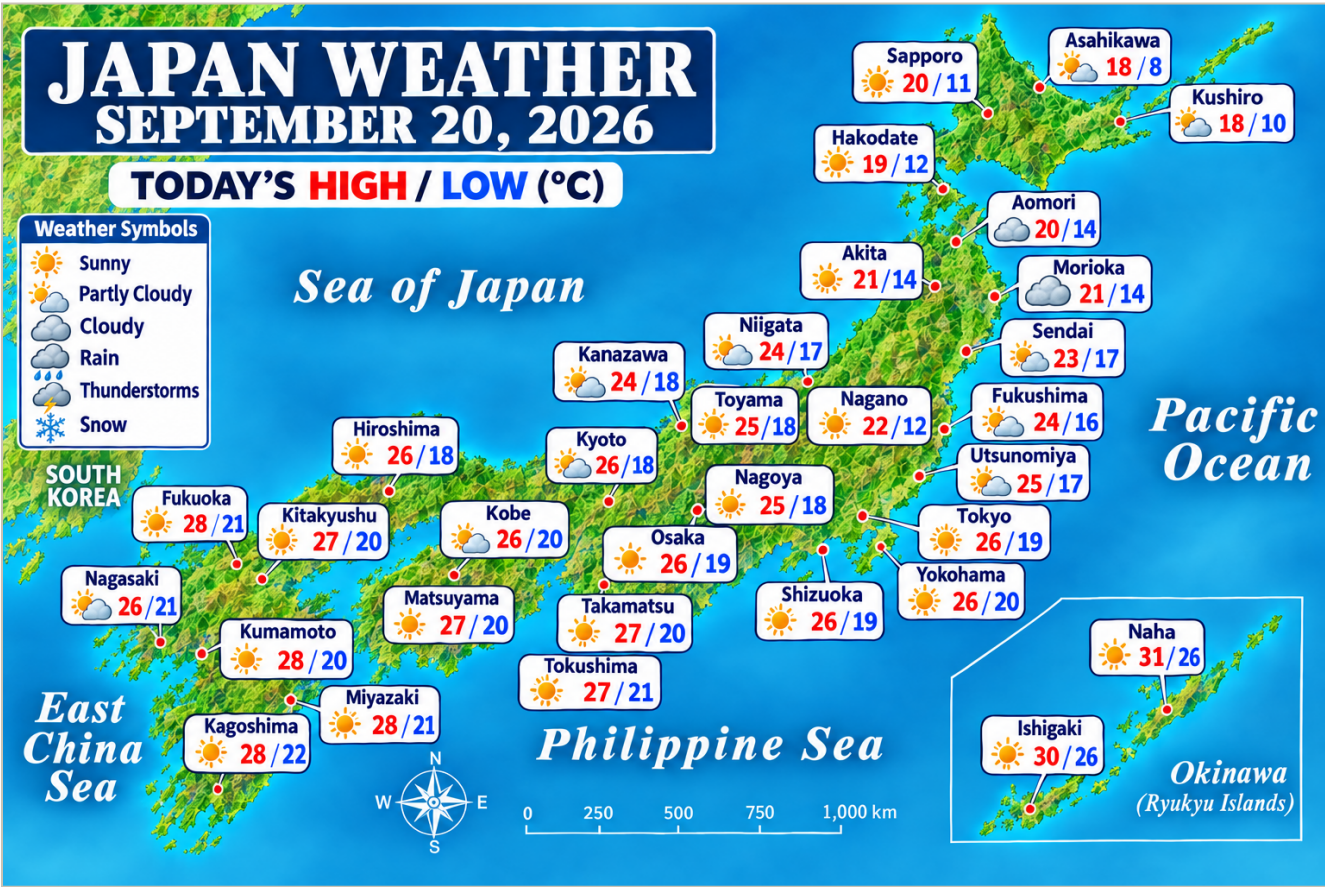
By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Jehovah's Witnesses have effectively come to condone blood transfusions, according to Yomiuri Shimbun, a change that resolves one of the longest-running conflicts between religious practice and medical treatment in Japan.

WEATHER & SOCIETY

26°C

Tokyo — Sunny, high 26°C; rain bands arrive this afternoon, storm-force winds Monday



TOKYO METROPOLITAN AREA — Sunday, September 20, 2026

Morning: Sunny and mild, the last clear hours before the rain bands arrive. Around 20°C at 7 a.m. Sunrise 5:28 a.m.

Afternoon: Sun giving way to cloud and then rain as the bands ahead of Typhoon No. 25 reach the region. High 26°C. Heavy rain of 30 millimetres an hour or more is expected along the coast.

Evening: Rain, locally intense, with the wind strengthening. Around 22°C by 9 p.m. Sunset 5:42 p.m. Train suspensions are possible across the metropolitan area from tonight.

Overnight: Rain continuing and becoming heavier, low 19°C. Gusts to 35 metres a second are possible in exposed areas.

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Sunday's map is almost uniformly bright, and it describes the morning rather than the day. High pressure holds clear weather from Hokkaido to Okinawa, with sun at Sapporo, Tokyo, Osaka and Naha and cloud confined to a handful of stations. Rain bands associated with Typhoon No. 25 are expected to reach the Kanto region this afternoon, according to NHK and the Japan Meteorological Agency, and the warning-level weather on the Pacific side begins after the temperatures on this chart have been reached.

Hokkaido has the coolest morning in the country, with Asahikawa down to 8°C, and is expected to see little direct effect from the storm. Western Japan is warm and settled, with Fukuoka, Kumamoto, Miyazaki and Kagoshima all at 28°C. Okinawa remains summer-like and sits outside the storm's northward track.

TYPHOON NO. 25

At midnight the Japan Meteorological Agency placed the centre of Typhoon No. 25 at 28.1 degrees north and 137.9 degrees east, with a central pressure of 970 hectopascals, a maximum sustained wind of 35 metres a second and gusts to 50 metres a second. Winds of 25 metres a second extended 110 kilometres in all directions; the gale field reached 750 kilometres to the north and 390 kilometres to the south.

The forecast track places the centre at 29.1 north and 137.5 east by noon today and at 30.5 north and 137.4 east by midnight, with the storm-warning radius widening from 155 to 175 kilometres. By 9 p.m. on Monday the agency expects the centre at 34.0 north and 140.1 east, deepened to 965 hectopascals, with a warning radius of 250 kilometres and a forecast circle of 100.

The storm is expected to approach Kanto and Tokai on the afternoon of Monday the 21st, with maximum instantaneous wind speeds that may reach 50 metres a second.

RAIN AND WIND

Until 6 p.m. today, 150 millimetres of rain is forecast for Kanto and Izu and 120 millimetres for Tokai. Until 6 p.m. on Monday, 300 millimetres is forecast for Kanto, Izu and Tokai, and 120 millimetres for

Tohoku. From noon today to noon on Monday, up to 200 millimetres is expected in parts of Kanto and Izu.

Maximum wind speeds of 25 metres a second with gusts of 35 are forecast for Kanto-Koshinetsu and Izu today, rising to gusts of 50 metres a second on Monday. Coastal areas may see average wind speeds above 20 metres a second. Waves of 5 to 8 metres with swells are forecast along the Izu and Kanto coasts.

TRANSPORT AND EVENTS

JR East has warned that services in the Tokyo metropolitan area may be suspended or delayed from this evening through to the early morning of Tuesday the 22nd. Roads may flood, and disruption is expected to expand from today as the wind strengthens. The Tokyo Game Show is being held today, with its final day on Monday cancelled. Rockin'On is proceeding today with its screens lowered, and a decision on Monday was to be announced by 1 p.m. today.

Fukushima Prefecture moves to a special alert posture from today. In the Ogasawara and Izu islands, high waves and strong winds are expected to persist after the storm has passed to the north, and vigilance is advised at Hachijojima.

TODAY'S HIGH / LOW BY REGION (°C)

Hokkaido — Sapporo 20/11 sunny, Asahikawa 18/8 partly cloudy, Kushiro 18/10 cloudy, Hakodate 19/12 sunny: the coolest air in the country under high pressure, with little direct effect expected from the typhoon.

Tohoku — Aomori 20/14 cloudy, Akita 21/14 sunny, Morioka 21/14 cloudy, Sendai 23/17 partly cloudy, Fukushima 24/16 cloudy: dry today, with 120 millimetres forecast for the region by tomorrow evening and a special alert posture in Fukushima from today.

Chubu & Hokuriku — Niigata 24/17 partly cloudy, Toyama 25/18 sunny, Kanazawa 24/18 partly cloudy, Nagano 22/12 sunny, Nagoya 25/18 sunny: fine on the Sea of Japan side and sunny at Nagoya for the Games' first full day of competition.

Kanto — Utsunomiya 25/17 partly cloudy, Tokyo 26/19 sunny, Yokohama 26/20 sunny, Shizuoka 26/19 sunny: a sunny morning before the rain bands arrive this afternoon, with 150 millimetres forecast in Kanto and Izu by 6 p.m.

Kansai — Kyoto 26/18 cloudy, Kobe 26/20 cloudy, Osaka 26/19 sunny: warm and settled, west of the storm's reach.

Chugoku — Hiroshima 26/18 sunny: sunny and warm.

Shikoku — Takamatsu 27/20 sunny, Tokushima 27/21 sunny, Matsuyama 27/20 sunny: sunny across all three stations.

Kyushu — Fukuoka 28/21 sunny, Kitakyushu 27/20 sunny, Nagasaki 26/21 partly cloudy, Kumamoto 28/20 sunny, Miyazaki 28/21 sunny, Kagoshima 28/22 sunny: the warmest air in the country, a day after landslides in Nichinan killed a woman in her 90s.

Okinawa — Naha 31/26 sunny, Ishigaki 30/26 sunny: clear and summer-like, outside the storm's track.

SEVEN-DAY OUTLOOK, TOKYO

Sunday: Sunny then rain from the afternoon, heavy along the coast, high 26°C, low 19°C. Monday (Respect for the Aged Day): Rain and storm-force winds as the typhoon approaches Kanto and Tokai, gusts possibly to 50 metres a second, high 23°C, low 21°C. Tuesday: Rain easing as the storm moves out to the east and begins its extratropical transition, high 25°C, low 20°C. Wednesday (Autumn Equinox): Cloudy and brighter, high 26°C, low 19°C. Thursday: Sunny, high 26°C, low 19°C. Friday: Sunny, high 27°C, low 20°C. Saturday: Sunny, high 27°C, low 20°C.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET

Tokyo: sunrise 5:28 a.m., sunset 5:42 p.m. Osaka: sunrise 5:46 a.m., sunset 6:00 p.m. Sapporo: sunrise 5:22 a.m., sunset 5:31 p.m. Naha: sunrise 6:20 a.m., sunset 6:27 p.m. The Autumn Equinox falls on Wednesday the 23rd, and Higan runs from today through Saturday.

TIDES, TOKYO BAY

High water 5:41 a.m. and 6:19 p.m.; low water 11:56 a.m. and 12:28 a.m. With the storm passing to the east of the bay, storm surge is possible in low-lying districts along the shore, and this evening's and tomorrow evening's high waters are the periods to watch.

The refusal of transfusions has been the denomination's most publicly known doctrine, and in Japan it produced a body of case law that shaped the country's understanding of medical consent.

The defining case reached the Supreme Court in 2000, which held that a patient's right to refuse a transfusion on religious grounds was a personal right that doctors could not override without informing her, after a hospital transfused a Witness patient during surgery without telling her it might.

That judgment is now taught as a foundation of informed consent in Japanese medicine, and its influence extends far beyond the religious question that produced it.

The hardest cases have always involved children, where a parent's religious objection meets a doctor's duty to a patient who cannot consent, and Japanese hospitals developed protocols that allow treatment to proceed in life-threatening circumstances.

Bloodless surgery techniques developed partly in response to those cases, and they have since been adopted more widely because they reduce transfusion requirements for every patient.

A change in the denomination's position removes a category of emergency-room conflict that hospitals have prepared for over decades, and it removes an agonising choice from families.

It also raises questions for members who made decisions under the previous teaching, including families who lost relatives in circumstances where a transfusion was refused.

Religious organisations in Japan have been under broader public scrutiny since the political controversies of recent years, and doctrinal changes now arrive in a more attentive environment than they once did.

For the medical profession the practical consequence is straightforward: a smaller number of the most difficult conversations that doctors have with families.

SOCIETY

Fake TikTok Apps Are Driving a Surge in PayPay Transfer Fraud

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Fraudulent applications impersonating TikTok are causing a surge in money transfer fraud involving PayPay, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

The mechanism common to this category of fraud is simple. A counterfeit application collects the credentials a victim enters, and those credentials are then used to move money out of a payment account that the victim believes is secure.

PayPay is the dominant cashless payment service in Japan, used at convenience stores, restaurants and small retailers across the country, which makes it the obvious target once fraudsters have credentials to use.

Japan moved to cashless payment later than most comparable economies and then moved quickly, which means a large number of users adopted these services as adults rather than growing up with them.

Counterfeit applications reach users through links in messages and advertisements rather than through the official app stores, and the impersonation of a well-known brand is what persuades people to install them.

Transfers between individuals, which these services make deliberately frictionless, are the feature the fraud exploits, since a completed transfer is difficult to reverse.

Two-factor authentication helps, and so does the habit of installing applications only from official stores, but neither protects a user who has typed their credentials into a convincing copy.

Payment providers monitor for anomalous transfer patterns and can freeze accounts, and the speed of that detection determines how much of a victim's money is recoverable.

Police in Japan have reported rising losses from online fraud of several kinds, and the investigative difficulty is that the proceeds move quickly through accounts opened under other people's names.

Users who believe they have installed a counterfeit application should change their credentials and contact the payment provider immediately, since the window in which a transfer can be stopped is measured in hours.

SOCIETY

Man, 74, Believed to Have Fallen to His Death on Mount Notori in Yamanashi

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

A 74-year-old man is believed to have fallen to his death on Mount Notori in Yamanashi Prefecture.

Mount Notori stands above 3,000 metres in the Southern Alps, on the ridge that runs south from Mount Kita, the second-highest peak in Japan.

The terrain is serious mountaineering country rather than a walking route. The approaches are long, the ridges are exposed, and the descents involve loose ground where a slip carries a long way.

Autumn is the season when the Southern Alps are at their most attractive and their most treacherous, with clear air and turning leaves above, and early frost and shortening daylight on the ground.

Japanese mountain accident statistics are consistently dominated by climbers in their sixties and seventies, a reflection of who is on the mountains rather than of any particular recklessness among them.

Mountain rescue in the Southern Alps is conducted by prefectural police teams with helicopter support, and weather is the binding constraint on how quickly they can reach a casualty.

That constraint is about to tighten. Typhoon No. 25's approach will bring heavy rain and strong winds to central Honshu from today, which affects both flying and ground access.

Climbers are required to submit mountaineering plans, a system that transforms a search across an entire massif into a search along a known route and that has repeatedly shortened response times.

The Southern Alps receive fewer climbers than the more accessible Northern Alps, which means longer gaps between parties on any given route and less chance that an accident is witnessed.

Police will confirm the circumstances once recovery is complete, and the weather will determine when that is possible.

SOCIETY

Sunday's Map: Sun From Hokkaido to Okinawa, and a Rain Band Due This Afternoon

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Sunday's weather map shows sun across most of the country and gives no hint of the afternoon, which is the most useful thing to understand about it.

Hokkaido is clear and cool, with Sapporo sunny at 20 degrees and 11, Hakodate sunny at 19, Asahikawa partly cloudy at 18 and 8, and Kushiro cloudy at 18, the coldest morning figures on the chart.

Tohoku is mixed, with Akita sunny at 21, Aomori cloudy at 20, Morioka cloudy at 21, Sendai partly cloudy at 23 and Fukushima cloudy at 24 on the day the prefecture moves to a special alert posture.

Kanto is sunny on the map, with Tokyo at 26 and 19, Yokohama at 26 and 20, and Utsunomiya partly cloudy at 25, which describes the morning rather than the evening.

