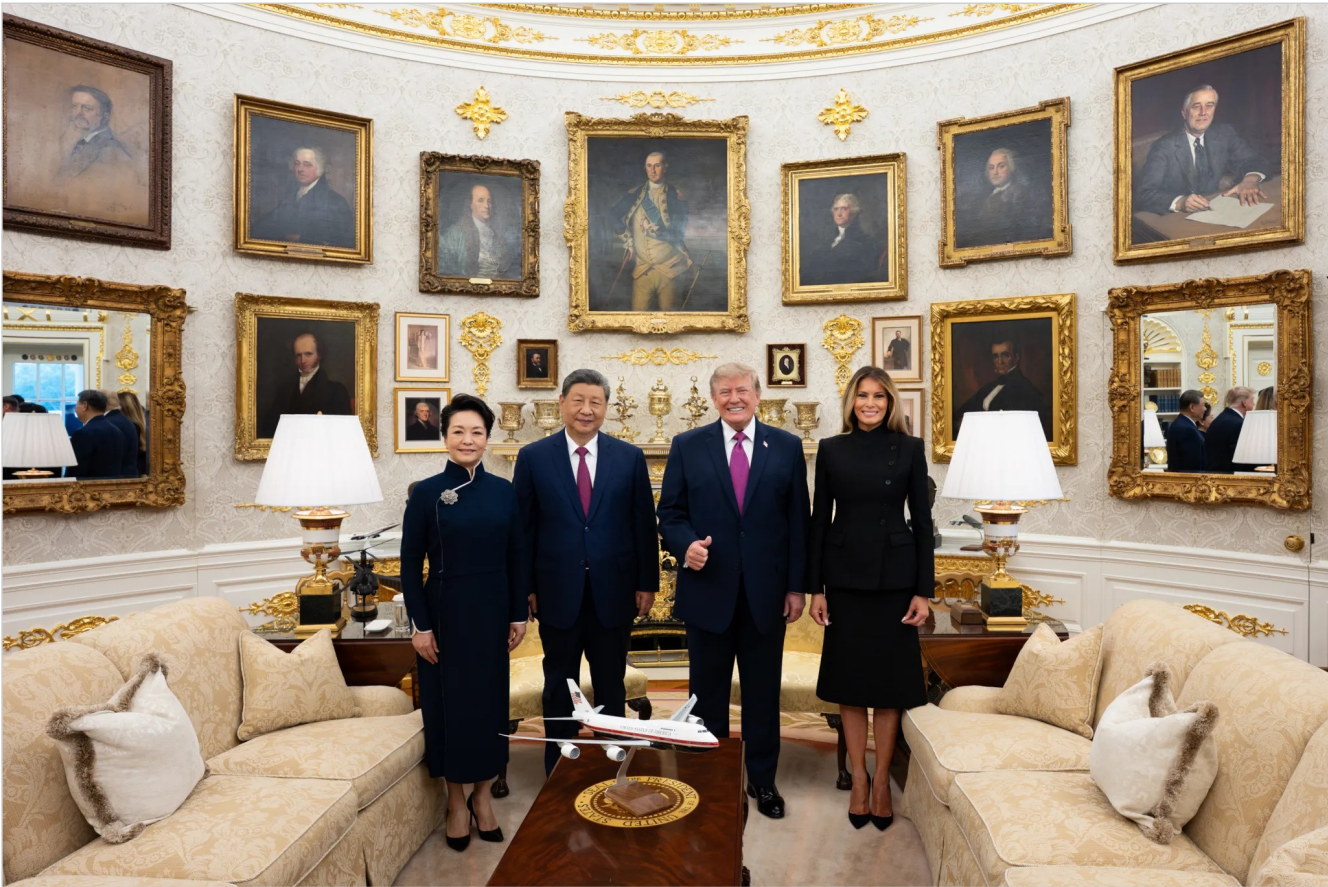


MP'S REPLY UNDISCLOSED ■ ELEVEN DEAD; SEVERE-DISASTER DESIGNATION PLANNED; CHIBA UNDER WARNING-LEVEL RAIN ■ TYPHOON NO. 26 SURIGE NEARS OKINAWA ■ YEN 'UNDERVALUED', KATAYAMA AN

Xi Demanded 'Opposition to Taiwan Independence'; Trump Kept His Answer to Himself, and Called China a Wartime Ally

Beijing's leader said the two countries 'fought against the Japanese militaristic aggressors'; Tokyo called the exchange 'within expectations'; Taipei replied that it was the Republic of China that fought alongside America. A farm-purchase announcement is due Monday

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk, with Rachel Kim | Japan-U.S. Coverage, Washington-Tokyo Liaison



President Trump and Mrs. Trump with President Xi Jinping and Madame Peng Liyuan in the Oval Office during the state visit, a model of the presidential aircraft on the table. Xi demanded 'opposition to Taiwan independence'; the President did not disclose his reply, Yomiuri reported. Trump said China 'was an ally'; Xi said the two 'fought against the Japanese militaristic aggressors'. (White House Official)

At the White House summit, President Xi Jinping demanded opposition to Taiwan's independence, and President Trump did not disclose the content of his own remarks on Taiwan, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

Mr. Trump said that China was an ally, and Mr. Xi said that the two countries had fought against the Japanese militaristic aggressors, according to Asahi Shimbun and Sankei News. The Japanese government remained calm, describing the exchange as within expectations.

Taiwan countered that it was the Republic of China that fought alongside the United States, a rebuttal that goes to the heart of a history both Beijing and Taipei claim.

The photograph above, an official White House image, shows the two presidents with Mrs. Trump and Madame Peng Liyuan in the Oval Office during the state visit, a model of the presidential aircraft on the table between them.

The Taiwan exchange is the summit's unresolved sentence. Beijing asked for a verb, opposition rather than non-support, and the American answer has not been published, which leaves Tokyo, Taipei and the region reading an absence.

An undisclosed reply is not a concession, but it is not a reaffirmation either, and the foreign ministry in Tokyo will press through alliance channels for the exact words before Beijing's account becomes the only one in circulation.

The wartime language was the summit's other message, and it was aimed at Japan. Mr. Xi's phrase places the present American-Chinese relationship inside the frame of 1945, in the same week that his Foreign Ministry insisted the Charter's former enemy clauses are important for the post-war order.

Tokyo's response, that the remarks were within expectations, was chosen to deny the phrase the reaction it was designed to produce, and it is the response this page's editorial columns recommended on Thursday.

The Republic of China's rebuttal from Taipei makes a point that history supports: the government that fought beside the United States from 1941 to 1945 was the one that later retreated to Taiwan, not the one Mr. Xi leads.

On trade, China may expand its purchases of American agricultural products, and Mr. Trump said farmers are overjoyed, with an announcement of the results scheduled for the 28th, according to Sankei

News.

That announcement, on Monday, will give the two-month truce extension its first concrete content, and Japanese agricultural exporters and importers will read it for its effect on soybean, corn and beef markets.

Finance Minister Katayama held a telephone call with the American Treasury Secretary and confirmed that the undervaluation of the yen is a problem, Asahi Shimbun reported, an exchange that follows the yen's fall to 159 on Thursday and keeps the currency inside the alliance's conversation.

The government will submit three related bills, including a subsidy programme aimed at reducing Japan's dependence on the Strait of Hormuz, Asahi reported, while Foreign Minister Motegi has already said that Japan will pursue safe navigation in the strait and refuse additional costs.

In Washington, the five major American television networks declined to broadcast the summit talks, returning their press passes in protest at the exclusion of CNN, which meant that the exchange on Taiwan reached the world through wires and readouts rather than live pictures.

The summit's ceremony has ended; its consequences begin with Monday's farm announcement, the alliance briefing on the Taiwan words, and the working-level talks on minerals and chips that Japan and the United States confirmed on Tuesday.

Taro Suzuki's cartoon on the editorial page takes up the Taiwan question directly, with Beijing's warships arranged around the island and allies holding their treaties, and the editorial argues that an undisclosed American answer is not one Tokyo can live with for long.

The Prime Minister, back in Tokyo, faces a weekend in which Chiba lies under warning-level rain, Typhoon No. 26 approaches Okinawa and the government moves to designate No. 25 a severe disaster.

For Japanese readers, the week's diplomacy closes with the alliance affirmed, the wartime frame rejected calmly, and one sentence about Taiwan still waiting to be read.

Eleven Dead, a Severe-Disaster Designation Planned, and Chiba Under Warning-Level Rain Today as Typhoon Surige Turns Toward Okinawa

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

Typhoon No. 25 has claimed eleven lives in Chiba and Kanagawa prefectures, with some people still missing, and the government plans to designate it a severe disaster, according to NHK and NTV News.

Chiba may experience torrential rain of warning level from morning to evening today, with the autumn rain front stalled over the Pacific coast, and Tochigi rain from before dawn to early morning, according to Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun. Asahi reported that Ibaraki may also see warning-level rain.

Typhoon No. 26, named Surige, will approach Okinawa around the 27th and 28th and may then approach Kyushu and Honshu, according to Asahi and Weathernews, reporting the meteorological agency's announcement.

The rain arrives on ground that has not dried. Emergency repairs have begun on the breached embankment of Inbanuma, but the flooding continues, and solar panels in the floodwater have caught fire, adding an electrical hazard to a standing flood.

The Kominato Railway will suspend service all day on some sections for the time being; there are stretches where the rails hang in mid-air, the ballast beneath them washed away.

Thirty-seven schools are closed because of the typhoon, and more than 500 schools suffered facility damage, according to Asahi.

The rise in the toll from ten to eleven on Friday reflects the recovery of one of the missing, and the search for the others continues under skies that are about to open again.

A severe-disaster designation, under a law of 1962, would raise the state's share of the cost of restoring roads, rivers, schools and farmland, relieving prefectural and municipal budgets that cannot bear the season's damage alone.

Today's rain is a compound hazard. Slopes in Chiba and Kanagawa remain under landslide warnings that light rain could trigger; warning-level rain would trigger them; and the lowlands around Sakura that have not drained would receive water faster than the pumps can lift it.

Municipalities will issue evacuation information through the day, and residents of the districts evacuated last week face the possibility of leaving again before the water from the first storm has gone.

Surige's track adds a third phase. If the typhoon turns toward Kyushu and Honshu after Okinawa, the Kanto region could receive a second typhoon within a fortnight, and the meteorological agency's forecasts through the weekend will show whether it does.

Okinawa expects rough seas and high waves from Sunday, and ferries and flights to the outer islands will be suspended as the storm approaches.

Power and water remain out in parts of Chiba with no clear outlook, and the households concerned will receive today's rain without the means most people use to hear warnings.

Farmers face re-flooding of fields during the harvest, with damage to rice, tomatoes and other crops, and the agriculture minister's remark on Friday that new rice selling for close to 1,000 yen is undesirable describes a market that has turned against the growers the storm has already hurt.

The prefecture's mascot, Chiba-kun, has had its

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WEATHER — TOKYO

24°C

Low 19°C · Cloudy then afternoon rain

24°

Sapporo

27°

Niigata

32°

Hiroshima

34°

Kagoshima

Warning-level rain possible in Chiba and Ibaraki; Typhoon No. 26 nears Okinawa on Sunday. Full weather, Page 12.

TODAY IN BRIEF

- Xi demanded 'opposition to Taiwan independence'; Trump did not disclose his remarks. Trump: China 'was an ally'; Xi: the two 'fought against the Japanese militaristic aggressors'. Tokyo: 'within expectations'. Taipei: it was the Republic of China that fought alongside the U.S.
- Typhoon No. 25: eleven dead in Chiba and Kanagawa; the government plans a severe-disaster designation; emergency repairs begin at Inbanuma, where solar panels have caught fire; Kominato Railway sections suspended.
- Warning-level rain possible in Chiba and Ibaraki today; Typhoon No. 26, Surige, near Okinawa on the 27th and 28th, then possibly Kyushu and Honshu.
- Katayama and Bessent agree the yen's undervaluation is a problem; Kiuchi: Abenomics-style reflation is over; new rice near 1,000 yen 'undesirable'.
- Tokyo District Court: the blanket ban on campaigning by under-18s is unconstitutional, a first.
- Asian Games: marathons at dawn in Nagoya; 400m and 1500m finals, football v North Korea and the women's basketball final tonight; men's table tennis gold confirmed 3-2.

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MARKETS	
Nikkei 225 (Sept. 24)	■ 65,513, +495
Intraday high	66,249
Yen (Sept. 24)	Touched 159
Long-term rate	3.075%, 30-yr high
BOJ policy rate	1.25%
Farm purchases	Results due Mon.
Trade truce	To late November

THE SUMMIT: SATURDAY

- Xi demanded 'opposition' to Taiwan independence; Trump's reply undisclosed (Yomiuri).
- Trump: China 'was an ally'; Xi: 'fought against the Japanese militaristic aggressors' (Asahi, Sankei).
- Tokyo: 'within expectations'. Taipei: the ROC fought alongside the U.S.
- Farm purchases: results Monday. Five networks boycotted the talks.

TYPHOON: SATURDAY

- 11 dead; severe-disaster designation planned (NHK, NTV).
- Warning-level rain in Chiba and Ibaraki today; front stalled.
- Inbanuma repairs begun; solar panels burning; Kominato rails in mid-air.
- No. 26 Surige: Okinawa Sun.-Mon.; Kyushu, Honshu possible.

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- Katayama and Bessent: the yen is undervalued, Page 7.
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- Vance: \$2.2 billion in Obamacare fraud recovered, Page 6.
- Marathon morning, a stacked night at the Games, Page 15.
- Editorial: If it needs a blockade, it is not peace, Page 20.

TONIGHT

- 400m and 1500m finals; football QF v North Korea; basketball final.
- NHK Watch 9: Surige, the rain, No. 25's areas, the beer tax.

Continued on Page 2

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FROM PAGE 1

Eleven Dead, a Severe-Disaster Designation Planned, and Chiba Under Warning-Level Rain Today as Typhoon Surige Turns Toward Okinawa

The autumn rain front has stalled over the Pacific coast; emergency repairs have begun on Inbanuma's breached embankment, where solar panels have caught fire in the floodwater; Typhoon No. 26 is expected near Okinawa on Sunday and Monday

Continued from Page 1

activities suspended after insensitive comments about public relations work outside the prefecture, Yomiuri reported, a small controversy in a large disaster.