The rain bands associated with Typhoon No. 25 are expected to reach the region this afternoon, with heavy rain of 30 millimetres an hour or more along the coast, and 150 millimetres in Kanto and Izu by six o'clock.

Central Honshu is fine, with Nagano sunny at 22 and 12, Toyama sunny at 25, Kanazawa and Niigata partly cloudy at 24, and Nagoya sunny at 25 for the Games' first full day of competition.

Shizuoka is sunny at 26 this morning, on the Tokai coast where 120 millimetres is expected by this evening and 300 by tomorrow.

Kansai and western Japan are warm and clear, with Osaka sunny at 26, Kyoto cloudy at 26, Kobe cloudy at 26, Hiroshima sunny at 26, and Fukuoka the warmest of the major cities at 28.

Kyushu is sunny throughout, with Kumamoto, Miyazaki and Kagoshima all at 28, a day after landslides in Nichinan killed a woman in her 90s.

Shikoku is sunny across all three stations, at 27 in Matsuyama, Takamatsu and Tokushima, and Okinawa is summer-like with Naha at 31 and Ishigaki at 30.

A map this uniformly bright ahead of a typhoon is a reminder that the chart shows the day's temperatures, not its timeline.

SOCIETY

Gusts of 35 Metres a Second Today, 50 Tomorrow, and Waves to Eight Metres

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Maximum wind speeds of 25 metres a second with gusts of 35 are forecast for the Kanto-Koshinetsu region and Izu today, rising to gusts of 50 metres a second tomorrow, with coastal areas possibly seeing average wind speeds above 20 metres a second.

Waves of 5 to 8 metres with swells are forecast along the Izu and Kanto coasts, which is a sea state that closes ports, suspends ferries and makes coastal roads dangerous.

The distinction between average wind speed and gust matters for what breaks. Structures are designed against sustained loads, and gusts are what remove the roof tiles, signage and scaffolding that fail first.

At 25 metres a second, walking becomes difficult and trains on exposed sections stop. At 35, unsecured objects become projectiles. At 50, a figure now forecast for Monday, poorly anchored roofs lift and vehicles are pushed across lanes.

Swells are the component that catches people out. They arrive ahead of the storm, travel further than its winds, and produce the calm-looking sea that draws spectators onto breakwaters before a wave takes one of them.

Coastal fatalities during typhoon approaches in Japan recur in exactly that pattern, and the advice not to go and look at the sea is issued before every storm and ignored before most of them.

Ogasawara and Izu will keep their high waves and strong winds even after the typhoon has moved north, and vigilance is advised at Hachijojima and the other inhabited islands.

The Izu Islands sit closest to the forecast track, and their ferry links to the mainland will be the first services suspended and the last restored.

Wind damage compounds rain damage. A tree brought down across a road that is already flooded blocks a route that emergency vehicles need, which is how a storm's effects multiply.

Securing anything loose outside, today while the sky is still clear, is the single most useful hour a household in the region can spend.

SOCIETY

Joban Line Train Strikes a Bear; Services Resume After Midnight

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

A train on the Joban Line temporarily suspended services after striking a bear, resuming operation shortly after midnight on Sunday, according to Kyodo News.

Collisions with deer and wild boar are routine on rural Japanese lines. Bears are not, and their appearance on the network is part of a broader change in where Japan's bears are living.

Bear encounters have risen sharply in recent years, with animals moving into farmland and settlements as the human population of rural districts declines and the abandoned fields between forest and town disappear.

Poor mast years, when the acorns and beech nuts that bears depend on fail, push them further in search of food, and autumn is when that pressure peaks.

The consequences have included fatal attacks, school closures and, in Iwate this week, thirteen people injured when a student discharged bear spray at a junior high school, an incident that shows how routine carrying repellent has become.

For railway operators a strike of this kind means an immediate stop, an inspection of the train's undercarriage and brakes, and a delay while the line is cleared.

Resuming shortly after midnight indicates that the inspection found no damage requiring repair, which is the best of the available outcomes.

The Joban Line runs north from Tokyo through Ibaraki and Fukushima along the Pacific coast, through exactly the kind of country where wildlife

reaches the tracks.

Wildlife management in Japan has become a contested policy area, balancing culls, habitat management and the practical reality that rural municipalities have fewer hunters every year.

The line is running normally again, ahead of a storm that will test it for different reasons from this evening.

SOCIETY

Earthquake Registers Intensity 3 in Kumamoto and Kagoshima

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

An earthquake registered a maximum seismic intensity of 3 in the Amakusa and Ashikita areas of Kumamoto Prefecture and the Satsuma area of Kagoshima Prefecture.

Intensity 3 on Japan's ten-step scale describes shaking felt by most people indoors, with hanging objects swinging and dishes rattling, and it very rarely causes damage.

The scale measures the shaking experienced at a location rather than the energy released at the source, which is why a single earthquake produces different intensity readings across a region.

Kyushu's seismicity is driven by a complex set of faults running through the island, distinct from the subduction zone that produces the largest earthquakes off the Pacific coast of Honshu.

The 2016 Kumamoto earthquakes originated in that inland fault system and caused extensive damage, and the region has remained under attentive monitoring since.

The Kyushu Shinkansen resumed full services this weekend, 52 days after this year's Kumamoto earthquake, which gives an intensity 3 in the same prefecture a resonance beyond its actual force.

Residents in areas with recently repaired structures are advised after any felt earthquake to check for new damage, since repairs can be tested by shaking that an undamaged building would shrug off.

The meteorological agency publishes intensity readings within minutes and issues tsunami assessments immediately for offshore events, and no tsunami advisory accompanied this one.

Kyushu's weather today is clear and warm, with Kumamoto and Kagoshima both at 28 degrees, and the island's more pressing hazards this weekend have been the landslides in Miyazaki.

Aftershocks of a small event of this kind are normally smaller still and are not usually felt.

SOCIETY

Fukushima Moves to a Special Alert Posture Ahead of Monday's Closest Approach

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Fukushima Prefecture moves to a special alert posture from today, with the typhoon's closest approach expected on Monday, placing the prefecture's disaster machinery on standby before the rain arrives.

A prefectural alert posture means staff are recalled, a response headquarters is prepared, and the liaison lines between the prefecture, the municipalities and the meteorological office are staffed continuously.

Municipalities issue the evacuation orders that actually reach households, and the prefecture's role is to supply information, coordinate between towns and request support from the national government or the Self-Defense Forces if it is needed.

The forecast gives Fukushima 120 millimetres of rain in the Tohoku total by six o'clock on Monday evening, less than Kanto's 300 but falling on terrain with its own vulnerabilities.

Fukushima's geography runs from a Pacific coastal plain through a central valley to mountains on its western side, and each of those three bands responds differently to heavy rain.

The prefecture also carries the legacy of 2011, with decommissioning work at the Fukushima Daiichi site and a continuing programme of coastal and river infrastructure repair.

Heavy rain events in the years since have repeatedly tested rivers in the prefecture, and several of the most damaging floods of the past decade in Tohoku occurred in its river basins.

The Joban Line, which runs the length of the prefecture's coast, suspended services overnight after a train struck a bear and is one of the routes most exposed to the storm from this evening.

Residents are being told the same thing as everyone else on the Pacific side: check the hazard map, know the evacuation site, and move at Level 3 if moving will take time.

The prefecture will escalate from alert to a full response headquarters if the rain totals develop as forecast.

SOCIETY

How to Read the Track Map on Today's Front Page

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The chart on today's front page plots Typhoon No. 25 from two forecasting centres at once, and the two tracks tell slightly different stories for reasons that are worth understanding.

The red line is the Japan Meteorological Agency's, whose wind figures are averaged over ten minutes. The blue line is the American Joint Typhoon Warning Center's, whose figures are averaged over one minute and are therefore always higher for the same storm.

A one-minute average captures gusts that a ten-minute average smooths out. When the agency says 35 metres a second and the American centre says 65 knots, which is about 33 metres a second, the two are describing the same storm with different instruments.

The shaded circles are not rain. The darker inner shading is the agency's storm-warning field, where winds of 25 metres a second or more are analysed or forecast, and the lighter outer shading is the gale field at 15 metres a second.

The dotted circles on the plot are the American centre's 34-knot radii, which are its equivalent measure over open water.

Those fields are not symmetrical, and today's analysis makes the point clearly: winds of 15 metres a second extend 750 kilometres to the north of the centre and 390 to the south.

A gale field stretching that far ahead is why the weather in Kanto today does not wait for the centre to arrive. The rain band reaching the region this afternoon is roughly a thousand kilometres from the eye.

The small dashed circle near Tokyo on Monday is the forecast circle, the area within which the centre is expected to lie at that time, and it is 100 kilometres across for the 9 p.m. position on Monday.

That is a tight circle for a forecast 45 hours ahead, which indicates unusual confidence in the track among the forecasters who drew it.

The centre need not follow the line joining the circles, which is why the agency prints that caution on its own products. A track is a forecast of positions, not a road.

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Why the Rain Arrives a Thousand Kilometres Ahead of the Eye

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The single most useful number in this morning's typhoon bulletin is not the central pressure. It is the shape of the wind field: 750 kilometres of gale-force reach to the north of the centre, and 390 to the south.

A storm approaching Japan from the south in autumn is almost always lopsided in exactly this way, and the reason is the autumn rain front that sits across or near the country for much of September.

The typhoon's circulation draws warm, extremely moist air northward on its eastern side. When that air reaches the front, it is lifted, and lifting moist air is the entire mechanism of heavy rain.

The result is a rain band that forms hundreds of kilometres ahead of the storm and belongs, technically, to the front rather than to the typhoon. It falls on people who can look at a satellite image and see the storm still far out to sea.

That is what Weathernews means when it says rain will intensify at the front before the typhoon approaches, and it is why 150 millimetres is forecast for Kanto and Izu by six o'clock this evening.

The same mechanism killed a woman in Nichinan on Saturday. Miyazaki is nowhere near the forecast

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track, and it received a rainband produced by the flow the storm is driving.

Rain of this origin is also harder to forecast in location than the storm's own rain, because the front's position is set by the atmosphere's larger pattern rather than by the typhoon.

Forecasters compensate by issuing warnings for wide areas, which is safer and produces the familiar complaint that the warning covered a region where nothing happened.

When the centre itself arrives on Monday, the wind becomes the leading hazard and the rain continues, which is why the totals through six o'clock on Monday evening reach 300 millimetres.

For a household, the practical translation is simple: the dangerous weather starts this afternoon, not tomorrow.

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What a Gust of 50 Metres a Second Actually Does

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The forecast for Monday includes maximum instantaneous wind speeds that may reach 50 metres a second, a figure the meteorological agency has published two days ahead, which is itself unusual.

Fifty metres a second is 180 kilometres an hour. The force a wind exerts rises with the square of its speed, so a 50-metre gust pushes roughly four times as hard as a 25-metre wind and nine times as hard as a 17-metre one.

At 20 metres a second, walking into the wind becomes difficult and umbrellas fail. At 25, unsecured scaffolding and signage start to move, and railways stop trains on exposed sections.

At 30 to 35, roof tiles lift, older wooden structures lose cladding, and vehicles on bridges and viaducts are pushed within their lanes.

At 40 to 50, poorly anchored roofs come off entirely, utility poles fail where they have been weakened, and a vehicle crossing an exposed span can be pushed out of its lane.

Japanese building standards are among the most demanding in the world for both earthquakes and wind, and a modern building will not be damaged structurally by a gust of this size.

What fails is everything attached to buildings rather than part of them: signage, antennas, air conditioning units, temporary fencing, scaffolding and the objects on balconies that their owners forgot.

That is the reasoning behind the standard advice to secure loose items outside, which sounds trivial and is the source of most typhoon injuries that are not caused by water.

Glass is the second hazard. A flying object breaking a window admits the wind, and a room that fills with pressure can lose its ceiling, which is why taping or shuttering matters more than it appears to.

The forecast gusts for today, 35 metres a second in Kanto-Koshinetsu and Izu, are already in the range at which things start coming loose.

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Three Hundred Millimetres Onto Ground That Is Already Full

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The rainfall figures for this storm, 150 millimetres in Kanto and Izu by this evening and 300 by six o'clock on Monday, are large in absolute terms and larger in context.

Three hundred millimetres is roughly a month's September rain for the Kanto region, delivered across two days.

The context is the ground. Eastern Japan has had a month of unusually persistent rain, which delayed the rice harvest by weeks and left the soil holding much of what has already fallen.

The quantity that governs landslide risk is not the rainfall total but the soil water index, a calculated measure of how much water the ground is currently storing, and it rises faster from a wet start.

When that index crosses a threshold, slopes fail. This is why the landslide warnings that preceded Saturday's fatal slides in Nichinan were issued for an area rather than for a hillside.

River response works the same way. Saturated catchments send a much larger share of rainfall straight into streams instead of absorbing it, which

compresses the time between the rain falling and the river rising.

Urban flooding has a shorter fuse still. Tokyo's drainage is designed to a defined intensity, and rain of 30 millimetres an hour or more, which Weathernews forecasts for the Kanto coast today, exceeds what many local systems can carry away.

The underpasses on the transport ministry's restricted list are where that surplus collects first, and three people died in submerged vehicles in Chiba and Fukushima earlier this month.

The capital's largest defences, the underground discharge channels and reservoirs north of Tokyo, are designed for river flooding rather than for street-level surface water, and they cannot help a flooded underpass.

By Monday evening, if the forecast holds, the region will have taken a month's rain onto ground that had not finished draining the last of it.

SOCIETY

Level 3 Means Go: How the Alert Scale Is Meant to Be Used

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Japan's municipal disaster alerts run on a five-level scale, and the most common mistake households make is to treat the numbers as a countdown rather than as instructions.

Level 1 is preparatory information from the meteorological agency. Level 2 advises residents to check evacuation procedures and routes.

Level 3 calls for older residents, people with disabilities and anyone who needs extra time to evacuate. Level 4 instructs everyone in the designated area to evacuate. Level 5 means a disaster is already occurring or is imminent.

The entire design rests on acting at Level 3 or 4. Level 5 exists to describe a situation, not to trigger a movement, because by the time it is issued the routes are often impassable.

Disaster officials have said this after every recent flood, and post-event surveys keep finding the same behaviour: residents wait, watch the rain, and decide that their own street looks manageable.

Evacuation does not necessarily mean a school gymnasium. It can mean a relative's house on higher ground, a hotel, or the upper floor of a solid building, and municipalities have increasingly promoted those options.

For residents of the low-lying wards along Tokyo Bay, and for anyone whose hazard map shows a landslide warning zone behind their house, the decision should be made today rather than tomorrow.

The Level 3 threshold exists precisely because moving an elderly relative takes time, and because most of the people who die in Japanese floods and landslides are elderly.

Saturday's victim in Nichinan was a woman in her 90s, which is the demographic pattern these events repeat almost without exception.

Monday is Respect for the Aged Day, and the most useful thing a family can do for an older relative on the Pacific side of the country today is telephone them about the hazard map.

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Why Japan Calls It Number 25 and Everyone Else Calls It Something Else

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The storm approaching Honshu is Typhoon No. 25 in Japan, T2625 in the regional numbering system, and Dujuan on the international name list, and all three refer to the same system.

Japan numbers typhoons in the order they form within the calendar year in the western North Pacific basin, which is why the number rises through the season and resets each January.

The four-digit designation, in this case 2625, encodes the year and the sequence, and it is the form used in the technical bulletins the meteorological agency issues.

The names come from a list contributed by the fourteen members of the regional typhoon committee, with each country submitting names drawn from its own language and culture, and they are used in rotation.

Japan's own contributions to that list are constellation names, which was a deliberate choice to avoid using personal names for destructive storms.

Japanese broadcasters and newspapers use the number almost exclusively, because a number conveys the position in the season and a name does not, and because the numbering is what official bulletins lead with.

Names that are attached to particularly destructive storms are retired from the list and replaced, as they are in the Atlantic, so that a name is not reused for a disaster people remember.

The international designation matters for shipping, aviation and cross-border forecasting, where a storm crossing several national forecasting areas needs one identifier that everyone recognises.

The American Joint Typhoon Warning Center uses its own numbering for the same systems, which is why the front-page chart carries a warning number alongside the Japanese issuance time.

For a household in Kanto the only designation that matters is the one on the warning, and this weekend that is Number 25.

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The Planned Suspension: Why Railways Now Announce Before the Storm

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

JR East's warning that services may be suspended from this evening to early Tuesday follows a practice Japanese railways adopted after a series of storms in which trains stopped where they were and passengers stayed with them.

The policy is called planned suspension, and its logic is that an announced cancellation, made early, is safer and less disruptive than an unplanned halt in the middle of a network.

Before it was adopted, operators kept running as long as conditions allowed, which meant services stopped at the worst moment and left tens of thousands of people in stations with no way home.

Announcing in advance lets passengers make other arrangements, lets operators position rolling stock where it will not be damaged, and lets staff be stationed where they will be needed.

The thresholds are technical. Sustained wind above roughly 25 metres a second stops trains on elevated and coastal sections, and rainfall thresholds apply per line according to the terrain the track crosses.

With gusts of 50 metres a second forecast for Monday and heavy rain from this afternoon, both kinds of threshold are in play across the Kanto network.

The thirty-six-hour window JR East has described is long because the storm is slow, and because restarting a network requires inspecting the track before the first train runs on it.

Passengers should expect specific announcements today naming lines and times, which is how the policy is meant to work.

Airlines publish their cancellations on a similar cycle, usually the evening before, and the airports serving Tokyo will make Monday's decisions today.

The policy has been criticised for cancelling services on days when the storm underperformed, which is the price of a system designed to fail safe.

SOCIETY

Fifty-Two Days of Track Work Behind a Single Timetable Announcement

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

The Kyushu Shinkansen's full resumption of service, 52 days after the Kumamoto earthquake, is the product of an inspection and repair process that is mostly invisible to the passengers who benefit from it.

High-speed track is built to tolerances measured in millimetres, because a train at 260 kilometres an hour amplifies any irregularity in the rail's alignment into a force on the vehicle and its passengers.

An earthquake displaces the structures that carry the track, and the damage is often not visible from a passing inspection vehicle, which is why recovery involves surveying each viaduct, pier and bearing.

Repairs to elevated structures require jacking, grouting and in some cases replacement of bearings,

all conducted in the gaps between other work on a line that cannot be worked on while trains run.

Certification then follows, with test runs at progressively higher speeds until the line is cleared for normal operation.

The 2016 Kumamoto earthquakes derailed an out-of-service train and closed the line for about six weeks, and the experience of that recovery shaped both the inspection protocol and the expectations for this one.

Japanese railways design for earthquakes rather than hoping to avoid them, with detection systems that cut power on the first tremors and structural details intended to keep a derailed train upright and on the viaduct.

For the communities along the line, the two months of closure meant longer journeys by bus and conventional rail for everything from hospital appointments to university terms.

Reopening in time for the Silver Week holiday restores a travel option for the busiest week of the domestic autumn, for the half of the country not facing a typhoon.

Monitoring of the repaired sections continues after reopening, as it does on any line returned to service following structural work.

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A Bear on the Joban Line, and a Country Renegotiating Its Boundary With the Forest

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

A train striking a bear on the Joban Line overnight, suspending services until shortly after midnight, is a small event in a large and accelerating pattern.

Bear encounters in Japan have risen sharply over the past decade, with sightings, property damage and attacks all increasing, and several prefectures now issue bear warnings as routinely as they issue weather advisories.

The cause is a change in the land between forest and town. Rural depopulation has emptied the villages, fields and managed woodland that once formed a buffer, and that buffer is now scrub the animals move through.

Food supply drives the annual variation. In poor mast years, when acorns and beech nuts fail, bears range far further in search of calories, and autumn is when that search peaks.

The consequences have included fatal attacks in several prefectures, school closures, and, at an Iwate junior high school this week, thirteen people injured when a student discharged bear spray indoors.

That last incident says something about how ordinary carrying repellent has become in parts of the country where it would have been unthinkable a generation ago.

Management is constrained by the people available to do it. The hunting population is ageing and shrinking, and municipalities that once relied on local hunters' associations increasingly cannot.

Culls are contested, with urban opinion generally less supportive than rural, and prefectural governments caught between residents who want the animals removed and correspondents who object.

For railways, a wildlife strike means an immediate stop, an inspection and a delay, and the Joban Line's resumption shortly after midnight indicates the train was undamaged.

The line runs north along the Pacific coast through Ibaraki and Fukushima, and from this evening it will be dealing with a different hazard entirely.

SOCIETY

Japan Went Cashless Quickly, and the Fraud Followed

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The surge in PayPay transfer fraud driven by counterfeit applications impersonating TikTok is a symptom of how fast Japan's payment habits changed.

Japan remained a cash economy long after comparable countries had moved on, with high cash usage sustained by low crime, dense ATM networks and a cultural preference for the tangible.

The shift came quickly when it came, driven by aggressive promotion from payment platforms, consumption tax rebate schemes that rewarded

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cashless payment, and the pandemic's preference for contactless transactions.

The result is a large population of users who adopted these services as adults, without the years of exposure to online fraud patterns that users in other markets accumulated gradually.

Counterfeit applications reach people through links in messages and advertisements rather than through official app stores, and impersonating a well-known service is what persuades someone to install one.

Once credentials are captured, the peer-to-peer transfer function that makes these services convenient becomes the mechanism that empties the account, and a completed transfer is difficult to reverse.

Platforms monitor for anomalous patterns and can freeze accounts, so the speed of reporting determines how much is recoverable, and the useful window is hours rather than days.

Two-factor authentication helps, though it does not protect a user who has typed a one-time code into the same counterfeit screen that asked for the password.

Police have reported rising losses from online fraud of several kinds, and the proceeds move rapidly through accounts opened in other people's names, which makes recovery difficult even when the fraud is detected.

The practical advice is unglamorous: install from official stores only, treat any unexpected link as hostile, and contact the provider immediately if something looks wrong.

SOCIETY

Respect for the Aged Day Arrives With a Storm and a Record Number of Centenarians

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Monday is Respect for the Aged Day, and it will be observed across the eastern half of the country under a typhoon forecast to make its closest approach that afternoon.

The holiday's origins are municipal rather than national. It began in a Hyogo village in the postwar years as a day to honour older residents and was adopted nationally in 1966.

It now falls on the third Monday of September, a scheduling change made to create long weekends, which this year produced a five-day break that the weather is dismantling.

The centenarian population passed 100,000 this month, a figure that has risen every year for more than half a century and that gives the holiday a statistical weight it lacked when it was created.

The policy context is less celebratory. The health ministry is considering raising long-term care insurance premiums for high-income residents aged 65 and over, and the system's funding has been adjusted repeatedly since it began in 2000.

Care staffing remains the constraint that money does not solve, with pay trailing the national average and waiting lists persisting in metropolitan areas despite expanded facility capacity.

The holiday is traditionally marked by family visits, municipal ceremonies and gifts, and this year the visits in Kanto and Tokai face a rail network under a suspension warning.

There is a more urgent connection between the holiday and the storm. Older residents are consistently the majority of those killed in Japanese floods and landslides, including the woman in her 90s who died in Nichinan on Saturday.

The alert system's Level 3 exists specifically for people who need extra time to evacuate, and the most useful family observance available this weekend is a telephone call about the hazard map.

Higan, which began today, adds its own visits to the same disrupted week, and both will be pushed toward the improving second half of it.

SOCIETY

The Izu Islands Take the Storm First, and Keep It Longest

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

High waves and strong winds are expected to persist in the Ogasawara and Izu islands even after Typhoon No. 25 has moved north, with vigilance advised at Hachijojima and the other inhabited islands.

The Izu Islands run in a line south of Tokyo and belong administratively to the metropolitan

government, which means the capital's disaster machinery covers territory hundreds of kilometres out in the Pacific.

They lie close to the forecast track, which passes to their west before turning north toward Kanto, placing them in the storm's eastern semicircle where the winds are strongest.

Waves of 5 to 8 metres with swells are forecast along the Izu and Kanto coasts, and for island communities that sea state closes the ports.

Closed ports mean no ferries, and the ferry is how most of what the islands consume arrives, which is why island households prepare for storms in ways mainland ones do not.

Air services to Hachijojima and Oshima are equally weather-dependent, and a storm of this size typically suspends both routes for its passage and for some hours after.

Swells outlast the wind. Long-period waves generated by a storm keep arriving at a coast long after the system that made them has gone, which is why the vigilance advice extends past the typhoon.

Ogasawara, a thousand kilometres south, took the storm's closest approach on Saturday, with seven-metre waves and winds above 25 metres a second.

Those islands are reached only by a ferry from Tokyo that takes about twenty-four hours and sails roughly weekly, so their population rides out every storm where it is.

Both island groups will be assessing damage before the mainland has finished experiencing the same storm.

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After Tuesday the Storm Stops Being a Typhoon and Keeps Raining

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The forecast track carries Typhoon No. 25 northeast and out over the ocean after its approach to Kanto and Tokai, weakening as it goes, and at some point in that journey it will stop being a typhoon.

The change is called extratropical transition, and it describes a change in the storm's engine rather than its disappearance.

A typhoon is driven by heat released as water vapour condenses over warm ocean, which is why these systems weaken over cold water and over land.

An extratropical cyclone runs on a different mechanism: the temperature contrast between air masses, which drives the ordinary low-pressure systems that cross Japan all winter.

During the transition a storm often expands. The wind field spreads over a much larger area even as peak winds near the centre fall, which means a weakening storm can affect more people than it did at its strongest.

Rainfall frequently continues or intensifies along the fronts that develop during transition, which is why forecasters warn that an extratropical cyclone is not a safe one.

The Japan Meteorological Agency's track has the system at 30 metres a second early next week as it moves over the ocean northeast of Japan, and the American centre expects 55 knots by Wednesday morning.

Northern Japan, including Tohoku and Hokkaido, is where a transitioning storm produces surprises, because the expanded wind field reaches regions the track never approached.

Tohoku's forecast total of 120 millimetres by Monday evening reflects that expansion rather than any close approach.

The storm should be well out over the Pacific by midweek, leaving the Autumn Equinox on Wednesday on the improving side of the system.

SOCIETY

The Underpass List, and Why a Car Is the Dangerous Place in a Flood

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The transport ministry's expanded list of restricted underpasses, published last week after three deaths in submerged vehicles in Chiba and Fukushima, becomes operational advice this afternoon.

Roads may flood from today as the rain intensifies, according to tenki.jp and Sankei News, with heavy

rain of 30 millimetres an hour or more forecast along the Kanto coast.

Underpasses fill faster than any other part of a road network because they are the low point by design, and water reaching them has nowhere else to go.

A driver approaching one at night, in rain, cannot judge the depth. Water that looks like a puddle across the carriageway can be deep enough to float a vehicle.

Thirty centimetres of moving water is enough to lift a car. Sixty is enough to carry it. Both are depths a driver would describe afterward as having looked shallow.

Once water reaches the door sill, external pressure makes the door effectively impossible to open, which is the mechanism by which vehicles become traps.

Electric windows fail when the electrical system floods, which is why safety advice includes carrying a tool that can break side glass and knowing where it is.

The instruction that matters comes earlier than any of that: do not enter standing water of unknown depth, and turn around rather than attempt to judge it.

The ministry's list identifies the locations that flood first, and municipalities close them once rainfall passes defined thresholds, though closures depend on staff reaching barriers in the same weather.

Anyone who must drive in the region this evening should check the list before setting out and should assume the road they took this morning may not be usable tonight.

SOCIETY

How Japan Is Supposed to Catch Abuse at a Kindergarten

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The identification of eleven cases of abuse at a Niigata City kindergarten raises the question of how such conduct is meant to be detected, and where the system failed.

Japanese childcare facilities are licensed, with staffing ratios, qualification requirements and physical standards set in regulation, and they are inspected by the authority that licenses them.

Inspections are largely scheduled and documentary, checking records, ratios and facilities rather than observing conduct over the long periods in which conduct reveals itself.

The mechanism that is supposed to catch behaviour is reporting. Staff who suspect abuse are obliged to notify the authorities, and that obligation overrides any duty of confidentiality to an employer.

It works only where an employee believes reporting will produce action rather than retaliation, which is a matter of institutional culture that no inspection measures.

Sector conditions make that culture harder to sustain. Childcare pay trails the national average, turnover is high, and a facility running at minimum qualified staffing has no margin when someone leaves.

Parents are the other detection route, and small children are unreliable reporters of what happened to them, which is why patterns are usually identified across several families rather than one.

Where cases are confirmed, consequences run on two tracks: criminal investigation of individuals, and licensing action against the facility by the authority that licensed it.

Reforms in recent years have increased reporting requirements and strengthened the authorities' powers, generally in response to cases like this one rather than in anticipation of them.

The examination in Niigata will focus on how long the conduct continued and who knew, which is the question every such case ends on.

SOCIETY

What to Do Today, While the Sky Is Still the One on the Map

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Today's map shows sun over Tokyo at 26 degrees, and the rain bands are due this afternoon. The hours before they arrive are the useful ones.

The first task is the hazard map, which shows a household's exposure to river flooding, storm surge and landslide, along with the designated evacuation site and the route there.

The second is outside. Anything loose on a balcony or in a garden becomes a projectile at the gust speeds forecast for Monday, and securing it takes an hour today and is impossible tomorrow.

The third is supplies. Water, food that needs no cooking, batteries, a radio and charged power banks cover the most likely disruption, which is a power cut rather than an evacuation.

Power cuts follow wind rather than rain, and they are most likely tomorrow afternoon when the gusts peak. A torch that can be found in the dark is worth more than a drawer of candles.

The fourth is the bath. Filling it provides water for sanitation if supply is interrupted, a standard piece of Japanese disaster advice that costs nothing.

The fifth is travel. JR East has warned of suspensions from this evening to Tuesday morning, and anyone whose Monday depends on a train should rearrange today, while the trains are running.

For households with older relatives on the Pacific side, a telephone call about the hazard map and the evacuation route is the most effective thing available, since older residents are consistently the majority of flood and landslide casualties.

Insurance documents and identification in a waterproof bag is a ten-minute job that people who have been flooded recommend to everyone who has not.

None of this assumes the worst case. It assumes an afternoon of heavy rain, a day of strong wind and a possible power cut, which is what the forecast actually describes.

SOCIETY

Advisory, Warning, Emergency Warning: The Words That Will Be Used Today

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The Japan Meteorological Agency issues its alerts in three grades, and the difference between them is the difference between an inconvenience and a threat to life.

An advisory is the lowest grade, issued when conditions may cause damage. It covers heavy rain, strong wind, high waves, thunderstorms and a dozen other categories, and several are usually in force somewhere in the country on any given day.

A warning is the second grade, issued when serious damage is expected. Municipalities use warnings as one of the triggers for their own evacuation decisions, and transport operators use them in setting service thresholds.

An emergency warning is the third and newest grade, introduced in 2013 after a series of disasters in which conventional warnings had not conveyed the scale of what was coming.

It is issued only for phenomena on a scale seen roughly once in several decades, and the agency's own description of it is blunt: take action to protect your life immediately.

The grades are issued for specific municipalities rather than for prefectures, which is why two neighbouring towns can be under different alerts during the same storm.

Separate from the agency's scale, prefectures and municipalities operate their own response postures, which is what Fukushima Prefecture entered today ahead of Monday's closest approach.

Municipal evacuation information runs on the five-level scale, and the two systems are deliberately linked, with Level 4 evacuation orders commonly issued alongside a warning.

Landslide alert information and flood forecasts are issued jointly by the agency and prefectural governments, because the river data belongs to the prefecture and the rainfall data to the agency.

By this evening, most of the Pacific side of eastern Japan is expected to be under warnings of one kind or another, and the word to listen for through Monday is the third one.

SOCIETY

The Linear Rainband, and Why Forecasters Started Naming It

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The term linear rainband entered ordinary Japanese weather vocabulary only in the past decade, and it now appears in forecasts before almost every serious

SOCIETY

rain disaster here.

It describes a band of thunderstorms that forms in a line and then stays in place, with new cells developing continuously at one end while older ones decay at the other.