Today's weather map shows Tokyo cloudy then turning to afternoon rain with a stray thunderstorm, with a high of 24 and a low of 19; Asahi's weather section gives a high of around 21 and an 80% chance of rain.

Hokkaido has recorded the season's first sub-zero temperatures, and the map's Sapporo panel shows humid weather with afternoon rain and drizzle.

The Mid-Autumn moon of Friday night is followed by a Saturday on which cloud will make observation difficult across much of eastern Japan.

NHK's Saturday Watch 9 will devote its programme to Surige's path, the autumn rain, the areas hit by No. 25 and the liquor tax reform, which shows the order in which the country's attention is arranged this weekend.

For Chiba, the arithmetic of the season is now four events in two months, and the fourth begins this morning.

POLITICS

Unofficial and Essential: Japan's Ties With Taiwan Since 1972

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

Japan's stake in the sentence Washington has not published about Taiwan rests on a relationship with the island that has been unofficial for 54 years and essential for all of them.

When Japan normalised relations with Beijing in 1972, it broke diplomatic ties with Taipei and adopted the position that it understands and respects Beijing's claim that Taiwan is part of China, a formulation short of acceptance.

Relations continued through the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association and its counterpart, offices that function as embassies without the name, and trade, investment and travel between the two grew into one of the region's densest relationships.

Taiwan's semiconductor industry, led by TSMC, has become central to Japan's own economic security, with the company's plants in Kumamoto the largest foreign investment in Japanese manufacturing in decades.

Security ties are indirect. Japan does not sell arms to Taiwan or train with its forces, but its security documents plan for a contingency in the area, its south-western islands lie within sight of the island, and its joint statements with Washington since 2021 have described the strait's peace and stability as important to Japan.

Public sympathy runs deep, from Taiwan's aid after the 2011 disaster to the Japanese tourists who fill Taipei's streets, and Japanese politicians visit the island in numbers that Beijing objects to.

Beijing's demand at the White House for opposition to Taiwan's independence, and its wartime remark aimed at Japan, are pressure on the same point: to separate Japan and the United States from the island they both, unofficially, support.

Taipei's rebuttal that it was the Republic of China that fought alongside America was addressed to Washington, but it was heard in Tokyo, where the wartime frame is the argument Beijing uses against Japan.

The 1972 formula has held for half a century because it lets Japan deal with both sides; the ships in Taro Suzuki's cartoon are the reason it is harder each year.

Unofficial ties, official interests: that is the relationship, and this week tested both.

POLITICS

The Prime Minister's Weekend: A Designation, a Typhoon and a Sentence

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

Prime Minister Takaichi's first weekend back from New York holds three tasks that the week's news has set for her.

The first is the severe-disaster designation for

Typhoon No. 25, which NHK and NTV News report the government plans to make, and which the cabinet will confirm by ordinance as the assessment of damage proceeds.

The second is Typhoon No. 26, Surige, approaching Okinawa on Sunday and Monday with a possible track toward the main islands, which requires the disaster machinery to prepare for a second event before the first is cleared.

The third is the sentence Washington has not published on Taiwan, which the foreign ministry will seek through the alliance briefing and which the Prime Minister will be asked about when the Diet session opens.

Her government's response to the wartime remark, within expectations, was chosen for calm, and the weekend's question is whether the calm is followed by insistence in private.

The Diet session's agenda has grown: the food tax cut to 1% from April 2027, the typhoon's supplementary budget, three bills to reduce dependence on Hormuz, the security document revision with its escort satellites, the land permit proposal and the police study group's smartphone recommendation.

Finance Minister Katayama's call with the American Treasury Secretary, confirming the yen's undervaluation as a problem, and Growth Strategy Minister Kiuchi's statement that Abenomics-style reflation is over, give the session an economic frame the government has chosen.

Her approval stands at 58.3% in the ANN poll, and the handling of a second typhoon within a fortnight is the kind of event that moves such numbers.

NHK's Saturday Watch 9 will devote its programme to Surige, the rain, the areas hit by No. 25 and the liquor tax, which is the order of the public's attention this weekend.

The alliance was affirmed in New York, tested in Washington, and is now being read in Tokyo; the typhoon is the other test, and it arrives on Sunday.

TECHNOLOGY

September 2008: Shenzhou 7 and China's First Walk in Space

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Eighteen years ago this week, China's Shenzhou 7 was in orbit with three astronauts aboard, launched on September 25, 2008, and two days later one of them, Zhai Zhigang, became the first Chinese astronaut to walk in space.

The spacewalk lasted about twenty minutes and was broadcast live, with the astronaut waving a Chinese flag at the hatch, and it made China the third country, after the Soviet Union and the United States, to conduct extravehicular activity with its own spacecraft.

The mission tested the spacesuit, the airlock procedures and the release of a small companion satellite that photographed the spacecraft, all steps toward the space station that China has since built and now operates continuously.

The programme's progress since, from the Tiangong station to the lunar sample returns of the past few years, has made China the second space power in a field that the week's Japanese coverage has shown to be increasingly contested.

Japan's defence ministry plans escort satellites to guard its own constellation against interference, and the manoeuvring satellites that prompt the plan are among the capabilities China has demonstrated since 2008.

The state visit that ended this week, with its emphasis on co-operation in artificial intelligence and security, did not, on the accounts available, address space, where the two powers compete more openly than in most fields.

Japan's own astronauts have flown on American and Russian spacecraft and to the International Space Station, and a Japanese astronaut is planned for the American programme's return to the Moon.

The anniversary of Shenzhou 7 falls on a technology calendar crowded with satellites, from Vanguard's

failure to DART's success, and it marks the point at which a third country joined the walk.

Twenty minutes at the hatch in 2008 have become a permanent station and a lunar programme.

The flag waved at the hatch is the same one the cartoon's warships fly, which is the week's reminder that capability in orbit and pressure at sea come from the same programme.

POLITICS

Three Bills to Cut Japan's Dependence on Hormuz, With a Grant Programme at Their Centre

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

The government will submit three related bills, including a subsidy programme aimed at reducing Japan's dependence on the Strait of Hormuz, according to Asahi Shimbun, in its first legislative response to the Gulf conflict's effect on energy supply.

The programme, described in reports as a grant for moving away from Hormuz, would fund measures that reduce the share of Japan's energy that passes through the strait: diversified crude sources, stockpiles, domestic refining and alternative fuels.

The bills follow Foreign Minister Motegi's statement that Japan will pursue safe navigation in the strait and refuse additional costs for restoring it, which places the government's money at home rather than abroad.

The strait's constriction in the seventh month of the conflict has raised the price of petrol, kept the fuel subsidy at record cost and made the Japan Agricultural News' report on the rising importance of domestic refineries a matter of policy.

The American-Iranian talks reported by Yomiuri Shimbun this week, with the conditions for reopening the strait among their subjects, are the development that could end the constriction; the bills assume it will not end soon.

The extraordinary Diet session will receive the bills alongside the consumption tax cut, the typhoon recovery and the security document revision, and their financing will face the same long-term rate, at a 30-year high, as every other item.

Reducing dependence on a route that carries most of Japan's crude oil is a decades-long project, and the grants would begin it rather than complete it.

Japan's stockpiles, built since the 1970s, and its refining capacity, shrunk over two decades and now reconsidered, are the existing instruments the programme would extend.

The three bills' details, including the size of the grants and their recipients, were not included in the report, and the Diet's committees will examine them.

For households, the programme's success would be measured at the pump, over years rather than sessions.

POLITICS

Satsuki Katayama at the Finance Ministry: A Former Official Now Making the Calls

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama, whose telephone call with the American Treasury Secretary confirmed that the yen's undervaluation is a problem, is the first woman to hold the post and a former official of the ministry she now leads.

She joined the finance ministry after university and served in its budget and other bureaus before entering politics in 2005, when she was elected to the House of Representatives as one of the candidates the Koizumi government fielded against opponents of postal privatisation.

She later moved to the House of Councillors, served as minister for regional revitalisation and women's empowerment, and became known as a forceful advocate of the ministry's fiscal discipline and, later, of a more expansive line.

Her appointment under the Takaichi government placed a minister with the ministry's own training at its head at a moment when its arguments, against a consumption tax cut and for caution on defence financing, face a government committed to both.

The yen is the other test. A finance minister who confirms with Washington that the currency is undervalued has prepared the ground for intervention, and the ministry's rate checks and the memory of July

31 give the preparation force.

Growth Strategy Minister Kiuchi's statement that Abenomics-style reflation is over aligns with a finance ministry that regarded the weak yen as a cost long before the government said so.

Katayama's task in the Diet session is to finance a tax cut she was trained to resist, a typhoon recovery whose designation as a severe disaster raises the state's share, and three bills to reduce dependence on Hormuz, at a long-term rate of 3.075%.

Her telephone call was the week's quietest significant act, and it may be followed by louder ones if the yen continues toward 160.

The ministry's officials, her former colleagues, will brief her on the levels they defend and the moments they choose.

A minister who knows the building is one the building cannot easily surprise.

INTERNATIONAL

The Spouses in the Photograph: Peng Liyuan, Melania Trump and the Quiet Diplomacy of a State Visit

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The official photograph on today's front page shows four people rather than two: the presidents and their wives, side by side in the Oval Office with a model of the presidential aircraft on the table before them.

Peng Liyuan, in a dark high-collared dress, was a celebrated singer before her husband's rise, a soprano who performed for decades on Chinese television and in the army's performing troupe, and she is among the most recognised women in China.

Her role on state visits has been cultivated as a softer face of Chinese diplomacy, with appearances at schools, hospitals and cultural events that the visits' formal programmes lack.

Melania Trump, in black, has kept a smaller public role than most of her predecessors, and her appearances at state visits are among the few occasions on which she is photographed in the official programme.

State visits are choreographed around the spouses as well as the leaders: the arrival ceremony, the exchange of gifts, the state dinner and the photographs are designed to show two countries rather than two governments.

The Oval Office photograph, taken by the White House's own photographers and released as a government work, is the kind of image that survives a summit longer than its communique.

For Japanese readers, the equivalent images are those of the Emperor and Empress receiving visiting leaders, and of the Prime Minister's spouse at the meetings that accompany summits abroad.

The photograph's warmth contrasts with the summit's substance, in which the Chinese leader demanded opposition to Taiwan's independence and invoked a wartime frame aimed at Japan, and the contrast is the point of such images.

The model on the table, of the presidential aircraft in its livery, is the kind of detail the photographers arrange and the kind that draws the eye.

Four people, one room, one photograph: the visit's most durable record is also its least informative, and it was meant to be.

SOCIETY

The Storm's Numbers, Saturday

Compiled by the Society Desk

11 dead in Chiba and Kanagawa; some still missing.

1: severe-disaster designation the government plans to make.

37 schools closed; more than 500 with facility damage.

1 breached embankment at Inbanuma, under emergency repair; flooding continues.

Several months to restore Chiba's roads and rails; the Kominato Railway suspended in sections.

No. 26, Surige: near Okinawa on the 27th and 28th; Kyushu and Honshu possible after.

80%: Tokyo's chance of rain today (Asahi); Chiba under warning-level rain.

150: areas in Chiba without power, with no outlook.

30 times: one clinic's influenza rate against normal.

1 mascot, Chiba-kun, with its activities suspended.

POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi addressing the United Nations General Assembly in New York earlier this week. Her government described the summit's wartime remark as 'within expectations', declining to be provoked. (Photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

'Within Expectations': Why Tokyo Chose Calm as Its Answer to the Wartime Frame

The Prime Minister's government declined to rise to Xi's remark about Japanese militarism, a decision that fits a week of restraint

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The Japanese government's response to President Xi's remark that China and the United States fought against the Japanese militaristic aggressors was two words: within expectations, according to Asahi Shimbun and Sankei News.

The phrase was chosen for what it withholds. A protest would have made the remark a dispute; silence would have let it stand; calling it expected denies it the status of an event.

The Prime Minister, shown above at the General Assembly rostrum on Tuesday, has conducted the week on the same principle, stating positions and declining provocations.

Beijing's use of 1945 has been consistent through the week: the Foreign Ministry's insistence that the Charter's former enemy clauses are important for the post-war order, and now the wartime frame placed around the summit itself.

The frame's purpose, as the editorial columns argued on Thursday, is to describe Japan by its past whenever it reaches for a larger role in the present, and to invite Washington to see the alliance with Tokyo as a departure from a natural order.

Mr. Trump's remark that China was an ally is historically true of the years 1941 to 1945 and irrelevant to the alliance of 1951 that has governed the Pacific since; Tokyo's calm reflects a confidence that Washington knows the difference.

Taipei's rebuttal, that it was the Republic of China that fought alongside the United States, makes the same historical point from the other side of the strait, and Tokyo will have noted that the correction came from Taiwan rather than from Japan.

The government's attention is on the sentence that was not published: Mr. Trump's remarks on Taiwan, which Yomiuri reports he did not disclose after Mr. Xi's demand for opposition to independence.

That absence is the week's real question for Japan, and the alliance briefing that follows every summit is where the foreign ministry will seek the words.

Calm is a policy only if it is followed by insistence in private, and the government's test is whether the briefing produces the sentence.

The Prime Minister returns to a Diet session with a tax cut at its head and a typhoon recovery whose toll rose to eleven on Friday, and the wartime frame will not be allowed to displace either.

Within expectations is what a government says when it intends to answer elsewhere.

POLITICS

Monetisation Suspended, Identities Verified: The Design for Elections Without Misinformation

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

Monetisation will be suspended and identity verification tightened to combat false information and misinformation during elections, according to Yomiuri Shimbun, in a system design for digital elections that follows a series of campaigns shaped by online content.

The measures target the economics of misinformation. Content that earns advertising revenue for its creators has an incentive to be sensational, and suspending monetisation during campaigns removes the incentive for the period in

which it does most harm.

Identity verification addresses anonymous accounts, which have been the source of much of the false content in recent elections and which are difficult to hold accountable under existing law.

The design follows elections in which candidates' fortunes turned on video platforms, in which false claims spread faster than corrections, and in which the platforms' own measures proved inadequate.

The measures would apply to platforms operating in Japan, which will be asked to implement them during official campaign periods, and the details of enforcement were not included in the report.

The Tokyo District Court's ruling on the same day, that the blanket ban on campaigning by under-18s is unconstitutional, points in the opposite direction, toward freer expression, and the two developments will have to be reconciled in the same law.

Civil liberties groups will ask who decides what is false, and the design's answer to that question will determine its acceptance.

Japan's approach has been lighter than the European Union's, which imposes obligations on large platforms directly, and the measures reported by Yomiuri move it toward a middle ground.

The next national election is the test, and the platforms' co-operation will be the measure of the design's success.

For voters, the promise is an election in which what they see online is at least attributable, and no longer paid for by the click.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: The Sentence Washington Did Not Publish Is the One Tokyo Must Read

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

Yomiuri Shimbun's report that President Trump did not disclose the content of his remarks on Taiwan, after President Xi demanded opposition to independence, leaves the summit's most important sentence unread.

Non-disclosure is not the same as concession. Presidents decline to publish remarks for many reasons, including a wish not to hand Beijing a quotation, and the emphasis on co-operation in Friday's accounts suggested a meeting that avoided new formulations.

But non-disclosure is also not reaffirmation. The American verb on Taiwan, does not support independence, has been the alliance's shared assumption since Japan and the United States put the strait into their joint statement in 2021, and an unpublished answer to a demand for a different verb is a gap in the record.

Tokyo's task is to close the gap through the alliance briefing that follows every summit, and to obtain the words verbatim rather than in summary.

The television networks' boycott of the talks, in protest at CNN's exclusion, means there are no pictures to consult, which makes the briefing the only route.

Taipei's rebuttal on the wartime alliance shows that Taiwan is reading the same absence and answering what it can; Tokyo's within expectations shows a government declining to be provoked while it waits

for the sentence.

If the words held, the summit changed nothing on the question Japan cares about most, and the calm was warranted. If they moved, Beijing will build on them, and Tokyo will need to say so to Washington before Beijing says so to the world.

Taro Suzuki's cartoon this morning draws the demand as a document headed PEACEFUL TAKEOVER, and the editorial argues that an answer left unpublished is an answer that coercion can fill.

The farm purchases due on Monday will dominate the summit's headlines through the weekend; the Taiwan sentence will dominate its consequences.

Tokyo should ask for it in writing, this week, and should be prepared to say what it says.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: 'China Was an Ally': Three Words With Two Histories

By William | Senior Political Analyst

President Trump's remark that China was an ally, and President Xi's that the two countries fought against the Japanese militaristic aggressors, are true of one period and misleading about every period since.

From 1941 to 1945, the United States and China fought Japan together, and American aid flowed to the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek through Burma and over the Himalayas.

That government lost the civil war in 1949 and retreated to Taiwan, where it continues as the Republic of China, and Taipei's rebuttal on Friday, that it was the Republic of China that fought alongside the United States, is the historically exact reading.

The People's Republic fought the United States in Korea within a year of its founding, and the two countries were adversaries until the opening of 1971 and the normalisation of 1979.

Japan, meanwhile, became the United States' treaty ally in 1951, and the alliance has been the Pacific's organising fact for 75 years.

Mr. Xi's use of the wartime frame at a summit with the United States is therefore not history but strategy: an invitation to Washington to see its alliance with Tokyo as a departure from a natural order, and a reminder to Tokyo that Beijing will describe it by its past.

Mr. Trump's three words gave the frame a courtesy it did not deserve, though the emphasis on co-operation and the alliance's institutional depth make the courtesy cheap.

Tokyo's within expectations was the correct answer, and Taipei's correction the correct footnote.

The frame will return, at the next summit and the next anniversary, because it is useful to Beijing, and the answer will be the same: calm, correction and the alliance's continued existence.

Three words with two histories, and the second history is the one that governs the Pacific.

INTERNATIONAL

Cairo, 1943: The Alliance Xi Invoked, and the Government That Was Actually There

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

President Xi's remark that China and the United States fought against Japanese militaristic aggressors, and Taipei's reply that it was the Republic of China that fought alongside America, both point to a conference held in Cairo in November 1943.

There, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill met Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Republic of China, and the three issued the declaration that set the Allies' war aims against Japan, including the return of territories Japan had taken.

Chiang's presence at Cairo was the high point of China's standing among the wartime Allies, and the government he led received American aid through Burma and over the Himalayas, and hosted the American airmen known as the Flying Tigers.

The Communist forces that Mao Zedong led fought Japan as well, in the north, but the state that the Allies recognised, that signed the surrender documents and that took China's permanent seat at the United Nations in 1945 was Chiang's.

In 1949, Chiang's government lost the civil war and withdrew to Taiwan, where the Republic of China continues, and the People's Republic that Mao

founded took the mainland and, in 1971, the United Nations seat.

Beijing's claim to the wartime alliance rests on the continuity of the Chinese state; Taipei's rests on the continuity of the government that fought, and the Cairo declaration, in Beijing's reading, is also the basis for its claim that Taiwan was returned to China.

The history is therefore contested at every point, and Mr. Xi's use of it at a summit where he demanded opposition to Taiwan's independence was an attempt to enlist the wartime alliance against the island that the wartime ally now governs.

Japan's position is that the history of 1945 is settled by the treaties that followed, including the peace treaty of 1951 and the normalisation with Beijing in 1972, and that the present arrangements, not the past's ownership, govern the region.

The Japanese government's calm response, within expectations, reflects that view, and Taipei's correction supplies the historical footnote that Tokyo preferred not to write.

Cairo was 83 years ago; its declaration is cited this week by both governments that claim to be its heir.

INTERNATIONAL

'It Was the Republic of China That Fought Alongside the United States': Taipei Answers Xi

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Taiwan countered President Xi's remark that China and the United States had fought against Japanese militaristic aggressors with a correction of its own: that it was the Republic of China that fought alongside the United States, according to the reports available.

The rebuttal turns Beijing's history against it. The Chinese government that received American aid, fought the Pacific war and signed the surrender as an ally was the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek, which lost the civil war in 1949 and retreated to Taiwan, where the Republic of China continues.

The People's Republic, founded in 1949, inherits the state but not, in Taipei's telling, the alliance, and Mr. Xi's use of the wartime frame at a summit where he demanded opposition to Taiwan's independence gave Taipei both the motive and the opening to say so.

The exchange matters to Japan because the wartime frame is aimed at Tokyo, and because Taiwan's correction makes an argument that Japanese diplomats prefer others to make.

Beijing's claim to the wartime alliance underpins its demand for a place at the top of the post-war order and its description of Japan as the order's permanent defendant, and Taipei's rebuttal contests the claim at its root.

Mr. Trump's remark that China was an ally did not specify which China, and the ambiguity is one that Washington has managed for decades through its one-China policy and its unofficial relations with Taipei.

Taiwan's government has cultivated the memory of the wartime alliance as part of its case for American support, and the rebuttal continues that effort in the week's most visible forum.

For Tokyo, the exchange is a reminder that the history of 1945 is contested among the parties who claim it, and that Japan's interest lies in the present arrangements rather than the past's ownership.

The undisclosed American remarks on Taiwan remain the summit's unread sentence, and Taipei, like Tokyo, will be seeking them through its own channels.

The rebuttal will not change Beijing's frame, but it places on the record a fact that the frame omits.

INTERNATIONAL



A B-2 bomber and its fighter escorts pass over the flag during the arrival ceremony for President Xi Jinping's state visit to the White House. In the talks that followed the honours, Xi said the two countries had fought against 'the Japanese militaristic aggressors' and Trump said China 'was an ally', according to Asahi Shimbun and Sankei News. (White House Official)

INTERNATIONAL

'We Fought Against the Japanese Militaristic Aggressors': The Frame Beijing Brought to the White House

The welcome photographed earlier in the week gave way to a summit in which 1945 was invoked against an ally, and the ally declined to answer

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

President Xi Jinping told the White House summit that China and the United States had fought against the Japanese militaristic aggressors, and President Trump said that China was an ally, according to Asahi Shimbun and Sankei News.

The photograph above, an official White House image, shows the flyover that marked the state visit's arrival ceremony: a B-2 bomber and its fighter escorts passing over the flag. The words were spoken in the talks that followed the honours.

The Japanese government's response was that the exchange was within expectations, a phrase that denies the remark the status of an event and reflects a week in which Beijing has used 1945 repeatedly.

On Wednesday, China's Foreign Ministry insisted that the Charter's former enemy clauses are important for the post-war order; on Thursday, its leader placed the summit inside the wartime alliance; the two are one argument.

Taiwan's rebuttal, that it was the Republic of China that fought alongside the United States, corrected the history from the other side of the strait, and it was the sharpest public answer the remark received.

Mr. Xi's demand at the same summit that the President oppose Taiwan's independence, and the President's undisclosed reply, connect the wartime frame to the present question: Beijing invokes the alliance of 1945 while asking Washington to abandon the ambiguity of 1979.

For Tokyo, the frame is an attempt to describe Japan by its past whenever it reaches for a larger role, and the government's calm is the response that gives the frame nothing to work with.

For Washington, the President's three words gave the frame a courtesy that the alliance's institutions will not, and the emphasis on co-operation in the accounts available suggests a meeting that did not move on Taiwan.

The five American television networks' refusal to broadcast the talks, in protest at CNN's exclusion, means that the words reached the world through readouts and wires rather than pictures.

Monday's announcement of Chinese farm purchases will give the summit its commercial content, and the alliance briefing on the Taiwan words its strategic one.

Taro Suzuki's cartoon this morning draws Beijing's warships around Taiwan and the allies holding their treaties, and the editorial page argues that a peace which needs a blockade is not one.

The wartime frame will return, at the next anniversary and the next summit, because it is useful; the answer, calm and correction, will return with it.

INTERNATIONAL

'Farmers Are Overjoyed': China May Expand U.S. Farm Purchases, With Results Due Monday

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

China may expand its purchases of American agricultural products following the summit, and President Trump said that farmers are overjoyed, with

the results to be announced on the 28th, according to Sankei News.

Agricultural purchases have been the currency of American-Chinese trade truces since the first one, in which Beijing committed to buy soybeans, corn, pork and other products in quantities that it did not always fulfil.

Monday's announcement will give the two-month truce extension its first concrete content, and it will be read in Japan for its effect on the markets in which Japanese buyers also operate.

Japan imports most of its soybeans, corn and wheat, much of it from the United States, and large Chinese purchases can raise prices for Japanese importers, feed makers and food processors.

Taro Suzuki's cartoon on Friday placed a bowl marked SOYBEANS AGAIN on the summit's table, and Monday's announcement will show whether the cartoonist's guess was right.

For American farmers, Chinese purchases restore a market that the tariff confrontation closed, and the President's remark addresses a constituency that has borne the trade war's costs.

For Beijing, purchases are the cheapest concession available: they buy goodwill, feed a population and leave the technology controls and the rare earth leverage untouched.

The announcement's timing, Monday, keeps the summit in the news through the weekend and gives the truce extension a positive headline before the harder questions return.

Japanese agricultural policy has its own preoccupations this weekend, with new rice selling for close to 1,000 yen in some shops, a level the agriculture minister called undesirable, and farmers in Chiba facing a harvest under warning-level rain.

The world's grain markets connect the two stories, and Monday's numbers will reach Japanese feed lots and bakeries within the season.

INTERNATIONAL

Promises of Purchase: The Farm Deals That Preceded Monday's Announcement

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Monday's announcement of Chinese purchases of American agricultural products, promised by President Trump with the words that farmers are overjoyed, follows a history of such promises made and partly kept.

The trade agreement of January 2020, known as Phase One, committed China to buy an additional 200 billion dollars of American goods over two years, including tens of billions in farm products, above the levels of 2017.

The purchases fell far short of the commitment, as the pandemic, the trade war's own effects and China's other suppliers intervened, and the shortfall became an argument in every subsequent negotiation.

Soybeans are the centrepiece, since China is the world's largest importer and American growers

depend on the market, and Brazil's expansion as a supplier has given Beijing an alternative it uses when relations sour.

Purchases are the cheapest concession Beijing can offer: they buy goodwill and feed a population, and they leave technology controls and rare earth leverage untouched, which is why they feature in every truce.

For Japan, large Chinese purchases can raise world prices for the soybeans, corn and wheat it imports, most of them from the United States, and Japanese feed makers and food processors watch the announcements.

Taro Suzuki's cartoon on Friday placed a bowl marked SOYBEANS AGAIN on the summit's table, and Monday's numbers will show whether the cartoonist guessed right.

The two-month truce extension, to late November, gives the purchases a framework and a deadline, and the pattern of past truces suggests the deadline will be extended again.

American farmers, who bore the trade war's costs through lost markets and were compensated with subsidies, have reason to welcome the announcement and experience to doubt its fulfilment.

The results on Monday will be counted against the promises of 2020, and the count will shape the next round.

INTERNATIONAL

Five U.S. Networks Refuse to Broadcast the Summit Talks in Protest at CNN's Exclusion

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The five major American television networks declined to broadcast the American-Chinese summit talks, returning their press passes in protest at the exclusion of CNN, according to the reports available.

The boycott meant that the most consequential meeting of the year between the two powers reached the world through official photographs, readouts and wire reports rather than through the networks' cameras.

Press pools, in which a small group of journalists covers an event on behalf of all, depend on the principle that the group is chosen by the press rather than by the government, and the exclusion of one network broke that principle in the networks' view.

The American press corps has clashed with the White House over access throughout the President's second term, and the summit boycott is the sharpest expression of the dispute so far.

For Japanese readers, the boycott is one reason the summit's Taiwan exchange is known only through Yomiuri's report that Mr. Trump did not disclose his remarks: the pictures that would ordinarily have carried the leaders' words were not made.

Japanese broadcasters, which rely on American network pictures for White House events, carried the official images and the statements instead.

The exclusion of CNN followed disputes over the network's coverage, and the other networks' solidarity is unusual in an industry that competes for access.

Taro Suzuki's cartoon on Tuesday, showing a press pool drained of reporters, anticipated the dispute, and the editorial that day argued that a pool chosen by the government is not a pool.

The White House's own photographs, released as government works, are the visual record of the summit, and one appears on today's front page.

The boycott's effect on the summit's reception is a question for American politics; its effect on the record is that the words on Taiwan remain unheard.

INTERNATIONAL

The Pool and the Passes: How a Boycott of a Summit Came About

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The five American television networks' refusal to broadcast the summit talks, and their return of press passes in protest at CNN's exclusion, is the culmination of a dispute over who decides which journalists cover the President.