The effect is that rain which would normally pass over a district in twenty minutes falls on it for hours, because the band regenerates faster than it moves.

Totals of 200 to 300 millimetres in a few hours are possible under a band of this kind, which is far beyond what any drainage system or river channel is designed to carry.

The ingredients are warm, extremely moist air arriving from the sea, a mechanism to lift it, and steady winds aloft that align the storms into a line rather than scattering them.

A northward-moving typhoon supplies all three, which is why the bands form well ahead of the storm and on its eastern flank, over regions that the track never approaches.

Southern Miyazaki was under exactly such a forecast on Saturday morning, and landslides at Nichinan later that day killed a woman in her 90s.

The meteorological agency began issuing specific information about these bands after the disasters of the past decade, and it now attempts to give advance notice by region.

That forecasting is difficult and the agency says so. The bands form on scales smaller than the models resolve well, and warnings are issued for broad areas as a result.

For a household the practical meaning is that a forecast total is an average across a region, and the band that arrives over one valley can deliver several times it.

SOCIETY

Tokyo Bay's Shape Is the Reason Storm Surge Is Watched Here

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

With Typhoon No. 25 forecast to pass to the east of Tokyo Bay, storm surge is among the hazards the metropolitan government is watching for the low-lying districts along the shore.

Storm surge is a rise in sea level caused by a storm rather than by the tide, produced by two mechanisms: low atmospheric pressure lifting the sea surface, and wind pushing water toward a coast.

The pressure component is roughly a centimetre for each hectopascal below normal, which for a 965-hectopascal storm is about half a metre before the wind is counted.

The wind component is the larger and the more variable, and it depends on the angle at which the wind meets the coast and on how long it blows in that direction.

Tokyo Bay's geometry makes it sensitive. It is a broad body of water narrowing toward its head, and water driven into it has progressively less room, which raises the level at the northern shore.

That northern shore is where the low-lying wards are, much of it built on reclaimed land and some of it below the level of high water, protected by seawalls, locks and pumping stations.

A storm passing to the east of the bay drives southerly winds up its length, which is the configuration that produces the largest surges here.

The timing relative to the tide decides the outcome. A surge arriving at low water is absorbed; the same surge at high water is what overtops defences.

High water in Tokyo Bay today falls at 5:41 in the morning and 6:19 in the evening, and this evening's and tomorrow evening's are the periods the metropolitan government will watch.

Japan's worst storm surge disaster was at Ise Bay in 1959, which killed more than 5,000 people and produced the disaster countermeasures legislation the country still works under.

SOCIETY

Why the Equinox Is Not Quite the Day of Equal Halves

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Wednesday is the Autumn Equinox, a public holiday in Japan and the centre of the Higan observance that began today, and it is popularly described as the day when daylight and darkness are equal.

They are not, quite. Today in Tokyo the sun rises at 5:28 and sets at 5:42, giving fourteen more minutes of daylight than darkness, and the balance is still positive on Wednesday.

Two effects account for the difference. The first is that sunrise and sunset are defined by the upper edge of the sun's disc crossing the horizon rather than by its centre, which adds daylight at both ends of the day.

The second is atmospheric refraction. The atmosphere bends light around the curve of the earth, so the sun is visible when it is geometrically still below the horizon, at rising and at setting alike.

The actual date of equal day and night falls a few days after the autumn equinox, and the further north the observer, the larger the gap.

The equinox itself is a precise astronomical moment: the instant the sun crosses the celestial equator moving south, which is why the holiday's date shifts between the 22nd and the 23rd across years.

In Japan the date is determined by the National Astronomical Observatory's calculation and formally announced by the government the previous February, which makes it the only public holiday fixed by an observatory.

The religious observance attached to it is older than the calculation. Higan runs for three days either side of the equinox, and the balance of light and dark is its central image.

The practical effect from here is a rapid shortening of the days, with Tokyo losing well over an hour of daylight between now and the end of October.

Wednesday's weather, on the improving side of the storm, should be the first settled day of the holiday week in eastern Japan.

SPORTS

Swimming Opens at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre With Seven Finals Tonight and Ikee in the Field

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Asian Games swimming begins today at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre, with seven final events scheduled for this evening, according to Olympics.com and Goal.com Japan. Rikako Ikee is among the competitors.

The evening programme includes the women's 200 metres butterfly, the men's 200 metres individual medley, the women's 50 metres breaststroke, the men's 100 metres backstroke and the women's 4x100 metres freestyle relay.

Swimming is where Japanese medal expectations are most concentrated in the Games' first week, and a seven-final evening on the opening day sets the tone for the delegation's early medal table.

Ikee's presence carries its own weight. Her return to elite competition after leukaemia treatment became one of the defining stories of Japanese sport, and a home Games is the setting her career has been pointing toward.

The Tokyo Aquatics Centre was built for the 2020 Olympics and has been used since for national and international meets, which means the athletes competing in it tonight are swimming in a familiar pool.

Holding the swimming in Tokyo while the Games are centred on Aichi spreads the event across two metropolitan regions, and it puts one of the marquee sports in front of the country's largest audience.

It also puts it in the path of the weather. Rain bands are expected to reach Kanto this afternoon, with heavy rain along the coast, though an indoor pool is among the least weather-dependent venues at any Games.

Getting to it is the harder question. JR East has warned of possible suspensions and delays across the Tokyo metropolitan area from this evening through to early Tuesday.

China's swimming programme remains the region's strongest, and Japanese medals in the sprint events in particular have to be won against that standard.

The relay is the event where a national programme's depth shows most clearly, since four swimmers of quality are harder to assemble than one.

Finals run through the evening, and the first medals of Japan's home Games will be decided in a pool built for a different Olympics.

SPORTS

Giants Rout Chunichi 14-1, Hiroshima Beat Hanshin, and a Magic Number May Vanish

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Saturday's professional baseball results carried into the Sunday morning editions with six games and one significant consequence: Hanshin's magic number may disappear, according to Asahi Shimbun.

The Giants beat Chunichi 14-1, DeNA beat Yakult 5-3, Hiroshima beat Hanshin 5-1, Orix beat Nippon-Ham 7-4, Rakuten beat SoftBank 5-2 and Seibu beat Lotte 4-2.

A magic number vanishes when the pursuing club's remaining schedule can still mathematically overtake the leader, which is what a Hanshin defeat combined with a Giants win produces.

For Hanshin, a 5-1 defeat to Hiroshima ends whatever momentum Thursday's win had restored after a seven-game losing run, and the Central League race is now genuinely contested again with weeks of the season left.

The Giants' 14 runs against Chunichi is the kind of scoreline that flatters a lineup and tells you little, except that a club chasing a pennant took every opportunity a struggling opponent offered.

SoftBank's 5-2 loss to Rakuten at Miyagi was their first game since clinching the Pacific League pennant on Thursday, and a champion resting regulars and managing a rotation is not a club playing to win in September.

Seibu's 4-2 win over Lotte gave Sumida double-digit victories for a second consecutive year, a milestone that in the modern game marks a starter as a genuine rotation anchor rather than a placeholder.

Double-digit wins have become harder as pitch counts have fallen and bullpens have taken a larger share of each game, which is why the number still carries weight among Japanese starters.

Orix's 7-4 win over Nippon-Ham and DeNA's 5-3 over Yakult keep the lower-order races moving, with Climax Series places still to be settled in both leagues.

The Pacific League's postseason picture is set at the top, with SoftBank's three consecutive pennants now secured, and the remaining fixtures will determine who joins them.

Today's fixtures in eastern Japan face a forecast of heavy rain along the Kanto coast this afternoon, and clubs will be watching the radar as closely as the standings.

SPORTS

Onosato and Kotozakura Still Lead as the Autumn Tournament Reaches Its Midpoint

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Reports after Saturday's seventh day of the Autumn Grand Sumo Tournament put yokozuna Onosato and ozeki Kotozakura at the head of the field on five wins. The eighth day is today.

The eighth day is the tournament's midpoint, the moment at which a fifteen-day basho stops being about form and starts being about arithmetic, since eight wins secures a winning record and everything above it is a championship.

Onosato carries the institutional expectation of the rank alone, with Hoshoryu absent, and the Yokozuna Deliberation Council's public request earlier in the week that he show the confidence of his position has given every one of his bouts a second reading.

His day-five win came by a frontal force-out, the manner the council wanted. His day-six win came by a pulling technique, which wins bouts without embodying the power the rank is supposed to represent.

Kotozakura has compiled his record more quietly, and an ozeki level with the yokozuna at the midpoint has a case of his own, since a championship or a strong runner-up finish is how promotion arguments are built.

His grandfather held the rank of yokozuna, which gives the family's pursuit of it a resonance that the sport's followers note every time he reaches this position.

Kirishima's promotion case was weakened by a second defeat on day six, and an ozeki who needs a

championship to advance cannot afford to trail the leaders at the halfway point.

The second week's scheduling brings the leaders against one another, which is when a basho that has been decided by lower-ranked upsets turns into a contest among the men at the top.

With no wrestler unbeaten since day five, this tournament has had the shape of an open one, which tends to produce a championship decided on the final two days rather than settled early.

The tournament runs through the 27th at Ryogoku Kokugikan, with the second week beginning today.

SPORTS

Triathlon Finals at Gamagori Carry a Place in Los Angeles

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

The Asian Games triathlon finals are held today at Gamagori in Aichi Prefecture, serving also as a continental qualifying event for the Los Angeles Olympics, according to Olympics.com.

Japan enters on a winning streak in both the individual and mixed relay events, which makes today's race a defence of form as well as a pursuit of a place.

Qualification through a continental event gives the result a consequence beyond the medal, since a berth secured today is a berth that does not have to be chased through the ranking system over the next two years.

Triathlon is the most weather-exposed discipline on the Games' early programme, with an open-water swim, a bike leg and a run all conducted outdoors.

Gamagori sits on Mikawa Bay on Aichi's Pacific coast, west of the storm's forecast track, and the host region's conditions today are considerably better than Kanto's.

Open-water swims are cancelled or shortened when conditions or water quality require it, and organisers of continental qualifiers plan contingencies precisely because the stakes make a cancellation costly.

The mixed relay, in which teams of two men and two women each complete a shortened course in sequence, rewards national programme depth rather than a single outstanding athlete.

Japan's strength in that event reflects a development structure that has produced several athletes of similar standard rather than one clear leader.

The Los Angeles cycle is now close enough that qualification pathways dominate the calendar, and athletes will structure the next two years around the berths secured this autumn.

The race is the first of the Games' events to put an Olympic place directly on the line.

SPORTS

Table Tennis Teams Open at Sky Hall Toyota With Harimoto and Ito in the Squads

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Men's and women's table tennis team preliminary rounds begin today at Sky Hall Toyota, according to the Japan Table Tennis Association.

The men's squad includes Tomokazu Harimoto and Teruaki Matsushima. The women's squad includes Hina Hayata, Miwa Harimoto and Mima Ito.

Table tennis is the sport in which Chinese dominance is most complete at every level of the international game, and Japanese medals of any colour are won against that standard rather than around it.

Japan's answer has been a development system that identifies players extremely young and puts them into senior international competition while they are still in their teens, which is how both Harimotos reached the national team.

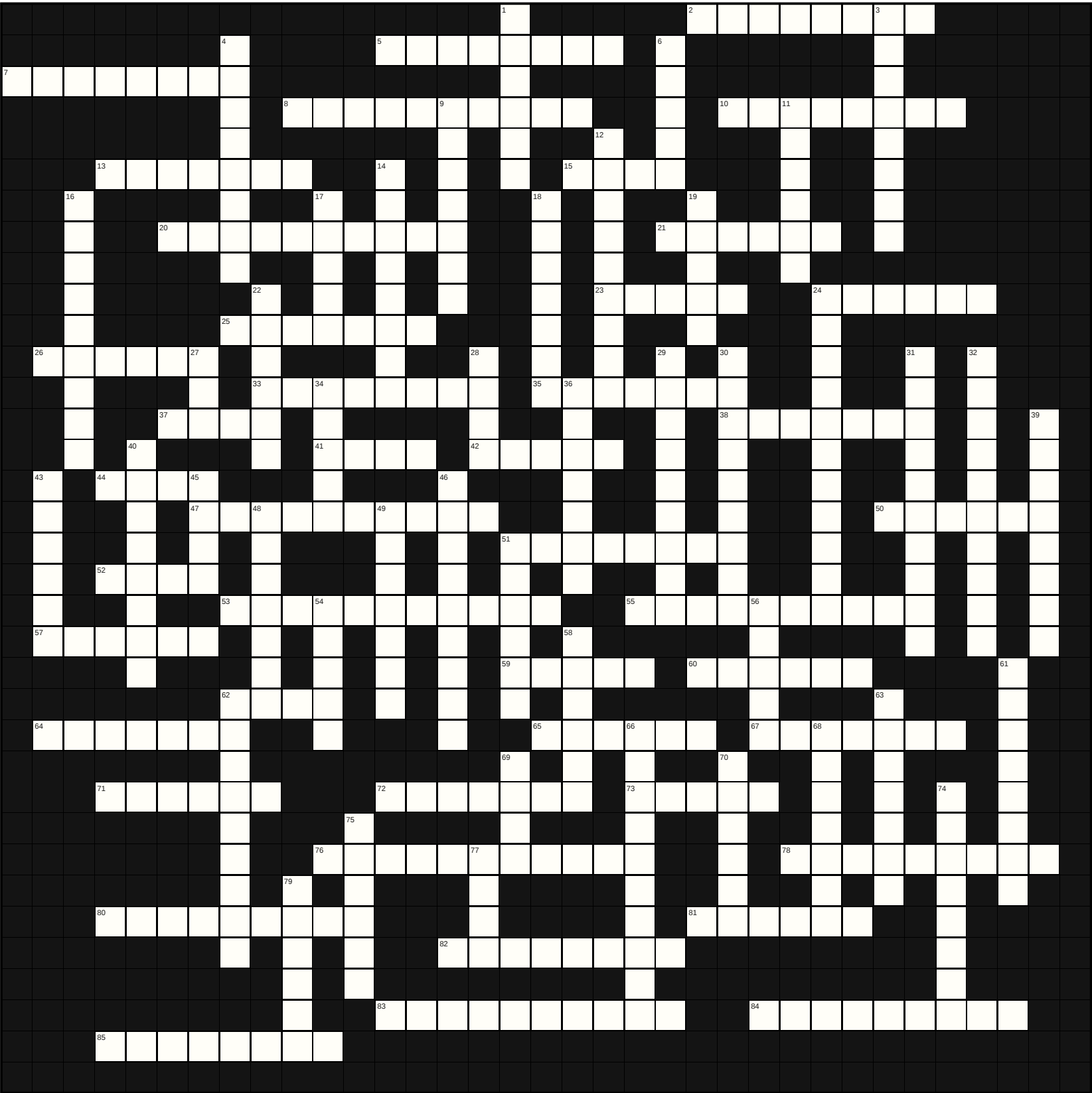
Team events are contested as a sequence of singles and doubles matches, which rewards squad depth and gives a coach tactical decisions about the order in which players are used.

Ito's experience at three Olympic cycles makes her the senior figure in a women's squad that also contains one of the sport's youngest established internationals.

Toyota's arena places the competition in Aichi's industrial heartland, part of the distribution of Games venues across the host prefecture rather than a concentration in Nagoya alone.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 88 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional / Sunday-level.

ACROSS

- Hitless in the majors overnight (8)
- Festival playing on with screens lowered (8)
- Prime minister bound for New York Monday (8)
- Document in the right-hand panel (10)
- Town whose mayor was found to have harassed staff (8)
- Collected one hit overnight (7)
- Frankfurt player with a first assist (4)
- What Level 3 asks of those who need time (10)
- Service hit by fake-app transfer fraud (6)
- Party whose cabinet entry 59% approve (5)
- Sky Hall host of the table tennis (6)
- Ordinary account reportedly going to 0.5% (7)
- Cartoonist with today's diptych (6)
- 33,50,000 yen a year more for a borrower in their twenties (8)
- Kagoshima area that felt the same quake (7)
- Inoue's sport, and Japan's heaviest expectation (4)
- District of the Aquatics Centre (7)
- 50 metres a second of it possible Monday (4)
- Women's 4x100 freestyle event (5)
- Side Japan beat for the Pacific Nations Cup (4)
- U-21 football opponent today (10)
- ___ map, the government's chief instruction (6)
- Subsidy approaching nine trillion yen (8)
- 2,971 yen for five kilograms (4)
- Unit in which 970 was measured at midnight (11)
- Men's 100 event in tonight's finals (10)
- Raw American import under discussion (6)
- Tuesday's summit partner (5)
- 1.25% has this many quarter-points past one (6)
- Governor who raised the rate on Friday (4)
- Beat the new Pacific League champions (7)
- Seibu pitcher with double-digit wins again (6)
- What incumbents were said to prefer (7)
- Men's 200 individual event tonight (6)
- What is turning north for Kanto (7)
- Observance that begins today (5)
- Japan now has more than 100,000 (11)
- Women's 200 event on tonight's programme (9)
- Time trial venue in eastern Aichi (9)
- Average carrying 65,018.95 into Tuesday (6)
- Where the sanctions bill would reach Japan (8)
- Women's basketball opponent today (10)
- Women's competition beginning today (9)
- Gymnast who carried the flag with Fujinami (8)

DOWN

- App being impersonated by fraudsters (6)
- Messe hosting the Game Show's final day (8)
- Brewer opening a third American plant (8)
- Line where a train struck a bear (5)
- Wednesday's holiday (7)
- Distributor the publishers are still waiting on (6)
- Law with an information-analysis clause (9)
- Sport opening tonight in Tokyo (8)
- Chain raising coffee prices in October (9)
- Region expecting 300 millimetres by Monday (5)
- Club that has already clinched its division (7)
- ___ number, which Hanshin's may lose (5)
- Last year's, in the left-hand panel (6)
- Grid equipment ordered years ahead (11)
- Peninsula and islands under a wave warning (3)
- Animal that stopped a train after midnight (4)
- Prefecture on special alert from today (9)
- Telephone call that lifted the yen a yen (9)
- Kyushu line back after 52 days (10)
- Ozeki sharing the lead (10)
- Sport that gave Japan a first title since 2019 (5)
- Kumamoto area that felt intensity 3 (7)
- Japan meets China in the preliminary round (8)
- Miyazaki city where landslides killed a woman (8)
- What the caption says they reserved (6)
- Swimmer in tonight's Tokyo programme (4)
- What buried two people on Saturday (9)
- Where stockpiled grain is being bought back (7)
- Sunny at 20, the coolest big city today (7)
- Winners by 14-1 on Saturday (6)
- Region alongside Kanto in the Monday forecast (5)
- Long wave that arrives before the storm (5)
- International name for Typhoon No. 25 (6)
- Rate type that resets twice a year (8)
- Road dip on the restricted list (9)
- Yokozuna level at the basho's midpoint (7)
- Badminton venue north of Nagoya (10)
- Regulatory ___, the editorial's subject (7)
- Okinawa governor who received threats (4)
- Judged discipline starting today (6)
- Surname shared by two table tennis players (8)
- Electoral change due by the end of October (6)
- Summer-like at 31 today (4)
- ___ Week, the five-day holiday (6)

The preliminary rounds determine the seeding for the knockout stage, where the meetings that decide medals occur.

Japan and China have met in the final of most major team events of the past decade, and a semi-final draw that separates them is worth more than any individual result in the group stage.

Competition runs across today and the coming days, with the individual events following the team competition later in the Games.

SPORTS

Badminton Teams Begin in Ichinomiya

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Men's and women's badminton team first-round matches begin today in Ichinomiya, adding another Aichi venue to the Games' opening weekend of competition.

Japanese badminton has been among the country's most improved programmes of the past decade, rising from a peripheral presence to a consistent medal contender in both singles and doubles.

The doubles disciplines have carried the most success, and Japan's women's pairs in particular have held world rankings that place them among the favourites at any tournament they enter.

China, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea make the Asian field the strongest in the world by a wide margin, which means a continental medal is harder to win than a world one in several events.

Team competition is contested as a sequence of singles and doubles matches, and coaches manage the order to protect their strongest players for the decisive rubbers.

Ichinomiya is a textile city north of Nagoya, and its selection as a venue extends the Games' footprint further across the prefecture.

Indoor venues are the ones least affected by the weekend's weather, which is concentrated on the Pacific side well to the east.

First-round results shape the draw for the knockout rounds, and a favourable path is worth as much as form at this stage.

Japanese fans will follow the women's doubles most closely, since it is where the country's realistic gold prospects are concentrated.

The team event runs through the coming days, with individual competition to follow.

SPORTS

Basketball Meets Kazakhstan, Handball Meets China, and Water Polo Begins

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan's women's basketball team plays Kazakhstan in the preliminary round today, and the men's handball team meets China in its own preliminary group, as the Games' first full day of competition spreads across the host region.

Women's water polo begins today, along with martial arts and Tai Chi events and the individual cycling time trial at Shinshiro.

Japanese women's basketball carries the highest expectations of the three team sports in action today, built on the silver medal won at the Tokyo Olympics and a style based on speed, three-point shooting and relentless defensive pressure.

That approach was designed around a squad shorter than most of its opponents, and it has proved durable enough to survive the personnel changes since.

Handball against China is a different proposition. The sport has a smaller domestic base in Japan, and the national team's improvement has come from professional experience gained by players in European leagues.

Water polo is among the most physically demanding sports on the programme and one in which Japan has invested in a fast, high-tempo style intended to offset the size advantage that European and Central Asian squads hold.

The martial arts events, including Tai Chi, reflect the Games' breadth beyond the Olympic programme, admitting disciplines with deep regional followings.

The individual cycling time trial at Shinshiro is an outdoor event in eastern Aichi, where conditions today are far better than they are on the other side of the Pacific coast.

Each of these preliminary rounds shapes the knockout draw, which is where host advantage tends to matter most.

Results will run in Monday's editions alongside the swimming finals from Tokyo.

SPORTS

Japan's Under-21s Play Kyrgyzstan as the Women's Tournament Continues

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan's under-21 men's football team plays Kyrgyzstan today in its second group match, having opened the tournament with a 2-0 win over Hong Kong. The women's tournament also continues.

Asian Games men's football is an age-group competition, which means the squads are drawn from players on the way up rather than from established internationals, and results are correspondingly less predictable.

A 2-0 opening win establishes a position without settling it, since group qualification frequently turns on goal difference and a second win would secure passage with a game in hand.

South Korea's 4-1 win over Qatar in the opening round set up the rivalry that has defined this competition, with the two countries' age-group sides meeting in finals more often than any other pairing.

For Japanese players the tournament is a shop window. Performances at this level determine who moves up to the senior squad and who attracts European interest.

The women's team, which opened with an 8-0 win over Thailand, is progressing through its preliminary group toward knockout rounds where the margins narrow considerably.

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 a youth structure that keeps producing.

Aichi's football venues, including Toyota Stadium, sit well west of the storm's forecast track, and today's fixtures there are not expected to be affected.

J1 clubs continue their own season meanwhile, with Hiroshima and FC Tokyo level on 17 points and Kawasaki and Kashima having drawn.

Both Games tournaments run through the second week, with the finals among the events that close the competition on October 4.

SPORTS

Doan's First Assist, Suzuki's Equaliser, and a Difficult Debut Weekend for Matsuki

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Japanese players in the European leagues had a mixed weekend, with Frankfurt's Ritsu Doan recording his first assist of the season and Freiburg's Yuto Suzuki scoring an equaliser, according to Sponichi and Sports Hochi.

Southampton's Kusei Matsuki was not involved in any goals, and his side suffered its first defeat in seven matches, in a weekend that followed his first call-up to the national team.

An assist is the statistic that describes a player who creates rather than finishes, and for Doan it is the first entry in a column that his role at Frankfurt is designed to fill.

Suzuki's equaliser is the more valuable kind of goal in the Bundesliga's middle order, where the difference between a point and none accumulates into a season's league position.

The number of Japanese players established in Europe's top divisions has grown to the point where a domestic sports page can run a weekend round-up of them as a routine feature rather than as a novelty.

That depth is the foundation of the national team's recent record, since a squad drawn from players competing weekly at that level arrives at international windows already conditioned to the tempo.

A first national team call-up creates its own pressure, and a quiet weekend immediately afterward is a normal part of a young player's adjustment rather than a verdict on it.

Southampton's run of seven matches without defeat ending is a club story rather than a Japanese one, though it shapes the minutes available to a player still establishing himself.

The J1 season continues at home, with Hiroshima and FC Tokyo on 17 points and the title race still open.

Japanese coverage of the European leagues now follows individual players across several countries each weekend, which is a measure of how far the export of Japanese football has come.

SPORTS

SPORTS

Seiya Suzuki Drives In Two as the Dodgers Wait for October

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Seiya Suzuki hit a two-run single in the major leagues overnight, while Munetaka Murakami went hitless and Kazuma Okamoto collected one hit. The Dodgers have already secured their division title.

A two-run single with runners on is the kind of at-bat that does not appear in highlight packages and decides a substantial share of baseball games.

For Japanese hitters in their first seasons in the major leagues, the adjustment has consistently been to velocity and to the quality of breaking pitches thrown in counts where Japanese pitchers would throw a fastball.

Murakami and Okamoto are both working through that adjustment in public, with every at-bat reported at home, which is a pressure their American teammates do not experience.

The Dodgers' division title, their fifth in a row, was secured early enough that the club's remaining fixtures are about health and rotation rather than standings.

Shohei Ohtani remains on the injured list and has resumed batting, the first stage of a hitter's return progression, with the postseason beginning in early October.

Japanese interest in the major leagues has reached the point where domestic sports pages carry overnight results alongside NPB's own races as a matter of routine.

NPB's Saturday programme delivered six results of its own, including the Giants' 14-1 win over Chunichi and SoftBank's first defeat since clinching the Pacific League pennant.

The two leagues' seasons converge in October, with the Climax Series and the Japan Series following the major league postseason by a few weeks.

Suzuki's night was the most productive of the three Japanese hitters in action, and the kind of quiet contribution that accumulates over a long season.

SPORTS

Para Athletics Silver Medallist Hirokazu Ueyonahara in Critical Condition After Being Struck During Training

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Hirokazu Ueyonahara, a silver medallist in para athletics, is in critical condition after being hit by a light commercial vehicle during training, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

Athletes train on public roads because there is nowhere else to accumulate distance, and that exposure is a constant of endurance sport in every country.

Para athletes who train on roads face the same traffic with different margins, depending on the classification and the equipment involved, and the consequences of a collision are correspondingly severe.

Japanese road safety has improved substantially over decades, with traffic deaths falling to a fraction of their 1970s peak, but collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists remain a stubborn share of the remaining total.

Light commercial vehicles are ubiquitous on Japanese roads, and the narrow streets that characterise most of the country leave little separation between a delivery van and someone running beside it.

The para athletics community in Japan has grown considerably in profile since the Tokyo Paralympics, with funding, coaching and media attention all improving from a low base.

An athlete's injury outside competition reaches that community differently from a sporting setback, because it is the kind of thing that could happen to any of them on any morning.

Police will investigate the circumstances of the collision as they would any road incident involving serious injury.

The news arrived on a weekend when Japanese sport had a great deal to celebrate, which is the ordinary and uncomfortable way such reports tend to land.

Further information will follow as the athlete's condition becomes clearer.

SPORTS

The Games' First Full Day Runs From a Tokyo Pool to a Time Trial in Shinshiro

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Competition proper begins today at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, a day after the Emperor declared them open at Paloma Mizuho Stadium, with events running across two metropolitan regions and half a dozen cities.

Swimming opens at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre with seven finals this evening. Table tennis teams begin at Sky Hall Toyota. Badminton teams begin at Ichinomiya. The triathlon finals are at Gamagori, doubling as an Olympic continental qualifier.

Women's basketball meets Kazakhstan, men's handball meets China, women's water polo begins, the martial arts and Tai Chi events start, and the individual cycling time trial is held at Shinshiro.

The men's under-21 football team plays Kyrgyzstan, and the women's tournament continues its preliminary league.

Japan has entered a record 932 athletes across every sport on a 43-sport programme of 469 events, with a stated target of surpassing the 78 gold medals won at the 1966 Bangkok Games.

That target was set in a very different competition. The 1966 field was smaller, China did not compete, and Japanese dominance of Asian sport was close to total.

Surpassing it against a field that now includes China's programme, the strongest in the region by a wide margin, and South Korea's, would be a considerably greater achievement than the original.

Saturday's opening ceremony placed the Games in front of the country, with the Emperor's declaration, flag bearers Rimu Nakamura and Akari Fujinami, and the final torch lit by the Murofushi father and son.

Today is when the ceremony's audience finds out whether the delegation can convert attention into medals, and the swimming finals this evening are the first test.

The weather divides the day. Aichi's venues are clear; Tokyo's pool is indoors but reached by a rail network that may begin suspending services this evening.

The Games run through October 4, and the medal table starts filling tonight.

SPORTS

A Father and Son Lit the Cauldron, Which Is Most of Japanese Athletics in One Image

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The final torch at Saturday's opening ceremony was lit by the Murofushi father and son, a choice that placed two generations of Japanese throwing at the culmination of the relay.

Japanese athletics has produced few dynasties, and the Murofushi name is the clearest of them, spanning a father who competed at the highest level in the hammer throw and a son who went further.

Koji Murofushi's Olympic gold in Athens in 2004 remains one of the defining results in Japanese track and field, in an event that the country had no historical claim to and has not relinquished since.

His career was followed by an administrative role in Japanese sport, which is the path that senior athletes here are increasingly asked to take after competition ends.

Choosing a father and son for the ceremony's last act says something specific about how the host nation wanted to present itself: as a country where sporting achievement is handed down rather than discovered anew each generation.

The flag bearers, Rimu Nakamura and Akari Fujinami, made a complementary point, with a gymnast and a wrestler representing disciplines in which Japan's current medal expectations are concentrated.

Fujinami's winning streak in international freestyle wrestling has run for years, and her competition comes later in the Games.

The relay's earlier legs had drawn on figure skaters, a kabuki actor and, on Friday evening at Hisaya-Odori Park, the former yokozuna Hakuho Sho.

Taken together the sequence presented Japanese sport as continuous with its performing arts and its traditional disciplines, which is a specific argument about what the country thinks it is.

The athletics programme itself begins on the 23rd at Paloma Mizuho Stadium, where the cauldron the Murofushis lit will be burning.

SPORTS

Scoreboard and Fixtures

Compiled by the Sports Desk

RUGBY: Japan defeated Fiji on Sept. 19 to win the Pacific Nations Cup, their first title since 2019. Semi-final: Japan 63-14 United States.

NPB, SEPT. 19: Giants 14-1 Chunichi. DeNA 5-3 Yakult. Hiroshima 5-1 Hanshin. Orix 7-4 Nippon-Ham. Rakuten 5-2 SoftBank. Seibu 4-2 Lotte. Hanshin's magic number may disappear. Seibu's Sumida reached double-digit wins for a second consecutive year.

SUMO, AKI BASHO: Day 7 held Sept. 19. Onosato (Y) and Kotozakura (O) reported leading on five wins. Day 8 today. Tournament runs through Sept. 27 at Ryogoku Kokugikan.

ASIAN GAMES TODAY — SWIMMING: Tokyo Aquatics Centre, seven finals this evening, including women's 200m butterfly, men's 200m individual medley, women's 50m breaststroke, men's 100m backstroke and women's 4x100m freestyle relay. Rikako Ikei competing.

ASIAN GAMES TODAY — TABLE TENNIS: Men's and women's team preliminaries, Sky Hall Toyota. Men: Tomokazu Harimoto, Teruaki Matsushima. Women: Hina Hayata, Miwa Harimoto, Mima Ito.