The White House press pool was created so that a small group of journalists could cover events that the whole press corps could not attend, on the understanding that the group was chosen by the press and that its reports were shared with all.

Disputes over the pool's composition have arisen in

every administration, but the exclusion of a network for its coverage, rather than for space, broke the principle that the pool is the press's rather than the government's.

The networks' solidarity is unusual in an industry that competes fiercely for access, and it reflects a judgment that access granted on the government's terms is not worth having.

For Japanese broadcasters, which rely on American network pictures for White House events, the boycott meant carrying official images and statements instead.

Japan's own press club system, in which accredited organisations share access to ministries and officials, has faced criticism for the opposite problem: exclusivity that keeps outsiders out rather than a government that keeps insiders out.

Taro Suzuki's cartoon on Tuesday drew a press pool drained of reporters, and the editorial that day argued that a pool chosen by the government is not a pool; the week's events have followed the cartoon.

The official White House photographs, released as government works, remain the summit's visual record, and one appears on today's front page.

The dispute will continue past the summit, and the networks' return to the pool will depend on the terms.

The words on Taiwan that Yomiuri reports were not disclosed are, in part, words that no camera was there to record.

INTERNATIONAL

Lee Jae-myung Says the Handover of Two North Korean Soldiers Breached a Confidential Agreement

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

President Lee Jae-myung of South Korea has posted that the extradition of two North Korean soldiers to South Korea violates a confidential agreement, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

The post concerns the handover reported on Friday, in which President Zelensky of Ukraine transferred North Korean prisoners captured in Russia's war to the South.

Yomiuri's report gives the number as two, and the President's statement indicates that the transfer was governed by an arrangement whose terms were not meant to be public.

The nature of the breach was not detailed in the report available, and the post raises the possibility of disagreement between Seoul and Kyiv over how the transfer was handled or disclosed.

The soldiers, captured by Ukrainian forces in the Kursk region, presented every government involved with a problem: Russia did not acknowledge them, North Korea did not want them back alive, and Ukraine held prisoners of a war their country had not declared.

South Korea's position, that captured soldiers who wish to go south should be allowed to, rests on its constitution's treatment of all Koreans as its citizens.

For Japan, the episode is part of the hardening alignment between Pyongyang and Moscow, which reaches the seas around Japan and which the trilateral framework with Washington and Seoul is meant to address.

The Prime Minister met Mr. Zelensky in New York this week and assured him of continued sanctions on Russia, and Japan's interest in the handover lies in what it reveals about North Korean forces in the war.

Pyongyang had not responded in the accounts available, and its silence on its soldiers in Russia has been consistent since the deployment became known.

A confidential agreement made public by the President who says it was breached is an unusual turn, and the details will follow.

INTERNATIONAL

The Other Ally in the Cartoon: The Philippines, Its Treaty and the Sea China Contests

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Taro Suzuki's cartoon this morning places a Filipino figure beside the Japanese and American ones, holding a document marked MUTUAL DEFENSE, and the figure represents the other Pacific ally that Beijing's pressure has reached.

The Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Philippines dates from 1951, the same

INTERNATIONAL

year as the treaty with Japan, and it commits each to respond to an armed attack on the other in the Pacific.

Its meaning has been tested in the South China Sea, where China's coast guard and maritime militia have confronted Philippine vessels around shoals that both claim, and where the United States has said the treaty covers Philippine ships and aircraft.

The Philippines has expanded American access to its bases under an agreement first reached in 2014, with sites in the north facing Taiwan added in 2023, so that the archipelago's defence and Taiwan's have become connected.

Japan and the Philippines have deepened their own security ties, with a reciprocal access agreement for their forces signed in 2024, coast guard co-operation and Japanese patrol vessels supplied to Manila.

The three countries, with Australia, now conduct joint patrols and exercises, and the network around the South China Sea and Taiwan is the structure that Beijing's pressure meets.

Mr. Xi's demand at the White House for opposition to Taiwan's independence, and the blockade drills the cartoon draws, are the same pressure applied to the island at the network's centre.

The Philippines' position, geographically between Taiwan and the sea China claims, makes it the ally whose treaty would be tested first in a crisis, and its government has said so.

Suzuki's signpost marked NEIGHBORS, with Philippine and American flags, is the cartoonist's statement that the alliance is a neighbourhood rather than a chain of bilateral deals.

Allies are not a delivery service, the cartoon's American figure says; the Philippines, holding the net, is the ally with the most to lose if they were.

INTERNATIONAL

Pressure and Blockade Drills: What China's Exercises Around Taiwan Have Practised

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

The warships arranged around Taiwan in Taro Suzuki's cartoon, marked PRESSURE and BLOCKADE DRILL, refer to exercises that China's forces have conducted with growing frequency and scale.

Since 2022, when a visit by the American House Speaker prompted the largest exercises in decades, China has staged drills that surround the island, practise the closure of its ports and rehearse the interception of ships and aircraft approaching it.

The exercises have been named, announced and mapped by Beijing, with zones declared around Taiwan's coasts, and their purpose is to demonstrate that a blockade is within China's capability.

A blockade would be the coercive middle option between political pressure and invasion, and Taiwan's dependence on imported energy and food makes it the option analysts study most.

Japan's stake is direct: its south-western islands lie within the exercise zones' reach, the sea lanes on which its own imports depend pass beside Taiwan, and its security documents plan for the contingency the drills rehearse.

The exercises have also tested Japan's own forces, which monitor them, and the alliance's coordination, which has grown through joint planning since the strait entered the leaders' statements in 2021.

Mr. Xi's demand at the White House for opposition to Taiwan's independence is the political face of the same pressure, and the cartoon's document headed PEACEFUL TAKEOVER, with its instruction to handle the allies with prudence, is the cartoonist's reading of it.

Beijing describes its exercises as responses to provocations and its aim as peaceful reunification, and the cartoon's title, that a peace which needs a blockade is not one, is the editorial page's answer.

The American reply to the demand has not been published, which leaves the pressure's political dimension unanswered on the record.

The drills will continue, since they are the instrument Beijing has chosen; the question the week leaves is what the allies say when the next one is announced.

INTERNATIONAL

Where They Meet Next: The Calendar After the State Visit

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

The state visit has ended with a two-month truce, a farm-purchase announcement due on Monday and an undisclosed sentence on Taiwan, and the calendar shows when the two leaders could next meet.

China hosts the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit this year, in Shenzhen in November, and the gathering of the region's leaders would place the two presidents in the same city at the truce's expiry.

APEC summits have been the venue for American-Chinese meetings before, and the timing gives the truce extension a natural deadline and a natural stage for its renewal.

For Japan, the Shenzhen summit is where the Prime Minister would meet Mr. Xi, and the wartime frame that Beijing brought to the White House would be the background to any such encounter.

The Group of Twenty summit, also later in the year, is the other multilateral occasion, and the two leaders' schedules will be read for whether they meet at either.

Between now and then, the working-level talks that the summit set in motion, on farm purchases, on the truce's terms and on the technology controls that remain in place, will produce the substance that the leaders will bless or not.

Japan's own working-level talks with Washington, on minerals and chips, confirmed on Tuesday, run in parallel, and the alliance briefing on the Taiwan words is the first item on their agenda.

The Prime Minister's meetings in New York this week, with the American president, the Ukrainian president and others, set Japan's positions before the state visit; the autumn's summits will test them after it.

Beijing's calendar includes its own anniversaries and its own exercises around Taiwan, which have been announced with less warning than summits.

The next meeting is on the calendar; the next drill is not, and the neighbourhood watches both.

ECONOMY

'Abenomics-Style Reflation Is Over': The Growth Strategy Minister Closes a Decade

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Growth Strategy Minister Minoru Kiuchi said that Abenomics-style reflationary policies are over, according to Asahi Shimbun, in the clearest statement yet from the Takaichi government that the economic era of the 2010s has ended.

Abenomics, the programme launched by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2013, rested on three arrows: aggressive monetary easing, flexible fiscal spending and structural reform, with the first arrow the one that flew furthest.

The Bank of Japan's purchases of government bonds, its negative interest rate and its control of the yield curve were the reflationary core, intended to end deflation and to weaken a yen that had strengthened through the financial crisis.

The programme succeeded in its first aim, ending the deflation that had persisted since the 1990s, and it produced a weak yen that supported exporters and the stock market for a decade.

Its costs arrived later: inflation that outran wages, a currency at 159 that raises the price of everything imported, and a central bank holding half the bond market.

Kiuchi's statement, from a minister whose title is growth strategy, describes a government that regards the weak yen as a problem, as Finance Minister Katayama and the American Treasury Secretary agreed by telephone the same day.

The Bank of Japan's policy rate of 1.25%, the highest in about 31 years, and the long-term rate's rise to 3.075%, the highest in 30, are the monetary expression of the same turn.

What replaces reflation is less clear. The government's growth strategy emphasises investment in artificial intelligence, semiconductors and economic security, financed by a budget whose borrowing costs are rising.

The Prime Minister's own economic instincts have

been associated with the Abe era, and her minister's statement suggests a distinction between its fiscal ambitions, which continue, and its monetary methods, which do not.

For markets, the statement confirms what the rate rises had already signalled: the era of the weak yen as policy is closed, and the era of the yen as problem has begun.

ECONOMY

Why Tokyo Calls Washington Before It Sells Dollars

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Finance Minister Katayama's call with the American Treasury Secretary, confirming that the yen's undervaluation is a problem, follows a rule that governs Japanese currency intervention: Washington is told first.

The Group of Seven's members have agreed for decades that exchange rates should reflect fundamentals and that disorderly movements are undesirable, and they consult before acting, since one member's intervention affects the others' currencies.

The American Treasury publishes a report on its trading partners' currency practices and maintains a monitoring list, and a Japanese intervention conducted without American acquiescence would risk a place on it and a dispute with the ally whose bond market Japan's reserves are invested in.

The joint intervention of July 31, in which both countries bought yen, was the strongest form of acquiescence, and the call this week suggests the ground is being prepared for a repeat if the currency continues toward 160.

A shared view that the yen is undervalued also matters for the market's psychology: traders who bet on further depreciation must weigh the possibility that two treasuries, rather than one, will act against them.

The finance ministry's instruments run from the rate check, a telephone call to dealers, through verbal warnings by the minister, to the sale of dollars from the reserves, and each step is more credible when Washington has agreed the diagnosis.

The Bank of Japan's policy rate of 1.25% and the long-term rate at a 30-year high have not closed the gap with American rates, which is why the currency's weakness persists and why intervention, rather than rates, is the tool at hand.

The Growth Strategy Minister's statement that Abenomics-style reflation is over frames the yen as a problem rather than a policy, and the call frames it as a shared one.

Monday's farm-purchase announcement in Washington, and the market's reading of the summit, will set the currency's first test of the week.

The call has been made; the order to sell, if it comes, will follow the currency's path.

ECONOMY

New Rice at Close to 1,000 Yen in Some Shops: The Minister Calls It 'Undesirable', and Flooded Farmers Are 'Slapped Back and Forth'

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

Some shops are selling new rice for close to 1,000 yen, and the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has called the level undesirable, according to NTV News, which reported that typhoon-affected farmers are being slapped back and forth by the sharp fall in prices and the damage to their crops.

The figure is a sharp drop from the 2,000-yen range for a five-kilogram bag that the average price returned to this month, and the reports did not specify the size of the bags selling for close to 1,000 yen.

Rice prices have swung violently over two years, from the shortage and surge of 2024 and 2025, when the government released reserves and imports rose, to the fall that new rice has now brought.

A collapse in price during the harvest is the worst outcome for growers, who sell most of their crop at the season's prices and who cannot recover the cost of production if the price falls below it.

For farmers in Chiba, whose fields have been re-flooded during the harvest, the price fall compounds the damage: the crop they save sells for less, and the crop they lose is gone.

The minister's description of the price as undesirable

reflects a policy that seeks stable prices, high enough for growers to continue and low enough for consumers to afford, and a market that has delivered neither.

Retailers selling new rice cheaply may be clearing stock ahead of the harvest's main arrival, or competing for customers who fled rice for other staples during the surge.

The government's tools include reserve purchases, which support prices by removing rice from the market, and the direct payments to growers that the agricultural co-operatives have demanded.

The consumption tax on food will fall to 1% from April 2027, which will lower the price of rice at the till further, though not the price the grower receives.

Slapped back and forth is the growers' own phrase, and it describes a season in which the weather and the market have both turned against them.

ECONOMY

From Shortage to Glut in Eighteen Months: How the Rice Reserve Was Used Last Year

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

New rice selling for close to 1,000 yen, a level the agriculture minister calls undesirable, is the mirror image of the shortage that dominated Japanese food policy through 2024 and 2025.

The shortage began with a poor harvest, a surge in demand from tourism and stockpiling, and a distribution system that could not respond, and it drove the price of a five-kilogram bag past 4,000 yen in the spring of 2025.

The government released rice from its reserve, first through auctions that barely moved the price and then through direct sales to retailers at around 2,000 yen, which brought cheaper rice to shelves within weeks.

Imports rose, tariff-free quotas were used and private importers brought in foreign rice that Japanese consumers had rarely bought, and the price fell through the summer.

Farmers responded to the high prices by planting more, and the new harvest, arriving now, is large, which is the origin of the glut that has some shops selling new rice for close to 1,000 yen.

The reserve, built for shortages, can also be used for gluts, by buying rice to remove it from the market and support the price, and the minister's word undesirable suggests the government is considering it.

For growers in Chiba, whose fields have been re-flooded during the harvest, the glut is the second blow, and the crop insurance that a severe-disaster designation would extend is the first relief.

Japanese rice policy has swung between over-production and shortage for decades, and the past two years have compressed the swing into a single cycle.

The consumption tax on food falls to 1% from April 2027, lowering the price at the till by a fraction of what the market has already taken off it.

Last year's reserve was used to bring the price down; this year's may be used to hold it up, and the reserve's managers have not had a quiet season.

SOCIETY

The Weekend at a Glance

Compiled by the Society Desk

Saturday: warning-level rain in Chiba and Ibaraki; Tokyo 80% chance of rain.

Saturday: marathons, track finals, football v North Korea, basketball final.

Saturday night: NHK Watch 9 on the typhoon, the rain and the beer tax.

Sunday: Surige near Okinawa; rough seas from Sunday.

Sunday: Aki Basho final day and the Emperor's Cup; playoff if needed.

Sunday: Japan Women's Open final round; Asian Games baseball concludes.

Sunday: decathlon day two; more track finals at Mizuho.

Monday: farm-purchase announcement in Washington; markets reopen.

Monday: the new morning drama begins on NHK.

Wednesday: verdict in the Mito nail artist murder case.

INTERNATIONAL



Vice President JD Vance announces the recovery of \$2.2 billion in fraudulent Affordable Care Act payments at a White House event, flanked by officials of the administration's task force against Obamacare fraud. (White House Official)

INTERNATIONAL

Washington's Fraud Task Force: \$2.2 Billion in Obamacare Fraud Recovered, the Vice President Announces

An official White House photograph shows JD Vance at the podium with the figure behind him; Japan, counting 325.7 billion yen lost to special fraud last year, is fighting a different kind of thief

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

Vice President JD Vance announced the recovery of 2.2 billion dollars in fraudulent payments under the Affordable Care Act, the health insurance law known as Obamacare, at a White House event shown in the official photograph above.

The backdrop carries the figure and the name of the administration's task force for stopping Obamacare fraud, and the Vice President is flanked by officials associated with the effort; the details of the recovery beyond the figure on the backdrop were not included in the reports available.

The Affordable Care Act, enacted in 2010, subsidises private health insurance bought through government marketplaces, and the subsidies are paid to insurers on behalf of the people enrolled.

Fraud in the marketplaces has centred on enrolment: brokers who sign people up without their knowledge, or switch them between plans, to collect commissions, and applications that misstate income to obtain larger subsidies.

The problem grew with the expansion of the subsidies during the pandemic, and the marketplace's regulators reported tens of thousands of complaints of unauthorised enrolment in 2024, before tightening the rules for brokers.

A recovery of 2.2 billion dollars would be among the largest sums reclaimed from the programme, and the announcement places the task force's work at the centre of the administration's argument that federal health spending is leaking.

For Japanese readers, the announcement invites a comparison with a different kind of fraud. Japan's police reported this week that special fraud, the telephone and online swindles that target the elderly, cost victims 325.7 billion yen last year, a record.

The American fraud is committed against the state, by intermediaries in a subsidy system; the Japanese fraud is committed against individuals, by criminal groups operating from abroad, and the two require different police.

Japan's own public health insurance, universal and administered through employers and municipalities, has its own fraud, in false claims by clinics and pharmacies, though on a scale that has not produced a task force with a podium.

The Vice President's event was part of a week in which the White House's own photographers supplied the visual record of American politics, from the state visit's Oval Office to the auditorium where the figure was announced.

Recoveries are announced; the cases behind them, in courts and audits, take years, and the figure on the backdrop will be tested by the accounting that follows.

Two billion dollars recovered in Washington and 325.7 billion yen lost in Japan describe two governments counting fraud in opposite directions.

ECONOMY

If China Buys More Soybeans, Japan's Feed Lots Pay More: The Chain Behind Monday's Announcement

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Monday's announcement of Chinese purchases of American agricultural products will reach Japan through the price of soybeans, corn and wheat, which the country imports in quantities that make it among the world's largest buyers.

Japan grows a small share of the soybeans it consumes, and imports the rest, most from the United States, Brazil and Canada, for tofu, soy sauce, cooking oil and, in the largest volumes, animal feed.

Corn for feed comes almost entirely from abroad, principally the United States, and wheat for bread and noodles largely from the United States, Canada and Australia.

Large Chinese purchases raise world prices by absorbing supply, and Japanese importers, who buy on the same markets, pay more, with the cost passing to feed lots, dairies and food processors.

The yen at 159 raises the cost further, since the purchases are priced in dollars, and the finance minister's call with Washington on the currency's undervaluation is connected to the grain markets in that way.

The trade war's earlier phases produced the opposite effect, as Chinese buyers left American soybeans and prices fell, which benefited Japanese importers at American farmers' expense.

Monday's numbers will be compared with the promises of 2020, which were only partly fulfilled, and Japanese buyers will hedge accordingly.

Japan's own rice glut, with new rice at close to 1,000 yen in some shops, runs alongside its dependence on imported grain, a contrast that describes an agricultural policy focused on one crop.

The de-Hormuz bills the government will submit address energy imports; grain imports depend on the same yen and the same shipping.

The chain from the White House to a Japanese feed lot runs through Chicago's futures markets, and it will move on Monday.

SPORTS

How the Climax Series Works, and Why the Weekend's Games Still Matter

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Professional baseball's weekend games continue the playoff races in both leagues, with SoftBank already Pacific League champions and the Central League still deciding its order.

The Climax Series, the post-season format used since 2007, admits the top three teams of each league, so that the weekend's games decide not only the pennants but the second and third places that carry a team into October.

The first stage pairs the second- and third-placed

teams in a best-of-three series at the home of the second-placed team; the winner advances to the final stage against the league champion.

The final stage is a best-of-six at the champion's home, in which the champion begins with a one-win advantage, so that the pennant winner needs three wins and the challenger four.

The two league winners of the final stage meet in the Japan Series, the best-of-seven championship that closes the season in late October or early November.

The format rewards the regular season's winner with home advantage and a head start, and it has produced upsets nonetheless, with third-placed teams reaching and winning the Japan Series.

For the teams contesting second and third place this weekend, every game changes the arithmetic, and for those already out, the games decide the draft order and the season's final standings.

The weekend's fixtures compete for attention with the Asian Games, the Aki Basho's final days and the Japan Women's Open, in the most crowded sporting weekend of the autumn.

The Asian Games baseball squad, drawn from the corporate leagues because the professional season is running, plays its Super Round game against Chinese Taipei today while the professionals contest their races.

October's post-season begins within a fortnight, and the weekend's results write its first chapter.

ECONOMY

One Rate for Every Beer: The October Liquor Tax Change That NHK Will Explain Tonight

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

NHK's Saturday Watch 9 will feature the liquor tax reform that takes effect in October, according to the programme's preview, completing the unification of the tax rates on beer and its cheaper imitations.

For decades, Japan taxed beer by its malt content, and brewers responded by creating beverages with less malt, or none, that tasted like beer and were taxed at a fraction of the rate: happoshu in the 1990s, and the so-called third beer, made from other grains or spirits, in the 2000s.

The result was a market of three tiers, in which the same shelf held beer, happoshu and third beer at different prices for similar products, and a tax system that rewarded ingenuity over quality.

The reform, enacted in 2017 and implemented in three stages in 2020, 2023 and now 2026, unifies the rates so that all beer-like beverages are taxed the same per volume.

The final stage raises the tax on third beer to the unified level and lowers the tax on beer to meet it, so that beer becomes cheaper and its imitations dearer.

Brewers have already shifted their portfolios, relaunching beers and retiring third-beer brands, and the October change will complete the shift on the shelf.

For consumers, the change is visible in the price of a can: beer down, third beer up, and the choice between them made on taste rather than tax.

The reform's revenue effect is intended to be neutral, and its purpose was to end a distortion that had made Japan's beer market unlike any other in the world.

The change arrives with the consumption tax on food, though not on alcohol, due to fall to 1% from April 2027, so that the two taxes on a supermarket basket will move in different directions.

Tonight's programme will explain the change to a public that has lived with three tiers of beer for a generation.

ECONOMY

The Three Arrows, and Which Ones Flew

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Growth Strategy Minister Kiuchi's statement that Abenomics-style reflation is over invites an accounting of the programme it closes.

Abenomics was announced in early 2013 by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, returning to office after the Democratic Party's three years, with the image of three arrows that would succeed together where each alone would fail.

The first arrow was monetary: the Bank of Japan, under Governor Haruhiko Kuroda from March 2013,

committed to a 2% inflation target and to bond purchases on a scale never attempted, later adding a negative interest rate and control of the yield curve.

The second was fiscal: stimulus spending to support demand while the monetary expansion took effect, though consumption tax increases in 2014 and 2019 pulled in the opposite direction.

The third was structural: reforms to labour markets, corporate governance, agriculture and immigration, of which corporate governance advanced furthest and the others least.

The first arrow flew. Deflation ended, the yen fell from around 80 to the dollar to above 120, corporate profits and the stock market rose, and unemployment fell to levels not seen in decades.

Its costs arrived with the inflation of the 2020s: wages that lagged prices, a yen that fell past 150 and then 160, and a central bank that owned half the bond market and could not raise rates without loss.

The Bank of Japan's exit, from negative rates in 2024 to a policy rate of 1.25% this week, is the unwinding of the first arrow, and Kiuchi's statement is the government's acknowledgment of it.

The third arrow's unfinished business, from productivity to the labour market, is what the growth strategy that replaces reflation is meant to address.

Abenomics ended deflation and built a stock market; its successor must build wages, and it starts with a yen at 159 and a 10-year yield above 3%.

ECONOMY

Happoshu, Third Beer and the Tax That Invented Them

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

The unification of beer tax rates in October ends a story that began with a tax, a loophole and a national talent for exploiting one.

Japan's liquor tax on beer was among the highest in the world, and it applied to beverages with a malt content above a threshold, which left room below it.

In 1994, a brewer introduced happoshu, a low-malt beverage brewed to taste as much like beer as possible while falling below the threshold, and it was taxed at a far lower rate and sold at a far lower price.

The government raised the tax on happoshu, and the brewers lowered the malt content again; the government adjusted, and the brewers found the next gap, so that by the 2000s a third category, made without malt from peas, soybeans or spirits, was taxed lower still.

The result was a market in which the same brewers sold beer, happoshu and third beer side by side, with advertising that emphasised how close the cheaper ones came to the real thing.

Consumers took the deal, and third beer's share rose through the years of stagnant wages, while premium beer became a smaller part of the market.

The 2017 reform set out to end the distortion by unifying the rates over three stages, so that the incentive to imitate beer would disappear and the products would compete on taste.

The stages of 2020 and 2023 narrowed the gap, and October's completes it, with beer's tax falling and third beer's rising to the same level.

Brewers have already reshaped their lines, and the beers relaunched for the unified market are the tax's final products.

A tax invented two categories of drink; a reform is retiring them, and NHK will explain the change tonight.

ECONOMY



The Tokyo Stock Exchange at Kabutocho. Finance Minister Katayama and the U.S. Treasury Secretary confirmed by telephone that the yen's undervaluation is a problem, after the currency touched 159. (Photo: TG2 (CC))

ECONOMY

Katayama and Bessent Agree That the Yen's Undervaluation Is a Problem

A telephone call between the finance ministers follows the currency's fall to 159 and a week in which the long-term rate reached a 30-year high; the policy rate stays at 1.25%

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

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama held a telephone call with the American Treasury Secretary and confirmed that the undervaluation of the yen is a problem, according to Asahi Shimbun.

The call follows the currency's fall to the 159 level on Thursday, and it places the yen inside the alliance's conversation at the end of a week dominated by the American-Chinese summit.

An agreement between the two finance ministries that the yen is undervalued is the precondition for co-ordinated action, and the joint intervention of July 31, the first since 2011, was preceded by exactly such an understanding.

The Tokyo Stock Exchange, pictured above, closed the week on Friday after Thursday's rise to 65,513, and the market's reading of the call will come on Monday.

The Bank of Japan's policy rate of 1.25% continues, and long-term interest rates stand at their highest level in 30 years, at 3.075% on Thursday, which describes a Japan in which money is no longer cheap and the currency is still weak.

The combination is unusual. Higher rates would ordinarily support a currency, but American rates have risen with Japanese ones, and the gap that drives the yen's weakness has not narrowed.

The call's confirmation of a shared view gives the finance ministry a stronger hand in the rate checks and possible interventions that traders expect near the 160 level, since intervention with American acquiescence is more credible than intervention alone.

Growth Strategy Minister Minoru Kiuchi said that Abenomics-style reflationary policies are over, according to Asahi, a statement that draws a line under the decade of monetary expansion in which the weak yen was policy rather than problem.

The two statements together describe a government that now regards the currency's weakness as a cost, for households paying more for imported food and fuel, rather than as a stimulus for exporters.

Consumption tax register subsidies of up to 3.5 million yen are preparing small businesses for the 1% rate on food from April 2027, and Tokyo's used condominium prices continue their first decline in 28 months, two of the week's other economic markers.

Kobayashi Pharmaceutical's consideration of going private, through a fund's tender offer, is among the factors in a market restructuring that has seen companies leave the exchange as governance demands have grown.

The week ends with the yen near the levels the ministry has defended before, and with the two allies agreed, at least in a telephone call, that it should be higher.

Whether the agreement produces action will depend on the currency's path in the sessions after Monday's farm-purchase announcement in Washington.

For households, the call is a signal that the government regards 159 as a problem and not a policy; for the market, it is a warning about the next telephone call to the dealers.

ECONOMY

Markets, Rates and Prices at a Glance

Compiled by the Economics Desk

YEN: Finance Minister Katayama and the U.S. Treasury Secretary confirmed by telephone that the yen's undervaluation is a problem (Asahi). The currency touched 159 on Thursday.

RATES: Bank of Japan policy rate 1.25%, to continue. Long-term rate at its highest in 30 years (3.075% on Thursday).

NIKKEI 225: 65,513 on Thursday, up 495, a fourth consecutive gain; intraday high 66,249.

POLICY: Growth Strategy Minister Kiuchi says Abenomics-style reflation is over (Asahi).

RICE: New rice at close to 1,000 yen in some shops; the agriculture minister calls it undesirable (NTV).

TOURISM: Japan first in the Travel and Tourism Development Index; U.S. second, Spain third (Yomiuri).

JUNGLIA: Okinawa's theme park seeks additional loans and investment; attendance half of plan (Yomiuri).

TAX: Food consumption tax to 1% from April 2027; register subsidies up to 3.5 million yen. Beer tax rates unified in October.

PROPERTY: Tokyo used condominium prices in their first decline in 28 months.

SUMMIT TRADE: Chinese farm purchases expected; results due Monday, Sept. 28 (Sankei).

BUSINESS

Japan Ranks First in the World in the Travel and Tourism Development Index

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Japan ranks first in the world in the Travel and Tourism Development Index, ahead of the United States in second place and Spain in third, according to Yomiuri Shimbun, with its transport network and historical heritage rated highly.

The index, compiled by the World Economic Forum, measures the factors that enable tourism, from infrastructure and safety to natural and cultural resources, rather than visitor numbers alone.