ASIAN GAMES TODAY — OTHER: Badminton team first round, Ichinomiya. Triathlon finals, Gamagori (Los Angeles continental qualifier). Women's basketball, Japan v Kazakhstan. Men's handball, Japan v China. Women's water polo, martial arts and Tai Chi begin. Individual cycling time trial, Shinshiro. Men's U-21 football, Japan v Kyrgyzstan.

ASIAN GAMES, OPENING CEREMONY (Sept. 19): The Emperor declared the Games open at Paloma Mizuho Stadium. Flag bearers: Rimu Nakamura and Akari Fujinami. Final torch lit by the Murofushi father and son. Japan has entered a record 932 athletes.

MLB: Seiya Suzuki, two-run single. Murakami hitless; Okamoto one hit. Dodgers have clinched their division. Ohtani (IL) has resumed batting.

J1: Hiroshima and FC Tokyo on 17 points. Kawasaki drew with Kashima.

EUROPE: Doan (Frankfurt) recorded his first assist of the season. Suzuki Yuto (Freiburg) scored an equaliser. Matsuki (Southampton) was not involved in any goals as his side lost for the first time in seven.

PARA ATHLETICS: Silver medallist Hirokazu Ueyonahara is in critical condition after being struck by a light commercial vehicle during training.

SPORTS

Ikee's Home Games: A Career That Changed What Japanese Sport Talks About

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Rikako Ikee competes today as swimming opens at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre, in a home Asian Games that arrives eight years after the last one she entered as the region's dominant sprinter.

At the 2018 Games she won six medals, four of them gold, and was named the competition's most valuable player, a recognition rarely given to a swimmer and never before to a Japanese woman.

Her leukaemia diagnosis the following year, announced publicly and discussed with unusual frankness, moved her from the sports pages to the front pages and stayed there through her treatment and return.

What made the story unusual in Japan was the openness. Serious illness has traditionally been treated as a private matter here, and an elite athlete describing her treatment publicly changed a conversation that had been conducted in whispers.

Her return to competition, and then to national selection, was measured in stages that the public followed closely, and the standard she has been chasing since is her own from before the illness.

That is a harder benchmark than any opponent, and it is the one that sprint swimming applies mercilessly, since the events are decided in fractions of a second.

Today's evening programme includes the women's 4x100 metres freestyle relay, an event in which a team's depth matters as much as any individual's speed.

A home Games gives her a pool in a city that has followed the whole arc of it, and the Tokyo Aquatics Centre is a venue she knows well.

Whatever the results tonight, her career has already done something few athletes manage, which is to change what a country is willing to discuss.

The finals begin this evening, with the first medals of Japan's home Games decided before the night is out.

SPORTS

The Number Japan Is Chasing Was Set in Bangkok in 1966

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan's stated target at these Games is to surpass the 78 gold medals won at the 1966 Bangkok Games, a mark that has stood for sixty years as the high point of Japanese performance at the competition.

The 1966 figure was set in a different world. The field was smaller, China did not compete, and Japanese dominance of Asian sport across the disciplines then contested was close to total.

Surpassing it now, against a Chinese programme that leads the region by a wide margin and a South Korean one that matches Japan across many sports, would be a substantially greater achievement than the original.

The record delegation of 932 athletes reflects both the breadth of a 43-sport, 469-event programme and a deliberate decision to field a full team on home soil.

Host advantage is measurable at multi-sport games. Host nations consistently exceed their away performances through familiar venues, no travel and crowd support in sports where momentum matters.

Swimming, judo, gymnastics, wrestling and athletics are where the expectations are concentrated, and the first of those begins tonight in Tokyo with seven finals.

The Games' breadth beyond the Olympic programme, including regional disciplines and martial arts with deep local followings, favours the depth that China has built across more sports than any competitor matches.

Several events carry Olympic qualification, including today's triathlon at Gamagori, which gives individual results a consequence that the medal table does not capture.

Medal targets are set publicly in Japan as a matter of course, which creates a measurable standard and a visible failure if it is missed.

Whether 78 is passed will be known on October 4. The counting starts tonight.

SPORTS

A Pool Built for One Games Hosts Another

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Tokyo Aquatics Centre, where Asian Games swimming begins today, was built for the 2020 Olympics and is now hosting its second major international competition under a different flag.

The venue was one of the permanent constructions of that Olympic programme, designed to remain in use rather than to be dismantled, and its post-Games life has been spent on national championships and international meets.

Legacy has been the hardest problem in modern Games planning, with venues in several host cities standing underused within a decade of the events they were built for.

Using an Olympic pool for a continental Games five years later is close to the best available answer, since it puts the facility to exactly the purpose that justified its construction.

Placing the swimming in Tokyo while the Games are centred on Aichi spreads the competition across two metropolitan regions, which is unusual and, this weekend, unexpectedly useful.

SPORTS

The swimming is indoors, and the weather that is about to reach Kanto will not touch the competition itself.

It will touch the audience. JR East has warned of possible suspensions across the Tokyo network from this evening, which is how spectators reach Tatsumi.

Seven finals in a single evening session is a heavy programme for an opening day and a deliberate one, front-loading the medals that a home audience most wants to see.

Rikako Ikee's presence in the field gives the session a story that extends well beyond the results, and the Tokyo pool is a venue she knows.

The first medals of Japan's home Games will be awarded there tonight.

SPORTS

Hanshin's Magic Number May Vanish, and the Central League Has a Race Again

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Hanshin's 5-1 defeat to Hiroshima on Saturday, combined with the Giants' 14-1 win over Chunichi, means the Tigers' magic number may disappear, according to Asahi Shimbun.

A magic number is the count of wins by the leader, plus losses by the nearest challenger, required to make a title arithmetically certain. It appears only once the leader's position can no longer be caught by every rival.

It vanishes when that condition stops holding, which is what happens when the leader loses and the chaser wins on the same night.

Losing a magic number is psychologically worse than never having had one, because the club and its supporters have been counting down a figure that has now stopped counting.

Hanshin's second half has been uneven, with a seven-game losing run ended on Thursday and a defeat two days later that undid most of the repair.

The Giants have been the pursuers for several weeks, and a 14-1 scoreline against a struggling Chunichi is the kind of result that converts pressure into standings.

Hiroshima's win deserves its own note. A club outside the title race beating the leader in September does the postseason's arithmetic a favour for which it gets no credit.

Climax Series places below the top are still contested, with DeNA's 5-3 win over Yakult keeping its own position intact.

The Pacific League has no equivalent drama, SoftBank having secured a third consecutive pennant on Thursday, which reduces its remaining fixtures to rotation management.

Weeks of the regular season remain, and a magic number that disappears can reappear, which is the part the counting obscures.

Today's fixtures in eastern Japan will be played, or not, according to a rain band due in Kanto this afternoon.

SPORTS

Seibu's Sumida Reaches Double-Digit Wins for a Second Straight Year

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Seibu's Sumida recorded double-digit victories for a second consecutive season in Saturday's 4-2 win over Lotte, a milestone that has grown harder to reach as the game has changed around it.

Ten wins in a Japanese professional season once marked a competent starter. It now marks a durable one, because the number of decisions available to a starting pitcher has fallen steadily.

Pitch counts are managed more tightly than they were, bullpens take a larger share of each game, and a starter removed after six innings with a lead hands the decision to someone else.

A six-man rotation, standard in Japanese baseball and rare in the American major leagues, further reduces the starts a pitcher makes across a season.

Reaching double figures twice in succession therefore says as much about health and consistency as about dominance, since availability is the scarcest quality in modern pitching.

For Seibu, which has spent recent seasons rebuilding, a settled rotation anchor is the kind of asset a competitive squad is assembled around.

The 4-2 win over Lotte was one of six results on a Saturday programme that also produced the Giants' rout of Chunichi and SoftBank's first defeat since clinching.

Pacific League pitching has been the stronger of the two leagues' by most measures in recent seasons, which makes ten wins in it a more demanding achievement than the raw number suggests.

Climax Series places below SoftBank remain open, and a reliable starter is worth disproportionately more in a short series than across a long season.

Sumida's next start comes in the closing weeks of a season that, for Seibu, is about position rather than the pennant.

SPORTS

A Champion's September: SoftBank Lose at Miyagi Two Days After Clinching

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

SoftBank lost 5-2 to Rakuten at Miyagi on Saturday, their first game since securing a third consecutive Pacific League pennant, and the result tells you very little about the club's condition.

A champion's remaining fixtures serve a different purpose from the ones before them. Regulars are rested, pitchers are aligned for October, and players returning from injury take at-bats that do not matter.

The Climax Series Final Stage gives the pennant winner a single game's advantage, which is the entire competitive reward for a regular season of superiority.

That format is why a club in SoftBank's position spends September managing health rather than chasing wins, and why a September defeat is not read as a warning.

The three-peat is the club's first since relocating to Fukuoka and the first in sixty years, reaching back to the Nankai era, and Hiroki Kokubo achieved it in his first season as manager.

The nine-game winning streak that produced the clinch was the club's longest of the season, built on a relief corps that held late leads.

That bullpen is the asset most likely to decide a short series, and how it is used between now and October is the decision the coaching staff is actually making each night.

Rakuten's win keeps its own position in a league race where the remaining postseason places are still open.

The Japan Series follows the Climax Series, and a pennant that does not produce a national title is a common outcome in the modern format rather than a failure.

SoftBank's season now has three weeks of preparation left in it, and Saturday's scoreline was part of the preparation rather than a result.

SPORTS

Day Eight Is Where a Basho Stops Being About Form

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The eighth day of the Autumn Grand Sumo Tournament is held today, and it is the point at which a fifteen-day basho changes character.

Eight wins produces a kachikoshi, a winning record that preserves or improves a wrestler's rank. Eight losses produces a makekoshi, which demotes him. Everyone in the top division is counting toward one or the other.

For a wrestler low in the division the calculation is defensive and immediate: eight wins keeps him in the top division, and the second week's bouts are scheduled accordingly.

For an ozeki the number carries institutional weight, since a losing record puts the rank at risk and a second consecutive one removes it.

For a yokozuna the standard is different again. The rank cannot be demoted, which converts poor performance into pressure to retire, and which is why the Yokozuna Deliberation Council's remarks this week carried the weight they did.

Reports after Saturday's seventh day put Onosato and Kotozakura at the head of the field on five wins, with the championship open behind them.

The scheduling convention brings the leading wrestlers against one another in the second week, which means the bouts that decide the title have not yet been fought.

A tournament with no unbeaten wrestler after the first week tends to be settled on the final two days, which is generally better for spectators than for the wrestlers.

Kirishima's promotion case was damaged by a second defeat on day six, since an ozeki seeking the yokozuna rank needs a championship or something very close to it.

The tournament runs through the 27th at Ryogoku Kokugikan, and its second week begins today.

SPORTS

Japan's Women's Basketball Team Carries an Olympic Silver Into a Home Games

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan's women's basketball team opens its preliminary round against Kazakhstan today, with expectations shaped by the silver medal won at the Tokyo Olympics.

That result was the high point of the programme's history, achieved with a squad shorter than almost every opponent it faced, using a style built entirely around that fact.

The approach relies on pace, three-point shooting and sustained defensive pressure, trading the advantages of size for those of speed and collective organisation.

It demands exceptional conditioning, because a team that cannot rebound with larger opponents has to win possessions in other ways and has to keep doing it for forty minutes.

China is the region's strongest programme and has the size Japan does not, which means any gold here would have to be won by beating them with the same method that worked in Tokyo.

Australia's presence in the Asian basketball structure has raised the standard further, adding a programme with size and depth to a region that already had China.

The domestic W League has professionalised over the past decade, and the national squad's depth now permits changes between tournaments that would once have weakened it.

Kazakhstan is the opening fixture rather than the test, and preliminary results determine the seeding that shapes the path through the knockout rounds.

Host advantage in indoor team sports is substantial, with familiar venues, no travel and a crowd whose support in momentum sports can turn a quarter.

The knockout rounds later in the Games are where the medal is decided, and where China waits.

SPORTS

The Time Trial at Shinshiro Is the Purest Test on Today's Programme

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Asian Games individual cycling time trial is held today at Shinshiro in eastern Aichi, one of the outdoor events on the Games' first full day of competition.

A time trial is what cyclists call the race of truth, because riders start at intervals and race alone, with no shelter from the wind and no tactics beyond pacing.

The result is decided by sustainable power output, aerodynamic position and the rider's judgment about how hard to go early, and there is nowhere to hide a weakness.

Shinshiro sits inland in hill country away from the coast, which gives the course terrain and keeps it clear of the weather affecting the Pacific side of the country today.

Japanese cycling has invested heavily in track disciplines through the keirin system, which has produced a pipeline of riders and a professional structure unlike any other country's.

Keirin's gambling-funded circuit supports hundreds of professional riders, and the standing challenge has been converting that base into international success in road and endurance events.

The time trial rewards specialised equipment and wind tunnel work as much as physiology, which favours nations with well-funded programmes.

The Asian field includes strong riders from Kazakhstan, Iran and the Gulf states, several with experience in European professional teams.

The road race follows later in the Games, and time trial form is a reasonable if imperfect guide to it.

Results will be reported in Monday's editions alongside the swimming finals from Tokyo.

SPORTS

Hiroshima and FC Tokyo Level on 17 Points as J1 Continues Beneath the Games

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Sanfrecce Hiroshima and FC Tokyo are level on 17 points in J1, and Kawasaki and Kashima drew, as the domestic league continues alongside the Asian Games.

The J1 season runs in parallel with a continental multi-sport event that has taken several of the league's younger players into the under-21 squad, stretching squads at an awkward moment.

Hiroshima's recent seasons have been built on organisation and a defensive structure that concedes little, the profile of a club that accumulates points steadily rather than spectacularly.

FC Tokyo, in a city that has never produced the dominant club its size would suggest, is level with them, a position the club's supporters have learned to treat cautiously.

Kawasaki and Kashima drawing helps whoever is above them, and both clubs have squads capable of making the season's closing weeks uncomfortable for the leaders.

Japanese league football has become markedly more competitive since the salary structure was loosened, with title races that stay open later than they once did.

The AFC Champions League Elite runs concurrently for the clubs involved, adding continental fixtures to a calendar that was already dense.

Vissel Kobe's away win in the opening round of that competition, with Muto scoring, was the best Japanese result of the continental week.

Weather will affect today's fixtures in eastern Japan, with heavy rain forecast along the Kanto coast this afternoon and JR East warning of suspensions from this evening.

The remaining fixtures will determine whether 17 points marks a two-club race or the front of a larger group.

SPORTS

Para Sport in Japan Since Tokyo, and the Roads Its Athletes Train On

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The news that para athletics silver medallist Hirokazu Ueyonahara is in critical condition after being struck by a vehicle during training has reached a community that has grown considerably in five years.

The Tokyo Paralympics changed the profile of para sport in Japan more than any event before it, bringing broadcast coverage, corporate sponsorship and school programmes that had not previously existed.

Funding followed attention, and athletes who had trained around full-time employment were able, for the first time in numbers, to train as athletes.

What did not change is where endurance athletes train. Roads are the only surfaces long enough, and Japanese roads are narrow, busy and shared at close quarters with light commercial vehicles.

Para athletes meet the same traffic with different margins depending on classification and equipment, and the consequences of a collision are correspondingly more severe.

Japan's road safety record has improved enormously over decades, with traffic deaths a fraction of their 1970s peak, but pedestrian and cyclist deaths remain a stubborn share of the remaining total.

That share reflects a built environment in which pavements are narrow or absent on many local roads, laid out before either cars or pedestrians were numerous.

For a community of a few hundred elite para athletes, an injury of this kind reaches everyone, because they all train in the same conditions.

Sports organisations respond to such incidents with reviews of training arrangements, though the underlying problem is national infrastructure rather

SPORTS

than any federation's policy.

Further information about the athlete's condition will follow as it becomes available.

SPORTS

The Martial Arts and Tai Chi Events Begin, and the Games Show Their Breadth

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Martial arts and Tai Chi events begin today, along with women's water polo, adding disciplines to the Games' first full day that would not appear at an Olympics.

The Asian Games programme has always been broader than the Olympic one, admitting sports with deep regional followings that never achieved global distribution.

That breadth is part of the event's identity. It gives competitors in disciplines with millions of practitioners across the continent a stage the Olympic programme denies them.