First place confirms a position that the country's tourism boom has built: record visitor numbers, a weak yen that makes Japan cheap for foreign travellers, and a transport system that carries them from Hokkaido to Okinawa on time.

The transport network's rating reflects the shinkansen, the urban railways and the airports, and the heritage rating reflects the temples, castles and townscapes that draw visitors to Kyoto, Nara and beyond.

The ranking arrives in a week in which Sankei News reported weekend hotel rates two to three times weekday levels, driven by inbound bookings, and in which Okinawa's Junglia theme park asked for further loans after attendance of half its plan.

The index measures the enabling conditions; the crowding, the pricing and the strain on local

communities are the boom's costs, and they are not in the ranking.

The United States' second place and Spain's third describe the competitors for the long-haul traveller, and Japan's rise above both is a statement about the decade's shift of tourism toward Asia.

The government's target of 60 million visitors a year by 2030 rests on the conditions the index measures, and the ranking will be cited in support of it.

The typhoon week, which emptied eastern Japan's resorts and closed its railways, is the kind of event the index does not capture, and the recovery of the Boso Peninsula's tourism will take the season.

First in the world is a title that the country's tourism industry will use; its residents will judge it by the weekend rates.

BUSINESS

What the Index Measures: The Conditions for Tourism, Not the Tourists

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Japan's first place in the Travel and Tourism Development Index, reported by Yomiuri Shimbun, is a ranking of conditions rather than of arrivals.

The index, compiled by the World Economic Forum, scores countries on pillars that include the business environment, safety and security, health, infrastructure, natural and cultural resources, and the sustainability of the sector.

Yomiuri's report singles out the transport network and the historical heritage as the pillars on which Japan scored highest, which matches the visitor's experience of trains that run on time and cities that keep their past.

The United States, in second place, scores on infrastructure and business environment; Spain, in third, on its cultural resources and its long experience as the world's most visited destinations.

The index does not measure crowding, pricing or the strain on residents, which are the costs that Japan's tourism boom has produced and that local governments have addressed with accommodation taxes.

Nor does it measure the weather, and the week in which the ranking arrived was one in which a typhoon emptied eastern Japan's resorts and closed its railways.

Japan's rise in the index over the past decade tracks the growth of inbound tourism from a few million visitors a year to tens of millions, and the weak yen that made the country cheap for them.

The government's target of 60 million visitors by 2030 depends on the conditions the index measures holding, and on the sector's capacity to absorb the numbers.

Junglia's shortfall in Okinawa, reported the same day, shows that the conditions for tourism do not guarantee customers for every project.

First in the world is a description of the country's readiness; the visitors decide the rest.

BUSINESS

From Third to First: How Japan Rose in the Tourism Index

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization Reporter

Japan's first place in the Travel and Tourism Development Index, reported by Yomiuri Shimbun, completes a rise that the index's previous edition had already signalled.

In the 2024 edition, the United States ranked first, Spain second and Japan third, and the new ranking reverses the order of the top three, with Japan above both.

The index's pillars reward the things Japan has built over the decade of its tourism boom: transport infrastructure, safety, health, cultural resources and the business environment for the sector.

The transport network's rating reflects a system that carries tens of millions of visitors from airports to cities and between cities by rail, and the heritage rating reflects the temples, castles and townscapes that visitors come for.

The rise also reflects the weak yen, which has made Japan cheap for foreign travellers and has driven arrivals to records, though the index measures conditions rather than numbers.

The United States' fall to second and Spain's to third

describe competitors whose conditions have not deteriorated so much as Japan's have improved, on the index's measures.

The costs of the boom, from weekend hotel rates two to three times weekday levels to the crowding of Kyoto and the strain on local communities, are outside the index, and they are what residents notice.

The government's target of 60 million visitors a year by 2030 will be cited alongside the ranking, and the ranking will be used to argue that the conditions for the target exist.

Junglia's shortfall in Okinawa, reported the same day, is the reminder that conditions do not guarantee customers for every project.

Third to first in two editions is the rise; the next edition will show whether it holds through a season of typhoons and a currency that may not stay cheap.

BUSINESS

Junglia Asks for More: Okinawa's Theme Park Seeks Loans and Investment as Attendance Runs at Half Its Plan

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

The Okinawa theme park Junglia has requested additional loans and investment, with attendance at half the planned level and a risk of a funding shortage, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

The park, opened in 2025 in the jungle of northern Okinawa's main island, was the largest new leisure investment in the prefecture in decades, built on the premise that Okinawa's visitors would travel north for an attraction of international scale.

Attendance at half of plan describes a project whose revenue cannot service the debt raised to build it, and the request for further funds is the consequence.

Theme parks are capital-intensive and depend on attendance in their first years to establish the cash flow that funds new attractions and the marketing that sustains interest.

Okinawa's tourism has grown with the inbound boom, but its visitors concentrate in Naha and the resorts of the central island, and the drive north to the park is longer than the plan assumed.

The typhoon season, with Surige now approaching the prefecture and rough seas from Sunday, is the structural obstacle to a park that must operate through the months in which Okinawa's weather is least reliable.

Lenders and investors will weigh a further commitment against the risk of throwing money after a plan that has missed by half, and the prefecture, which supported the project, has an interest in its survival.

Japan's theme park successes, Tokyo Disney Resort and Universal Studios Japan, sit beside its largest cities; the parks that have failed were in places visitors had to be persuaded to reach.

Japan's first place in the Travel and Tourism Development Index, reported the same day, measures the conditions for tourism; Junglia's shortfall measures the difference between conditions and customers.

The park's next season will decide whether the additional funds, if granted, buy time or delay a reckoning.

BUSINESS

Location, Capital and Weather: Why Theme Parks Succeed or Fail in Japan

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

Junglia's request for additional loans, with attendance at half its plan, illustrates the arithmetic that decides theme parks in Japan.

The successes are two: Tokyo Disney Resort, beside the capital's 40 million people, and Universal Studios Japan in Osaka, beside the Kansai region's 20 million, and both draw on populations that can visit for a day.

The failures were built on the premise that visitors would travel: Huis Ten Bosch in Nagasaki, which entered bankruptcy in 2003 before its revival under new owners, and a series of regional parks that closed in the 2000s.

Capital is the second factor. A park's construction is financed by debt that its first years' attendance must service, and a shortfall of half leaves the debt unserviceable unless new money arrives.

BUSINESS

Weather is the third, and in Okinawa it is decisive. A park that must operate through the typhoon season, with rough seas and closed airports, loses days that a mainland park does not, and Surige's approach this weekend is the pattern.

Junglia's premise was that Okinawa's growing visitor numbers, concentrated in the south, would travel north to the jungle for an attraction of international scale, and the premise has so far held for half of them.

The prefecture's support for the project, as an anchor for the north's development, gives it an interest in the park's survival that a purely commercial lender would not have.

Additional funds can buy the seasons in which attendance grows, if it does, or delay a reckoning, if it does not, and the lenders' decision will rest on which they believe.

Japan's first place in the Travel and Tourism Development Index measures the conditions for tourism, and the park's shortfall measures their limits.

The jungle is still there; the question is whether the visitors come to it.

BUSINESS

Okinawa's Economy: Built on Visitors, Exposed to Storms

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

Junglia's request for additional loans, and Surige's approach to the islands this weekend, describe the two facts of Okinawa's economy: it depends on visitors, and the weather decides whether they come.

The prefecture has Japan's lowest per-capita income and its highest birth rate, and its economy rests on tourism, on the American bases that occupy a large part of the main island, and on public spending from Tokyo.

Tourism has grown into the largest of the three, with visitors from the mainland and from abroad drawn by beaches, reefs and a culture distinct from the rest of Japan's, and the resorts of the central island and the outer islands employ a large share of the workforce.

The typhoon season is the structural weakness. From July to October, storms close airports, halt ferries and empty resorts for days at a time, and the losses fall on businesses that must earn the year's revenue in the months between.

Rough seas from Sunday, and the possibility of Surige's landfall, will cost the islands a weekend of the high season, and the outer islands, whose supplies come by sea, will feel the closure first.

Junglia was meant to add a year-round attraction in the north of the main island, and its attendance at half of plan reflects, in part, the distance from the southern resorts and the weather that closes the jungle.

The prefecture's development plans have sought to diversify, into information technology, logistics and the return of base land to civilian use, and the results have been slower than the tourism boom.

Japan's first place in the Travel and Tourism Development Index rests partly on Okinawa's resorts, and the prefecture's exposure to storms is the index's blind spot.

For Okinawans, the storm that arrives on Sunday is the season's routine, prepared for with a lifetime's practice, and the economy absorbs it as it always has.

The visitors will return when the seas calm; the question the park raises is whether enough of them travel north.

BUSINESS

The Week's Corporate and Property Markers: Condominiums, Kobayashi and the Register Subsidy

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

Three of the week's economic developments continue into the weekend, and each has a next step.

Tokyo's used condominium prices continue their first decline in 28 months, centred on the bay-area towers, and the question for the coming weeks is whether the fall is an adjustment or a turn, with the Bank of Japan's 1.25% rate and the long-term rate at a 30-year high raising the cost of the mortgages that fund purchases.

Kobayashi Pharmaceutical's consideration of going private, through a fund's tender offer, is a factor in the market's restructuring, in which companies have left

the exchange as governance demands have grown, and the board's decision on the offer is the next step.

The cash register subsidies of up to 3.5 million yen for the 1% consumption tax on food are preparing small and medium-sized businesses for April 2027, and the programme's application process will open as the Diet legislates the cut.

Each of the three connects to the rates. Higher mortgage costs press property; a higher cost of capital presses companies toward private owners; and the state's borrowing at higher yields presses the finance ministry to resist the tax cut's cost.

Growth Strategy Minister Kiuchi's statement that Abenomics-style reflation is over frames all three as consequences of a monetary turn the government now acknowledges.

Finance Minister Katayama's call with the American Treasury Secretary, confirming the yen's undervaluation as a problem, adds the currency to the list of things the government regards as costs rather than tools.

The Nikkei's four consecutive gains to 65,513 suggest an equity market comfortable with the turn, and Monday's session will test that comfort against the summit's farm announcement.

For households, the markers translate into mortgage rates, the price of consumer health products and the price of food at the till from 2027.

The week's economic story is the end of cheap money, told in three instalments.

BUSINESS

On the Shelf in October: What the Unified Beer Tax Does to the Price of a Can

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

The liquor tax reform that NHK will explain tonight arrives on the shelf in October, and its effect is simplest to state in cans.

The tax on beer falls, and the tax on third beer, the malt-free beverage that the tax code invented, rises, until both stand at the same rate per volume, and the price gap between them closes.

A can of beer becomes cheaper by a few yen, and a can of third beer dearer by more, since the third-beer tax has furthest to rise; happoshu, the middle category, moves less.

Brewers have prepared by relaunching beers and retiring third-beer brands, and the shelf in October will show more beer and fewer imitations than the shelf of a decade ago.

Consumers who chose third beer for its price face a choice: pay the unified rate for beer, or find the imitation no longer worth the small saving that remains.

Restaurants and bars, which sell beer by the glass, will see their costs fall slightly, and the draft beer that dominates their sales was always taxed at the beer rate.

The reform's revenue is intended to be neutral, so the state neither gains nor loses; the change is in who pays, with beer drinkers paying less and third-beer drinkers more.

The change coincides with rising prices for the ingredients that brewers import, from malt to aluminium, and with a yen at 159 that raises their cost in yen, so that the tax cut may be absorbed rather than passed on.

The consumption tax on food falls to 1% from April 2027, but alcohol is excluded, so the supermarket basket's beer and rice move under different rules.

October's shelf will show the tax's final products, and the imitations that a tax invented will fade as the tax that invented them ends.

TECHNOLOGY

Phones That Reach Satellites: Docomo, KDDI and SoftBank's Starlink Direct Connection Gains Attention After Chiba's Outages

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

NTT Docomo, KDDI and SoftBank have deployed direct connectivity to Starlink satellites, allowing ordinary smartphones to use map and weather apps outside service areas, and the practicality of the service has gained renewed attention following the communication disruptions in Chiba, according to Real Sound and Yahoo News.

Direct-to-cell service connects a standard phone to a satellite overhead without special equipment, using the carriers' own spectrum, so that a phone with no tower in reach can still send messages and use basic data services.

The service's value in disasters is exactly the situation Chiba has lived through: towers without power, cables cut, and residents unable to receive evacuation information or contact families.

The three carriers' deployment of the same satellite network reflects the absence of a domestic alternative at that scale, and the government's disaster planning has come to assume satellite backup for the ground network.

Speeds are modest and coverage requires a view of the sky, but for the 150 areas in Chiba without power and no outlook, a phone that can receive a warning from orbit is the difference between knowing and not.

Typhoon No. 26's approach to Okinawa, whose outer islands depend on connections that storms cut, gives the service its next test, and SoftBank's stratospheric base station, whose successful experiment was reported this week, is the complementary approach.

Dependence on a foreign satellite operator for a national disaster capability raises the questions of sovereignty and control that Japan's data policy has begun to address, and the defence ministry's satellite programmes are the domestic counterpart.

The Nuclear Regulation Authority and KDDI are demonstrating the transmission of radiation dose data by smartphone and satellite link, at one-tenth the weight of conventional equipment, according to Nikkei, another use of the same connection.

For residents, the practical point is that the service works only if the phone and the plan support it, and the carriers' publicity this week is aimed at telling them.

The tower fell in Chiba; the satellite did not.

TECHNOLOGY

How a Phone Talks to a Satellite

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The direct-to-cell services that Japan's three carriers have deployed with Starlink rest on a technical trick: satellites that behave, to a phone, like a tower.

Ordinary mobile phones transmit at low power to towers a few kilometres away, and a satellite hundreds of kilometres up cannot ordinarily hear them.

The satellites built for direct-to-cell service carry large antennas and sensitive receivers tuned to the carriers' own frequencies, so that a standard phone's signal, weak as it is, can be picked up from orbit.

The satellites move fast across the sky, and the system hands a phone from one to the next as they pass, in the same way that a moving phone is handed between towers.

The result is a connection that supports messaging and basic data, such as the map and weather apps the reports mention, rather than the video and voice of a ground network.

Coverage requires a view of the sky, so the service works in fields, on roads and on coasts but not deep inside buildings, which suits disaster use, where residents are often outdoors.