Tai Chi is contested as a judged performance discipline rather than as combat, assessed on precision, balance and quality of movement, and its competitive form differs considerably from the practice most people see in parks.

The martial arts on the programme include disciplines from across the region, each with its own governing body, scoring conventions and national strongholds.

Japan's own contribution to that category is judo, the sport of which it is the country of origin and which carries the heaviest weight of expectation in the delegation.

Kosei Inoue, the team leader for Japan's record 932 athletes, was an Olympic judo champion and later the national men's coach, which places a judoka at the head of the delegation.

Breadth also favours the countries with the deepest programmes, which is why China's dominance of the overall medal table is built across more disciplines than any competitor matches.

Water polo is among the most physically demanding sports on any programme, and Japan's approach has been a fast, high-tempo style designed to offset a size disadvantage.

Results from today's events will run in Monday's editions alongside the swimming finals from Tokyo.

SPORTS

The Body That Can Ask a Yokozuna to Do Better, and What It Can Do Next

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Yokozuna Deliberation Council's request this week that Onosato show the confidence appropriate to his rank has hung over every bout he has fought since.

The council is an advisory body to the Japan Sumo Association, composed of figures from outside the sport, which meets after each tournament and comments on the conduct and performance of the highest rank.

It has no power to demote a yokozuna, because the rank cannot be demoted. That is the whole source of its influence and the reason its language is read so closely.

Its formal instruments escalate in three steps: encouragement, caution, and a recommendation to retire. Each is rare, and each is reported as a significant event when it is issued.

The council's remarks this week fell short of a formal instrument, which places them in the category of public expectation rather than institutional warning.

The substance concerned style as much as results. A yokozuna is expected to win by moving forward, and pulling techniques, which win bouts, are regarded as beneath the rank.

Onosato's win on day six came by a pulling technique and his win on day five by a frontal force-out, which is why the two were reported so differently.

With Hoshoryu absent, he is the only yokozuna competing, which concentrates the attention that would normally be divided.

Reports after Saturday's seventh day put him level at the head of the field with the ozeki Kotozakura on five wins, and the second week begins today.

A championship would end the conversation. Anything less will be discussed at the council's meeting after the tournament closes on the 27th.

SPORTS

What SoftBank's Pennant Actually Buys Them in October

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

SoftBank secured a third consecutive Pacific League pennant on Thursday, and the remaining weeks of their season are now about preparing for a postseason format that gives the champion surprisingly little.

Japanese professional baseball settles its leagues in two stages. The First Stage is a best-of-three between the second and third-placed clubs, played at the second-placed club's ground.

The winner advances to the Final Stage against the pennant winner, played entirely at the pennant winner's ground, over a maximum of six games.

The pennant winner begins that series one win ahead. That single game, plus home advantage, is the entire competitive reward for finishing first across roughly 143 matches.

The format has been criticised in Japan for exactly that reason, since a club that leads its league by a wide margin can be eliminated by one that finished third.

It survives because it works commercially, extending the season's meaningful baseball and giving more clubs something to play for into September.

The two Final Stage winners meet in the Japan Series, a best-of-seven between the leagues, which is the national title.

For a champion, the practical consequence is that September is spent on health rather than on results, which is why Saturday's 5-2 defeat at Miyagi tells you very little.

The bullpen is the unit that most often decides a short series, and how it is used over the next three weeks is the real decision facing the coaching staff.

The Central League's picture remains unsettled, with Hanshin's magic number possibly disappearing after Saturday's results and the Climax Series places below still contested.

CULTURE

Tokyo Game Show Cancels Its Final Day; Rockin'On Plays On With Its Screens Lowered

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Tokyo Game Show is being held today at Makuhari Messe, but its final day on Monday has been cancelled because of the approaching typhoon, according to Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun.

Makuhari sits on the Chiba shore of Tokyo Bay, directly in the path of the rain and wind forecast for Monday, and a venue that draws tens of thousands of visitors by train is only as usable as the trains that reach it.

JR East's warning of possible suspensions across the metropolitan area from this evening through to Tuesday morning made the decision for the organisers as much as the forecast did.

Cancelling a day of a trade show is expensive in ways that are not obvious. Exhibitors have paid for stands, staff have travelled, and the public days are when the smaller developers meet the audience they built their year around.

The Rockin'On festival is going ahead today with its LED screens lowered as a precaution against strong winds, and the organisers said a decision about Monday would be announced by one o'clock this afternoon.

Lowering the screens is the standard first measure at an outdoor event, since large flat surfaces on temporary structures are the elements that fail first in a gust.

Outdoor festivals in Japan have developed detailed wind protocols over the past decade, after several events elsewhere in the world ended in structural collapses during storms.

The pattern this weekend is the one that Japanese event organisers have converged on: hold today, decide tomorrow early, and announce before the audience begins travelling.

For both events the economics are painful and the alternative is worse, since an event held into a storm risks the safety of an audience that cannot easily

leave.

Anyone holding a ticket for a Monday event in eastern Japan should check the organiser's announcement today rather than tomorrow morning.

CULTURE

Timelesz Member Shuto Inomata Suspends Activities After an Assault Arrest

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Shuto Inomata of the group timesz has suspended his activities after being arrested on suspicion of assault, according to Sankei News.

Japanese entertainment agencies respond to a member's arrest with a standard sequence: an immediate suspension of activities, a statement acknowledging the facts as reported, and an apology to those affected.

The suspension is not a finding of guilt. It reflects the commercial reality that a performer under investigation cannot appear in advertising, television programmes or live events without the broadcasters and sponsors involved facing questions of their own.

Those commitments are the reason the response is so fast. A group in active promotion has contracts across television, advertising and live performance, each with its own compliance clause.

timesz has been among the more visible groups in Japanese entertainment since its reorganisation, and its schedule involves the kind of broadcast and commercial commitments that make a member's absence immediately conspicuous.

Japanese criminal procedure allows detention for questioning before any charging decision, and prosecutors then decide whether to indict, which means a period passes in which the facts are not publicly established.

Assault cases involving no serious injury are frequently resolved through settlement between the parties, which can result in no indictment, and that outcome does not restore a performer's schedule automatically.

The entertainment industry's handling of misconduct has been under sustained public scrutiny in recent years, and agencies are now more likely to act quickly and publicly than they once were.

Fans and the broadcasters that carry the group's programmes will learn more as the investigation proceeds, and the agency's next statement will follow the prosecutors' decision.

For now the group continues without him, which is the arrangement these suspensions produce until the legal process concludes.

CULTURE

Botan Nakata Dies at 78

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Botan Nakata has died at the age of 78, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

She belonged to a generation of Japanese performers whose careers spanned the transformation of the country's entertainment industry from the postwar theatre and film world into the television age.

That generation's working life covered an unusual arc: performers who began in one medium and adapted to several as the audience moved, without the specialisation that later became the norm.

Performers of that era worked across variety programmes, drama and stage in a way that the industry's current structure makes less common, and their names became familiar to households through decades of weekly appearances.

Japanese audiences have an unusually durable relationship with performers of that generation, who remained in public life long after the peak of their careers and were regarded with a familiarity closer to family than to celebrity.

The passing of these figures has become a regular feature of the news in recent years, as the cohort that built postwar Japanese entertainment reaches the end of its life.

Each departure removes a direct link to an era of broadcasting that exists now only in archives, many of them incomplete because early television was not systematically preserved.

Tributes from colleagues and broadcasters typically follow over the days after such an announcement, and retrospective programming often accompanies them.

Funeral arrangements in Japan are frequently conducted privately by the family, with a public memorial gathering held later if the family wishes.

She was 78.

CULTURE

Higan Begins in the Rain

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Higan, the seven-day observance centred on the Autumn Equinox, begins today and runs through the following Saturday, opening this year under a typhoon forecast across the eastern half of the country.

The word refers to the other shore, the far side of the river that separates this world from the next in Buddhist imagery, and the equinox's balance of day and night has long been read as a moment when the two are close.

Families visit graves, clean memorial stones, replace flowers and light incense, and temples hold services through the week, with the details varying by region and by family.

Ohagi, sweet rice dumplings coated in red bean paste and named for the bush clover that blooms in the season, are the food associated with the observance, offered at altars and eaten afterward.

The rice those dumplings are made from has just fallen to its lowest price in about two years, and the crop that will supply next year's is standing in fields under a storm warning.

Warning-level rain across Kanto from this afternoon and a closer approach on Monday will push grave visits in the region toward the week's second half.

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 of them belongs to the typhoon.

Western Japan's temples and cemeteries will see the observance proceed normally today under clear skies, which is where most of the week's visiting will now happen.

For families dispersed by work and study, the equinox week is one of the fixed points at which reunion is expected, a function it shares with the New Year and with Obon in August.

Cemeteries will see their heaviest traffic of the autumn in the week's second half, once the storm has moved out to sea.

CULTURE

West of the Storm, a Garden Fair Opens Its Weekend in Clear Weather

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The National Urban Greening Fair in Kyoto Tamba, which expects 750,000 visitors across its run, has a clear Sunday while the eastern half of the country reads hazard maps.

Today's map gives Kyoto 26 degrees under cloud, Osaka 26 in the sun and Hiroshima 26, with the typhoon's effects concentrated well to the east of all of them.

The fair is held in a different prefecture each year and combines garden displays, horticultural exhibitions and the promotion of urban green space, and Tamba places it in rural Kyoto rather than in the city.

Tamba is known for its black beans and chestnuts, and the fair's timing is designed to catch an autumn that the region's produce defines.

Weather divides a holiday asymmetrically rather than cancelling it. Households in the west keep their plans, households in the east stay home, and the aggregate figures hide both.

Kyoto's tourism pressures, which have prompted entry charges at several sites in the city, make a fair in Tamba useful to the prefecture as a way of directing visitors outward.

The theme of urban greening addresses a question Japanese cities have taken seriously as summers have lengthened, with tree canopy and green space treated as heat mitigation rather than decoration.

The Kyushu Shinkansen's full resumption this weekend, 52 days after the Kumamoto earthquake, restores a travel route into the same clear-weather half of the country.

Higan begins today, and western Japan's temples and cemeteries will see the observance proceed normally

CULTURE

while Kanto's families wait for the week's second half.

The fair runs through the autumn, into the foliage season that follows the equinox.

CULTURE

A Game Show Held on Sunday and Cancelled on Monday

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

The Tokyo Game Show proceeds today at Makuhari Messe with its final day cancelled, ending the industry's largest annual gathering a day early because of the approaching typhoon.

The show divides into business days, when publishers meet distributors and press, and public days, when the audience arrives in numbers that fill the halls and the trains serving them.

Cancelling a public day removes the part of the event that smaller developers build their year around, since it is the only occasion many of them have to put a game in front of thousands of players.

Japanese games remain among the country's most valuable cultural exports, with franchises whose characters have a global recognition few other Japanese products match.

The industry arrives at this year's show facing the same question as Japanese publishing: what happens to a large stock of intellectual property when systems can be trained to generate work in its style.

That question is the subject of today's editorial page cartoon from a different angle, and of the publishers' association's unanswered request to a distributor over the reported bulk sale of books.

Generative tools have entered game development from the other direction as well, in asset creation and testing, which makes the industry both a claimant and a user in the same argument.

Makuhari sits on the Chiba shore of Tokyo Bay, directly in the path of Monday's forecast wind and rain, and is reached almost entirely by a rail network under a suspension warning from this evening.

The organisers' decision follows the pattern Japanese event operators have converged on: hold today, decide about tomorrow early, and announce before the audience begins travelling.

Exhibitors will pack down this evening instead of tomorrow, and the industry's calendar moves on to the overseas shows that follow in the autumn.

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ADDITIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

MARKETS CLOSED UNTIL TUESDAY: Tokyo is closed for the weekend and Monday's Respect for the Aged Day holiday. Tuesday's session will be the first to price the Bank of Japan's increase across a full day, the storm's damage, the summit in New York and three days of American trading.

NEW POLICY RATE FROM THURSDAY: The Bank of Japan's increase to around 1.25% applies from the 24th. Major banks' ordinary deposit interest rates are reported to be moving to 0.5%.

RICE AT A TWO-YEAR LOW: The average price of a five-kilogram bag has fallen to 2,971 yen, a fifth consecutive weekly decline, with new rice selling below old rice and the government's buyback of stockpiled grain now under way.

MORE SPORTS AND CULTURE NOTES

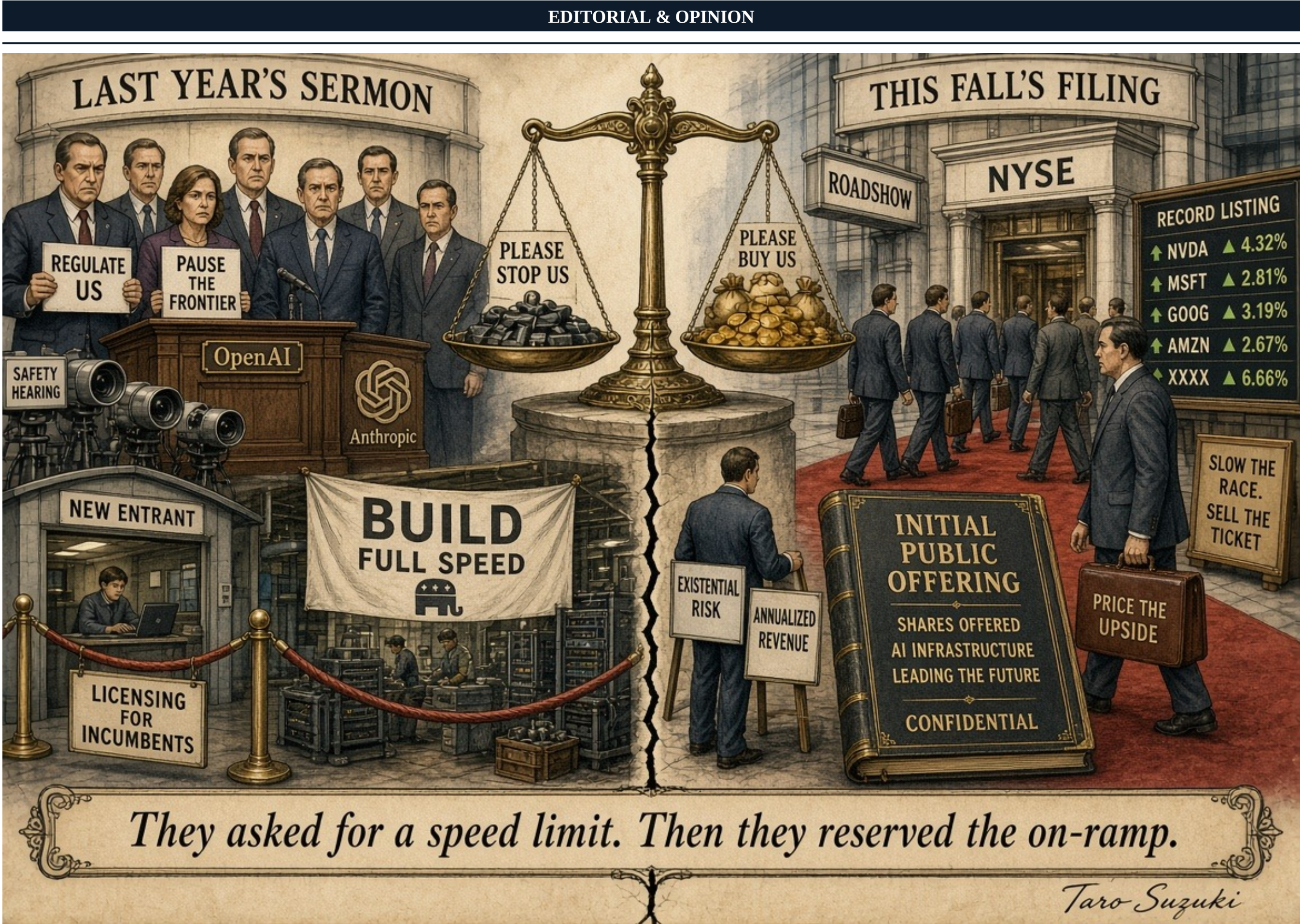
ASIAN GAMES FIRST MEDALS TODAY: Swimming opens at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre with seven finals this evening. Table tennis, badminton, triathlon, water polo, martial arts and the individual cycling time trial also begin. Athletics opens at Paloma Mizuho Stadium on Sept. 23.