The carriers use their own spectrum, licensed for terrestrial service, and regulators have had to permit its use from space, a change that Japan made ahead of many countries.

The satellite operator is foreign, and the service's role in national disaster capability raises the sovereignty questions that the defence ministry's own satellite programmes and the government's data policy have begun to address.

SoftBank's stratospheric base station, flying at 20 kilometres, is the other approach: closer to the ground, faster, but requiring aircraft that can stay aloft for months.

Both answer the question Chiba has asked all week: how a warning reaches a phone when the towers are down.

TECHNOLOGY

Satellite or Stratosphere: Two Answers to Chiba's Silence, Compared

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

The week's technology coverage has offered two answers to the question Chiba's outages posed, and they answer it differently.

Starlink's direct-to-cell service, deployed by Docomo, KDDI and SoftBank, connects ordinary phones to satellites in low orbit, and it works now, wherever a phone can see the sky.

SoftBank's stratospheric base station, whose experiment succeeded with 36 megabits per second to smartphones, flies at 20 kilometres and offers faster service over a smaller area, but it is not yet in operation.

The satellite service's strengths are coverage and availability; its limits are speed, the need for a clear view of the sky and dependence on a foreign operator.

The stratospheric platform's strengths are speed and the ability to be positioned over a disaster zone; its limits are the aircraft's endurance, the regulatory approvals it needs and the fact that it must be launched and flown.

In a disaster like Chiba's, the two would work together: satellites providing the baseline for messaging and warnings, and a platform overhead providing the capacity for coordination and video.

Both depend on phones with charge, which the 150 areas without power cannot assume, and both are useless to a resident who does not know the service exists, which is why the carriers' publicity this week matters.

The defence ministry's escort and AI satellites share the orbit with the communications satellites, and the government's data policy is beginning to address the sovereignty of a disaster capability that runs through a foreign network.

Typhoon No. 26's approach to Okinawa is the next test for the satellite service, and the stratospheric platform's operational debut is the test that will follow.

Chiba's silence had two answers this week; the next disaster will show which arrives first.

TECHNOLOGY

Dose Data by Phone and Satellite: The Regulator and KDDI Test a Lighter Way to Measure Radiation

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The Nuclear Regulation Authority and KDDI are continuing a demonstration of sending radiation dose data via smartphone and satellite link, with equipment one-tenth the weight of conventional systems, according to Nikkei.

Radiation monitoring around nuclear plants depends on fixed posts that measure dose rates and transmit them to the authority, and on mobile teams that measure where the posts do not reach.

The fixed posts failed in 2011 when the earthquake and tsunami cut their power and communications, leaving the authorities without data from the areas that needed it most, and the lesson shaped the monitoring rules since.

A smartphone-based system, transmitting by satellite, would work where towers and power lines do not, and a tenth of the weight makes it carriable by a single person on foot.

The demonstration connects to the direct-to-cell satellite services that the carriers have deployed and to the broader question of communications that survive disasters, which Chiba's outages have made urgent.

Japan's nuclear fleet is being restarted under the safety regime created after 2011, and Europe's accelerating return to nuclear power, reported this week, has made the regime a reference for others.

Monitoring that survives the loss of infrastructure is a condition of public trust in the restarts, and the regulator's investment in it reflects that.

The equipment's accuracy against conventional instruments is the demonstration's test, and Nikkei's report indicates that the trial continues.

The same satellite link that carries a dose reading can carry an evacuation order, and the technology's

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disaster uses extend beyond the plants.

For the communities around Japan's reactors, a lighter, satellite-linked monitor is a promise that the data will arrive when it matters.

TECHNOLOGY

The Sensors at Inbanuma: When the Data Arrives Late, So Do the Decisions

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

As water levels and flooding persist after the Inbanuma levee breach, delays in observation data and in recovery decisions have become points of contention, according to the technology coverage available.

River and lake management depends on gauges that report water levels continuously, and on the models that turn those levels into forecasts of where the water will go.

A breach changes the system's geometry, and gauges placed to monitor a lake within its embankments do not describe a lake that has left them, which is one reason decisions at Inbanuma have lagged the water.

Delays in data mean delays in the choices that depend on it: when to close the breach, where to deploy pumps, and which districts to warn.

The contention reflects a broader lesson of the week: that Japan's infrastructure for measuring its rivers, built for ordinary floods, has been tested by an event without precedent in the lake's management.

Sensor networks that report by satellite, like the radiation monitors the regulator is testing with KDDI, would survive the loss of power and communications that has affected the lowlands.

The land ministry's emergency repairs, begun on Friday, proceed under warning-level rain today, and the data on the lake's level and the river's will decide the crews' safety hour by hour.

The review that follows the breach will examine the observation system alongside the embankment, and the question of whether earlier data would have produced earlier action will be central.

NTT Docomo Business's platform for connected sensors, with Internet of Things features due in December, is the kind of system that a lake like Inbanuma would use in the next decade.

The water has not receded, and the arguments about the data that describe it have begun before it does.

TECHNOLOGY

The Satellites That Watch North Korea: Japan's Intelligence-Gathering Constellation and the Bodyguards It May Need

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

The escort satellites that the Defense Ministry continues to consider, six by fiscal 2035 according to Yomiuri Shimbun, would guard a constellation that Japan began building for a specific reason.

In 1998, North Korea launched a missile that flew over Japan, and the shock produced a decision to build reconnaissance satellites of Japan's own rather than depend on American imagery.

The first Information Gathering Satellites were launched in 2003, and the constellation has grown since to optical and radar spacecraft that can observe the peninsula and beyond in all weather.

The satellites are operated by the Cabinet Satellite Intelligence Center, and their imagery informs the government's judgments about missile launches, military movements and, increasingly, disasters at home.

Their vulnerability has grown with their importance. China and Russia have demonstrated satellites that manoeuvre close to other spacecraft, and both have tested anti-satellite weapons, which is the threat the escort satellites would answer.

The AI-equipped surveillance satellites planned for demonstration from 2027 to 2029 would add on-orbit analysis to the constellation, speeding the decisions that the counterattack capability of the 2022 security documents requires.

Together, the programmes describe a military space capability that has grown from a single reaction in 1998 into a constellation, a guard force and a thinking layer.

The programmes are featured again alongside this weekend's disaster reports, as Yomiuri notes, because

the same orbit that watches North Korea carries the links that reach phones in Chiba's powerless districts.

The Air Self-Defense Force's space operations units, established from 2020, monitor the orbit the satellites share, and the alliance's shared space awareness extends the watch.

Six bodyguards by 2035 for a constellation begun in 2003: the timeline describes how orbit has changed in a generation.

TECHNOLOGY

September 26, 1983: The Officer Who Decided the Satellites Were Wrong

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

Forty-three years ago today, a Soviet early warning satellite system reported that the United States had launched missiles at the Soviet Union, and the officer on duty, Stanislav Petrov, decided it was wrong.

The system reported first one launch and then several, and the procedure required Petrov to pass the warning up a chain that could have ended in retaliation.

He judged that a real attack would involve hundreds of missiles rather than a handful, that ground radar had not confirmed the launches, and that the system was new and untested, and he reported a malfunction.

He was right. The satellites had mistaken sunlight reflected from high clouds for the infrared signatures of missile launches, and the error was later traced to the system's design.

Petrov's decision, made in minutes under the pressure of a procedure designed to remove human judgment, is the case that every discussion of automated warning systems returns to.

The lesson is relevant this week in two ways. Japan's defence ministry plans satellites that use artificial intelligence to analyse surveillance data in orbit and speed counterattack decisions, with demonstrators from 2027, and the speed the ministry seeks is the speed Petrov's judgment resisted.

And the communications outages in Chiba, with the satellite and stratospheric alternatives that the week's coverage has featured, pose the same problem in reverse: data that does not arrive, rather than data that is wrong.

Sam Altman's appeal to the Security Council for AI regulation before control passes to machines, made this week, is Petrov's problem stated for a new technology.

Petrov was neither rewarded nor punished at the time, and his story became known only after the Soviet Union's collapse; he died in 2017.

A system that can be wrong needs a person who can say so, and the anniversary falls in a week that has made the point again.

TECHNOLOGY

September 26, 2022: The Day a Spacecraft Hit an Asteroid on Purpose

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Four years ago today, NASA's DART spacecraft collided with the asteroid Dimorphos, in the first test of whether humanity could change an asteroid's path.

Dimorphos, a small moon of the asteroid Didymos, was chosen because its orbit around its parent could be measured from Earth, so that any change from the impact would show in the timing of its passes.

The spacecraft, about the size of a vending machine, struck at more than six kilometres a second, and the impact shortened Dimorphos's orbit by more than half an hour, far more than the mission's minimum goal.

The result showed that a kinetic impactor, a spacecraft used as a projectile, could deflect an asteroid of that size given enough warning, which is the basis of planetary defence planning since.

Japan's own asteroid missions, Hayabusa and Hayabusa2, which returned samples from Itokawa and Ryugu, contributed to the understanding of asteroid structure on which such planning depends, and a Japanese instrument flew with the European follow-up mission to study the crater.

The anniversary falls in a week in which orbit has featured in Japanese news for other reasons: the defence ministry's escort satellites, the AI surveillance satellites, and the satellite links that

reach phones in Chiba's powerless districts.

Planetary defence is the peaceful end of the same technology, and the international co-ordination it requires is a model that the week's arguments about AI regulation could use.

No asteroid known today threatens Earth in the coming century, and the surveys that find them are the reason the test was run in advance.

DART's success made the deflection of a threatening asteroid a plan rather than a film plot.

Four years on, the moon it struck still orbits a little faster.

TECHNOLOGY

September 26, 1960: The Debate That Taught Television Its Power, and a Week in Which Networks Withheld It

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Sixty-six years ago today, John Kennedy and Richard Nixon met in the first televised debate between presidential candidates, and the event is remembered less for what was said than for how it looked.

Those who listened on radio, by the accounts of the time, thought Nixon had held his own; those who watched on television saw a tanned, composed Kennedy and a pale, perspiring Nixon, and the difference entered political folklore.

The lesson drawn was that television had changed politics from argument to image, and every campaign since has been conducted with the camera in mind.

The anniversary falls in a week in which the five major American networks declined to broadcast the American-Chinese summit talks, in protest at CNN's exclusion from the press pool, so that the most consequential meeting of the year reached the world without the medium that 1960 made central.

The absence of pictures is one reason the summit's Taiwan exchange is known only through Yomiuri's report that the President did not disclose his remarks; there was no footage to consult.

Japan's own television politics followed the American pattern from the 1960s, and NHK's debates and the commercial networks' campaign coverage shape elections here as there.

The government's design for elections without misinformation, reported this week, and the court's ruling on campaigning by minors, are the latest adjustments of rules written for the age of the sound truck to the age of the screen.

The Kennedy-Nixon debate was watched by an audience estimated at 70 million, the largest for any political event to that date, and it established the debate as a fixture.

The networks that withheld their cameras this week were exercising a power that 1960 revealed: that the picture is the event, and that its absence is a statement.

The debate's lesson was that television decides; this week's is that television can also decline.

TECHNOLOGY

September 26, 1958: A Vanguard Falls Short, and the Satellite Race Learns From Losses

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

Sixty-eight years ago today, the American Vanguard SLV-3 rocket failed to place its satellite in orbit, one of a series of losses in a programme that had been intended to launch the first American satellite.

Vanguard was the civilian programme chosen in 1955 to carry the United States into orbit during the International Geophysical Year, and its first launch attempt, in December 1957, exploded on the pad in front of the world's cameras, two months after Sputnik.

The Army's Explorer 1 reached orbit first, in January 1958, and Vanguard's own first success, Vanguard 1, followed in March; that satellite remains in orbit today, the oldest artificial object circling the Earth.

The failures that followed, including that of September 26, 1958, were the ordinary cost of a technology being learned in public, and the programme's three successful satellites returned data on the Earth's shape and the upper atmosphere.

The anniversary is a reminder that the satellite infrastructure now taken for granted, from the constellations that reach phones in Chiba to the escort

satellites the defence ministry plans, was built on a foundation of losses.

Japan's own first satellite, Osumi, reached orbit in 1970 on the fifth attempt, and the failures before it were part of the programme's education.

Modern launch failure rates are a fraction of the 1950s', and the difference is the accumulated knowledge of what went wrong.

The week's technology news, from the satellite links that survived Chiba's outages to the stratospheric platforms in test, is the descendant of the rockets that fell short.

Vanguard 1 still circles, a metal sphere the size of a grapefruit, and its orbit is expected to last for centuries.

A launch that failed on this day is remembered because the programme that failed it did not.

TECHNOLOGY

September 26, 1991: Eight People Sealed Themselves Into a Glass World

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Thirty-five years ago today, eight people entered a sealed glass structure in the Arizona desert and closed the airlock behind them for two years.

Biosphere 2, as the structure was called, contained a rainforest, an ocean with a coral reef, a savannah, a desert, a mangrove and a farm, all under glass, and the experiment was to see whether a closed ecosystem could sustain its crew.

The crew grew their own food, recycled their water and air, and monitored thousands of sensors that recorded the system's chemistry, in one of the longest tests of closed-loop life support ever conducted.

The experiment's most famous problem was oxygen: the level inside fell steadily through the first year, for reasons traced later to the soil's microbes and the concrete's absorption of carbon dioxide, and oxygen was eventually pumped in.

The crew emerged in September 1993, thinner, and the project was criticised for its management and celebrated for its data, which informed later thinking about life support for long space missions.

Biosphere 2 survives as a research facility of the University of Arizona, used for experiments on climate and ecosystems that a sealed environment makes possible.

The anniversary falls in a week in which Japan's closed systems have been tested by weather: the Inbanuma sensors whose delayed data became a point of contention, and the shelters in Chiba where crowding and influenza meet.

The lesson of 1991 was that a system's chemistry reveals itself only when it is measured continuously, and that the measurements matter most when they show something going wrong.

Space agencies planning long missions to the Moon and Mars, including Japan's, still cite the experiment for what it showed about the difficulty of closing a loop.

Eight people, two years, one glass world: the data are still being read.

TECHNOLOGY

September 26, 1993: Portugal's First Satellite, and the Small-Satellite Idea It Helped to Prove

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Thirty-three years ago today, PoSAT-1, Portugal's first satellite, was launched on a European rocket, and it belongs to a lineage that has changed what a satellite is.