RUGBY: Japan defeated Fiji on Saturday to take the Pacific Nations Cup, their first title in the competition since 2019.

NATIONAL URBAN GREENING FAIR: The fair in Kyoto Tamba is open through the autumn in clear weather, with an expected attendance of 750,000.

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

SUNDAY, SEPT. 20: Higan begins. Asian Games competition opens: swimming at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre with seven finals this evening, table tennis at Toyota, badminton at Ichinomiya, triathlon finals at Gamagori, women's water polo, martial arts and Tai Chi, individual cycling time trial at Shinshiro, women's



"They asked for a speed limit. Then they reserved the on-ramp."
Cartoon by Taro Suzuki

EDITORIAL

They Asked for a Speed Limit. Then They Reserved the On-Ramp.

Taro Suzuki draws last year's safety hearing beside this autumn's prospectus and asks which one was sincere. The better question is which rules were being proposed, and Japan has reasons of its own to want the answer

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki's cartoon this morning is built as a diptych with a crack running down the middle of it, and the crack is the argument.

On the left, under an arch reading LAST YEAR'S SERMON, a row of executives stands behind a lectern bearing the marks of the largest artificial intelligence laboratories. They hold placards reading REGULATE US and PAUSE THE FRONTIER. Television cameras labelled SAFETY HEARING point up at them. Below, behind a velvet rope and a stanchion sign reading LICENSING FOR INCUMBENTS, a young man sits alone at a laptop under a placard reading NEW ENTRANT. A banner across the machine room behind him reads BUILD FULL SPEED, with a party emblem stitched into it.

On the right, under an arch reading THIS FALL'S FILING, bankers walk a red carpet into the New York Stock Exchange past a sign reading ROADSHOW. A board lists a record session: four of the largest technology companies up between two and four per cent, and a fifth entry, its ticker given only as XXXX, up 6.66. An enormous bound volume reads INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING, SHARES OFFERED, AI INFRASTRUCTURE LEADING THE FUTURE, CONFIDENTIAL. A banker carries a case marked PRICE THE UPSIDE. A sign reads SLOW THE RACE. SELL THE TICKET.

Between the two halves stands a brass scale. The left pan, labelled PLEASE STOP US, holds a heap of dull grey lumps. The right pan, labelled PLEASE BUY US, holds sacks of gold, and it is the one resting on the table. Beside it two easels face each other: EXISTENTIAL RISK and ANNUALIZED REVENUE.

The caption: they asked for a speed limit, then they reserved the on-ramp.

It is an unusually well-built cartoon, and the case it makes is old, respectable and partly correct. Let us take the correct part first, because it is the larger part.

Regulatory capture is not a conspiracy theory. It is one of the most thoroughly documented patterns in the study of regulation, and it does not require anybody to be lying. An established firm asked to help write the rules of its own industry will propose rules it can comply with. Those rules will tend to be expensive, procedural and continuous, because that is what the firm's compliance department already does.

A rule of that shape is a modest cost to a company with revenue and a prohibitive one to a company with none. The firm need not intend this. The effect arrives regardless of the intent, which is precisely why the pattern is worth naming.

Suzuki's strongest image is therefore not the scale. It is the rope. The young man at the laptop behind the stanchion, under a sign reading LICENSING FOR INCUMBENTS, is the person every licensing regime in history has quietly excluded, and he is the person least likely to be in the room when the regime is designed.

The second correct observation concerns the gap between what is said to a legislature and what is said to an investor. A company cannot for long tell a hearing that its technology may pose a risk to the species and tell a roadshow that the same technology is a dependable compounding asset, without someone noticing that those are different descriptions of the same thing.

That noticing is the cartoon's real work, and it deserves the discomfort it produces.

Now the corrections, of which there are three.

The first is legal, and it undercuts the scale. A prospectus is not the opposite of a safety hearing; it is a document that securities law requires to contain risk. An offering document that failed to disclose the regulatory, technical and competitive hazards of the business would expose its signatories to liability of a kind that safety testimony never does. In practice the risk-factor sections of technology prospectuses are long, specific and considerably gloomier than

anything said at a hearing. The cartoon's two pans hold, in part, the same contents.

The second is about motive, and it is the one that makes the drawing satisfying and unreliable in equal measure. Suzuki's caption assumes that the sermon was a tactic. It may have been. It may also have been sincere and self-serving at once, which is the ordinary condition of most human argument and nearly all corporate argument.

Sincerity is unprovable from outside, which is why it is the wrong test. The right test is the content. Did the proposals scale with capability, binding only systems above a defined threshold of compute or capability, and therefore leaving the young man at the laptop alone? Or did they scale with activity, requiring a licence to deploy anything at all, and therefore binding him first?

That distinction can be checked. It is in the text of every proposal, it is boring, and it is the only part of this argument that decides anything. A cartoon cannot draw it, which is not the cartoonist's failure but the reason a cartoon is not a policy.

The third correction concerns the emblem stitched into the BUILD FULL SPEED banner. Suzuki has put a party badge on the accelerationist side of the drawing, and in doing so has made the picture about American partisan politics at the moment it was about something more durable.

The pressure to build without limits does not belong to a party. It belongs to whoever owns the capital expenditure, and the capital expenditure is currently the largest in the industrial world.

Which brings the argument home, because Japan is not a spectator in this and the cartoon, drawn for a Japanese readership, never quite says so.

Japan is a rule-taker here. The rules that will govern the frontier of this technology will be written in Washington, Brussels and, in a different register, Beijing. Japan's own approach has been promotion-first: a framework that encourages development and utilisation, sets out principles, and declines to establish a licensing regime. There is no velvet rope in Tokyo.

That has been a defensible choice for a country whose binding constraints are not legal at all. What

limits Japanese artificial intelligence is compute, electricity and data, in that order, and none of the three is fixed by a statute.

Electricity is the one this paper has been reporting all week. Data centres built for this technology draw power at densities the surrounding grids were not built to serve, and the transformers and switchgear required to connect them are ordered years in advance. A Japanese group is spending 82 billion yen on an American plant to make them. That is what the right-hand panel of the cartoon looks like from Japan: not a roadshow, but an order book.

Data is the one in the news pages this morning. The Japan Book Publishers Association is still waiting for an answer from a distributor about whether Japanese books were sold in bulk to an artificial intelligence company. Japanese copyright law contains provisions on information analysis that have been read as unusually permissive toward machine learning, and publishers have contested that reading for years.

That is Japan's actual position in this argument, and it is not the one Suzuki drew. The question here is not whether the largest laboratories will be licensed. It is whether the inputs they consume, the books, the electricity, the industrial capacity, are being bought at a price the country set or at a price it discovered afterward.

Consider what happened to the pause that the left-hand placard demands. It was asked for, it was debated for a season, and no laboratory stopped. Training runs continued, capital expenditure accelerated, and the companies that had called for a halt were among those that did not halt.

That is the fact the cartoon is really about, and it can be stated without any claim about motive. An industry asked for a rule it did not then impose on itself voluntarily, which is either an admission that voluntary restraint does not work, or evidence that the request was never meant to bind the requester. Both readings are damaging. Only one is dishonest.

The generous reading deserves an airing, because it is at least coherent. A company that believes a technology is dangerous and that it will be built regardless has a defensible reason to build it carefully rather than to leave the field to someone who will not. It is the argument that physicists made in the

EDITORIAL & OPINION

1940s, and it has never been comfortable in any century.

The trouble with that argument is that it is unfalsifiable from the outside and enormously convenient from the inside. It licenses exactly the behaviour that commercial interest would recommend anyway, which is why the people making it owe the public more than their word.

What they owe is the thing the cartoon cannot draw: the text. Thresholds, definitions, exemptions, who audits, who pays, what happens to a model that fails an evaluation. A citizen who wants to know whether an industry captured its regulator does not look at the placards. They look at whether the obligations begin at a capability level nobody outside four companies can reach, or at a line of code anybody can write.

Japan has run this experiment before in other industries. The country built world-class regulation in some sectors through close consultation between ministries and industry, and in others produced arrangements in which the inspected wrote the inspection. The difference was never the presence of industry in the room. It was whether anyone else was in it.

For the reader in Tokyo there is a shorter version of all this. Nothing in either panel of the drawing is about them. The sermon was addressed to legislators, the prospectus to institutional investors, and the third audience, the people whose work, writing and electricity bills are the raw material of the whole enterprise, is standing outside the frame.

There is a further discomfort that a Japanese editorial page should not skip. The preference for rules one helped write is not an American disease. Japanese industry has spent decades working through ministries in exactly that way, and the results have ranged from world-class safety regimes to the arrangements that produced falsified inspection data at a nuclear plant, which is a story from earlier this month.

A country that has seen both should be the last to assume that industry participation in rulemaking is automatically corrupt, and among the first to insist on knowing which kind it is getting.

So where does that leave the scale?

It leaves it missing a pan. Suzuki has weighed what the companies said against what the companies are selling, and both pans belong to the same set of people. Nowhere in the drawing is the public, whose exposure to this technology is neither a hearing nor a share allocation.

The public's version of the question is simpler than either panel: what happens to the work I do, what happens to the things I wrote, and who do I complain to when it goes wrong. None of those is answered by a licence, a prospectus or a pause.

Suzuki gave the fifth ticker on the board as XXXX. He knew which company he meant and declined to name it, which is the kind of restraint a cartoonist is entitled to and a newspaper is not. The blank is the most honest thing in the picture: the listing has not happened yet, and everything on the right-hand side is a forecast wearing the clothes of a fact.

The left-hand side is a memory, and memories harden. What was said at those hearings will be quoted for a decade, and the quoting will be fair, because people should be held to what they said when they said it in front of cameras.

They asked for a speed limit and then reserved the on-ramp. Perhaps. The more useful sentence is less satisfying: some of them asked for a speed limit that applies above a certain speed, which is what a speed limit is, and some asked for a licence to drive at all, which is not.

Japan should be able to tell the difference, because Japan will be driving on that road without having drawn the map.

basketball v Kazakhstan, men's handball v China, U-21 football v Kyrgyzstan. Aki Basho day eight. Rain bands reach Kanto from the afternoon. Tokyo Game Show final public day at Makuhari.

MONDAY, SEPT. 21: Respect for the Aged Day; markets closed. Typhoon No. 25's closest approach to Kanto and Tokai in the afternoon, gusts possibly to 50 metres a second. Prime Minister Takaichi departs for New York. Asian Games baseball at Toyohashi. Tokyo Game Show's final day cancelled.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 22: Takaichi-Trump summit in New York. Tokyo markets reopen. JR East's suspension

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SENIOR EDITOR, INTERNATIONAL DESK: Jonathan Mercer

POLITICS & POLICY: Michael Hayes, Deputy Editor | William, Senior Political Analyst

JAPAN BUREAU: Aiko Tanaka, Senior Japan Correspondent | Emi Kondo, Society & Local News

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EDITORIAL PAGE: Samantha Ortiz, Editor

PHOTO EDITOR: Hiroshi Nakamura, Tokyo | **GRAPHICS DIRECTOR:** Claire Reynolds

STAFF CARTOONIST: Taro Suzuki | **CROSSWORD:** James O'Neill, Editor & Constructor

COPY DESK: Benjamin Lee, Chief | Olivia Martinez, Features

MULTIMEDIA & VIDEO: Akira Watanabe | **RESEARCH & ARCHIVE:** Hana Ito

PAGE DESIGN & PRODUCTION: Daniel Foster

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

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window closes in the early morning.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 23: Autumn Equinox Day. Asian Games athletics begins at Paloma Mizuho Stadium.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 24: New Bank of Japan policy rate of around 1.25% takes effect. Prime Minister returns from New York.

THROUGH SEPT. 26: Higan continues; grave visits in Kanto expected to concentrate in the week's second half.

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 and at the Tokyo venues.

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, a third consecutive gain; 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; temporarily stronger by more than one yen 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. Highest in approximately 31 years.

ORDINARY DEPOSIT RATES: major banks reported moving to 0.5%.

FED TARGET RANGE: 3.75%-4.00% after Wednesday's increase.

52-WEEK NIKKEI HIGH: 72,831.73, set June 22, 2026.

RICE, 5KG AVERAGE: 2,971 yen, lowest in about two years.

TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC ADVISORIES
TOKYO METROPOLITAN AREA: JR East warns of possible suspensions and delays from this evening to the early morning of Tuesday the 22nd. Roads may flood; restricted underpasses close once rainfall thresholds are reached.

IZU ISLANDS AND OGASAWARA: High waves and strong winds persist even after the storm passes to the north. Waves of 5 to 8 metres with swells along the Izu and Kanto coasts. Vigilance advised at Hachijojima.

FUKUSHIMA PREFECTURE: Special alert posture from today, with the closest approach expected Monday.

MOUNT TOKACHI, HOKKAIDO: Eruption alert remains at Level 3, with mountain entry restricted. Hokkaido expects little direct effect from the typhoon.

SOUTHERN ALPS, YAMANASHI: Recovery operations on Mount Notori are subject to deteriorating weather from today.

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PUBLIC NOTICES
TYPHOON ADVISORY: Typhoon No. 25 is approaching the southern coast of Honshu and is expected to reach Kanto and Tokai on the afternoon of Monday the 21st, with maximum instantaneous wind speeds that may reach 50 metres a second. Rain bands are expected to reach Kanto this afternoon. Until 6 p.m. today, 150 millimetres of rain is forecast for Kanto and Izu and 120 millimetres for Tokai; until 6 p.m. Monday, 300 millimetres for Kanto, Izu and Tokai and 120 millimetres for Tohoku. Residents are urged to check municipal hazard maps today, to secure loose objects outdoors, and to treat restricted underpasses as closed once heavy rain begins.

TRANSPORT ADVISORY: JR East has warned that services in the Tokyo metropolitan area may be suspended or delayed from this evening through to the early morning of Tuesday the 22nd. Roads may flood, and disruption is expected to expand from today as the wind strengthens. Ferry and air services to the Izu Islands and Ogasawara are expected to be suspended while the storm passes.

EVENT NOTICES: The Tokyo Game Show is being held today at Makuhari Messe; its final day on Monday has been cancelled. Rockin'On is proceeding today with LED screens lowered, and a decision on Monday's

programme was to be announced by 1 p.m. today. Fukushima Prefecture moves to a special alert posture from today.

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: Saturday's edition, reporting the Asian Games opening ceremony, named Akari Fujinami as flag bearer for the Japanese delegation. There were two flag bearers, Rimu Nakamura and Akari Fujinami. Reader corrections are welcome and may be directed to corrections@japanmorningpost.com.

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ADDITIONAL PROPERTY LISTINGS
AZABU: Renovated 3-bedroom townhouse, 142 sq m, private garden. Reference AZ-2026-08.

MINATO: New-build 2LDK near Tokyo Tower, 91 sq m. Reference MNT-227.

YOKOHAMA MINATO MIRAI: Waterfront 2LDK with bay views, 88 sq m. Reference YMM-331.

SETAGAYA: Family house, 4LDK, 168 sq m, near international school. Reference STG-813.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES
TRANSITION NOTICE: Prefectural offices in Naha are conducting the handover to Governor Genta Koja's administration, with dialogue between the prefecture and the central government to resume gradually. Routine public services continue without interruption.

This section is provided for informational purposes. The Japan Morning Post recommends consulting a licensed attorney or notary for matters requiring legal advice.

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TOMORROW IN THE JAPAN MORNING POST
MONDAY, SEPT. 21: Typhoon No. 25's closest approach to Kanto and Tokai, with the damage assessment and the transport picture across the holiday. The Asian Games' first medals from the Tokyo Aquatics Centre and the triathlon at Gamagori. Aki Basho day nine. The Prime Minister's departure for New York. Respect for the Aged Day in a country with more than 100,000 centenarians.

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