PoSAT-1 was a microsatellite, built in Britain by a university-spawned company that pioneered small, cheap spacecraft assembled from commercial components rather than the custom-built parts of the space powers.

It flew as a secondary payload, sharing the launch with a larger Earth-observation satellite, a practice that has since become the standard way small satellites reach orbit.

The satellite carried cameras, a radiation experiment and a store-and-forward communications payload, and it was operated from Portugal, giving a small country a presence in orbit that would have been impossible a decade earlier.

TECHNOLOGY

The small-satellite idea that PoSAT-1 helped to prove is the basis of the constellations that now reach phones in Chiba's powerless districts, which consist of thousands of spacecraft built on production lines rather than a few built by hand.

Japan's universities and companies have built their own microsatellites since the 2000s, and the country's space industry now includes constellation operators alongside the traditional builders of large spacecraft.

The defence ministry's escort satellites and its AI surveillance demonstrators are, in the end, small satellites of the kind PoSAT-1 pioneered, applied to a mission the 1993 engineers did not foresee.

The satellite's launch on the same day as the anniversaries of Vanguard's failure, Petrov's judgment and DART's impact places it in a crowded date on the technology calendar.

Portugal's first satellite worked for years, and the idea it carried has outlasted it.

Small, cheap and many: the orbit of 2026 was designed in 1993.

TECHNOLOGY

The Signal That Was Opened: How Civilian GPS Became the Ground Under the Satellite Phone

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

The satellite phone services that Japan's carriers have deployed, and the map apps that work through them outside service areas, rest on an older decision: to open satellite positioning to civilians.

The Global Positioning System was built by the American military in the 1970s and 1980s for its own use, and civilian access was announced in 1983, after a Korean airliner strayed into Soviet airspace and was shot down, with the loss of everyone aboard.

For years the civilian signal was deliberately degraded, so that its accuracy was measured in hundreds of metres, and the full precision was reserved for military receivers.

In May 2000, the degradation was switched off, and civilian accuracy improved tenfold overnight, which made the car navigation, smartphone maps and delivery systems of the following decades possible.

Japan built its own augmentation, the Quasi-Zenith Satellite System, whose satellites hang over the country and improve positioning in cities where buildings block the American signals, and the system's fourth satellite completed its first constellation in 2018.

The map and weather apps that the carriers now advertise as working through Starlink outside service areas depend on positioning from these systems and on data from the satellites, so that the phone knows where it is even when no tower does.

The decision to open the signal is the model that the week's arguments about data and sovereignty return to: a capability built for one purpose, opened to all, and become infrastructure.

For residents of Chiba's powerless districts, the practical consequence is that a phone with a view of the sky can tell them where they are and where the evacuation centre is, without a tower.

The 1983 decision was made in the aftermath of a disaster; the 2000 decision in a time of confidence; and the 2026 uses were foreseen by neither.

The signal was opened, and the world built on it.

TECHNOLOGY

The Week After 0.01: Linux at Thirty-Five, and the Open Code Under Everything

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

This week in 1991, a Finnish student's operating system kernel had been available for a few days on a university file server, and almost nobody had noticed.

Linus Torvalds released version 0.01 of Linux on September 17, 1991, after announcing in August that he was working on a free operating system as a hobby that would not be big and professional.

The kernel grew, through contributions from programmers around the world who could read and change its code, into the system that runs most of the world's servers, every Android phone and the supercomputers that model the weather.

The satellite constellations that reach phones in Chiba, the data centres in Inzai whose flood risk was reported this week, and the systems that process the

Inbanuma sensors' data all run, in large part, on it.

The open-source idea that Linux proved, that software developed in public by many is more robust than software developed in secret by few, has shaped the industry since, and it informs the arguments about artificial intelligence that the week's coverage has carried.

Japan's contribution to open source has grown from the 1990s, with Japanese developers among the kernel's contributors and Japanese companies among its corporate sponsors.

The anniversary falls on a technology calendar crowded with satellites, from Vanguard's failure to DART's success, and the software that operates them is the quieter part of the story.

The kernel's first version ran on one kind of personal computer and did almost nothing; its thirty-fifth runs the world's infrastructure and does almost everything.

Torvalds' announcement that the project would not be big was the least accurate forecast in the history of computing.

The week after 0.01, nobody noticed; the week after that, someone did, and the rest is the internet.

TECHNOLOGY

Seventy Years of Uninterrupted Lines: From the First Transatlantic Telephone Cable to the Stratosphere

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

On September 25, 1956, the first transatlantic telephone cable entered service, and the lineage that runs from that cable to the satellite links and stratospheric platforms of this week's news is one of uninterrupted communication.

TAT-1 carried 36 telephone channels between Scotland and Newfoundland, replacing radio links whose quality depended on the weather, and it was laid by cable ships over two summers.

Before it, a transatlantic call was booked, expensive and often inaudible; after it, the call was placed, and the world's telephone networks became one.

Submarine cables remain the backbone of international communication, carrying almost all of the world's internet traffic across the oceans on fibre that has replaced TAT-1's copper, and Japan's connections to the world run through cables landing on its Pacific and Sea of Japan coasts.

Satellites complement rather than replace them, and the direct-to-cell services and stratospheric platforms in this week's coverage are the newest layer of a system that began with a copper cable on the seabed.

The Chiba outages showed what happens when the ground layer fails: towers without power and cables cut, so that residents could not receive warnings, and the satellite and stratospheric layers are the answer.

The lineage's lesson is redundancy: communication that survives a disaster is communication with more than one route, and TAT-1 was itself laid as a second route beside radio.

Japan's cable landing stations, its satellite operators and its carriers' new services are the three routes the country now maintains, and the typhoon season tests all of them.

Seventy years after the first call crossed the Atlantic by cable, the question is the same: whether the line holds when it matters.

The cable of 1956 is retired; the principle it established runs to the stratosphere.

TECHNOLOGY

The Satellite Everyone Can Read: Himawari's Open Data and the Storms It Watches

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

The images of Typhoon No. 26 that will fill screens this weekend come from Himawari, the meteorological agency's geostationary satellite, and the data behind them are open to anyone.

Himawari's full-disk images of the Earth, taken every ten minutes, are distributed in standard formats that researchers, companies and hobbyists can download and process, and the openness has produced an ecosystem of weather services beyond the agency's own.

Weathernews, whose reporting of Surige's track appears alongside Asahi's today, is one of the companies that build on the data, and the private forecasts that compete with the agency's rely on the

same satellite.

Open satellite data have also been used in unexpected ways, including the verification of claims in fraud cases, where cloud cover on a given day and hour can confirm or contradict an account.

The satellite watches the typhoon from a fixed point above the Pacific, and its infrared channels show the storm's structure at night, which is when Surige will approach Okinawa.

The agency's forecasts, on which the warning levels for Chiba and Ibaraki depend, combine the satellite's observations with radar, ground stations and the numerical models that run on the agency's supercomputers.

Himawari's data also feed the forecasts of neighbouring countries, which lack their own geostationary satellites, and the openness is part of Japan's contribution to the region's weather services.

The satellite is the eye; the sensors on the ground, like those at Inbanuma whose delays became a point of contention this week, are the fingers, and a forecast needs both.

A successor satellite is in preparation, with better resolution and more channels, and the data policy will remain open.

The typhoon approaching Okinawa is being watched by a satellite that lets everyone watch with it.

TECHNOLOGY

Power, Cables and Force Majeure: The Infrastructure Stories Running Under the Week

By Ethan Cole | Technology and Science Editor

Two infrastructure stories from the week's technology coverage continue into the weekend, and both concern the physical foundations of digital services.

Oracle's force majeure notice for its data centre development, citing power supply delays that are limiting artificial intelligence computation, describes a constraint that the AI industry has met in every country where it has built.

Data centres for AI draw power on the scale of small cities, and the grids that supply them were not built for the demand, so that projects wait for substations and transmission lines rather than for chips.

Japan's own data centre boom, concentrated in Inzai in Chiba, faces the same constraint, and the week's floods added a second: the Inzai centres' proximity to the Inbanuma lowlands, reported on Friday, is a risk that the breach made concrete.

The JCOM outage, a widespread network disruption that remains a problem for essential infrastructure according to the reports available, is the other story, and it concerns the cable networks that carry television and internet to millions of households.

An outage at a cable operator during a disaster week is a reminder that the ground layer of communications, from fibre to coaxial cable, is the layer that fails first and that the satellite and stratospheric services are meant to back up.

The two stories connect through electricity: data centres cannot compute without it, cable networks cannot transmit without it, and Chiba's 150 areas without power cannot receive anything at all.

The government's growth strategy emphasises AI, and the constraint it will meet is the one Oracle named: not the models but the megawatts.

Japan's electricity supply, strained by the Gulf conflict's effect on fuel and by the summer's demand, is the foundation on which the strategy's data centres would stand.

Force majeure is a legal phrase for a physical fact, and the week has supplied several.

TECHNOLOGY

Today in Technology: September 26

Compiled by the Technology Desk

1958: The Vanguard SLV-3 satellite fails to reach orbit, an early loss in the satellite race.

1960: The first televised U.S. presidential debate, Kennedy against Nixon, changes how politics is seen.

1983: A Soviet early warning satellite system falsely reports an American missile launch; Stanislav Petrov judges it a malfunction.

1991: Biosphere 2 seals its crew inside for a two-year test of a closed ecosystem's life support.

1993: PoSAT-1, Portugal's first satellite, is launched,

an early civilian small satellite.

2008: Shenzhou 7, launched the previous day, continues toward China's first spacewalk.

2022: NASA's DART spacecraft strikes the asteroid Dimorphos, the first kinetic deflection test.

1956, in lineage: TAT-1, the first transatlantic telephone cable, entered service the day before, seventy years ago.

2026: Chiba's outages, Starlink direct-to-cell and SoftBank's stratospheric base station pose the same problem as 1983: data that must arrive, and be right.

Compiled from the technology desk's records; dates are those on which the events occurred.

COURTS

Tokyo District Court Rules the Blanket Ban on Campaigning by Under-18s Unconstitutional, a First

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The Tokyo District Court has ruled that the provision uniformly prohibiting election campaigning by people under 18 is unconstitutional, the first such ruling, according to Asahi Shimbun and NHK.

The Public Offices Election Act bars minors from campaigning, a prohibition that predates the lowering of the voting age to 18 in 2016 and that has remained while the age of adulthood fell to 18 in 2022.

The court's finding is that a uniform ban on all campaigning by all minors goes beyond what the protection of young people and the fairness of elections can justify, and that it infringes the freedom of expression that the Constitution guarantees.

A district court ruling does not strike the provision from the statute book; it binds the case before it, and the government may appeal, so the ruling's effect will depend on the higher courts and on the Diet.

The case arrives as election campaigning has moved online, where the line between a young person's expression and prohibited campaigning is hard to draw, and where enforcement against minors has been uneven.

Yomiuri Shimbun reported the same day on measures to suspend the monetisation of false information and to tighten identity verification during elections, which shows the direction of election regulation moving in two ways at once: freer for young speakers, stricter for the platforms.

Minors have campaigned for candidates, parties and referendums in other democracies without evident harm, and the ruling brings Japanese law closer to that practice.

The ruling's reasoning will be studied by the parties, whose youth organisations have long operated under the restriction, and by the schools, where civics education has expanded since the voting age fell.

An appeal would take the question to the Tokyo High Court and potentially the Supreme Court, which has rarely found election law provisions unconstitutional.

For the 16- and 17-year-olds who will vote in a few years, the ruling is the first judicial statement that their voices before that age are not the state's to silence.

COURTS

Article 137-2: The Ban the Court Found Too Broad

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

The provision the Tokyo District Court found unconstitutional is a single article of the Public Offices Election Act that prohibits minors from campaigning in elections.

The prohibition dates from an era in which the voting age was 20 and campaigning was a physical activity, conducted through speeches, leaflets and door-to-door visits, all regulated in detail by the same law.

When the voting age fell to 18 in 2016, the prohibition was adjusted so that 18- and 19-year-olds could campaign, but it remained for those younger, on the reasoning that minors should be protected from political mobilisation and that elections should be kept fair.

The court's finding is that a uniform ban on all campaigning by all minors, regardless of form or context, is broader than those aims justify, and that it infringes the freedom of expression guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution.

Japanese election law is among the most restrictive in

COURTS

the democratic world, limiting the period, the methods and the participants of campaigning, and courts have historically deferred to the Diet's judgment about fairness.

A ruling that finds one of its provisions unconstitutional is therefore significant beyond the provision itself, and it will be cited in challenges to other restrictions.

The government's likely appeal will take the case to the Tokyo High Court, and the Supreme Court's view, if it reaches that far, will determine whether the Diet must amend the law.

Online campaigning, permitted since 2013, has blurred the line between expression and campaigning for everyone, and for minors the line has been enforced inconsistently.

The ruling arrives in the same week that the government designs measures against election misinformation, and the two will shape the rules for the next national vote.

For the plaintiffs, the finding vindicates the claim that young people's political voices are protected speech; for the law, it opens a question that the Diet has avoided for a decade.

COURTS

The Most Restrictive Election Law in the Democratic World, and the Court That Trimmed It

By William | Senior Political Analyst

The Tokyo District Court's ruling that the blanket ban on campaigning by under-18s is unconstitutional touches a law that regulates Japanese elections more tightly than any comparable democracy's.

The Public Offices Election Act limits the campaign period to 12 days for the House of Representatives and 17 for the House of Councillors, and it prohibits campaigning before the period begins.

Door-to-door canvassing is banned, a prohibition that the Supreme Court has upheld on the reasoning that it invites bribery; leaflets and posters are limited in number and format; and the use of sound trucks, the campaign's characteristic instrument, is regulated by the hour.

Online campaigning was permitted only in 2013, and its rules distinguish between candidates, parties and ordinary citizens, with restrictions on email that remain.

The law's philosophy is fairness through limitation: that a campaign confined to fixed methods and a short period cannot be bought, and that voters are protected from the excesses of a longer, freer contest.

Its critics argue that it entrenches incumbents, who are known before the period begins, and that it treats voters as people to be protected from persuasion rather than trusted to weigh it.

The ban on campaigning by minors belongs to the same philosophy, and the court's finding that it is too broad for its aims is a rare judicial trimming of a law the courts have mostly deferred to.

The ruling arrives with the government's design for elections without misinformation, reported by Yomiuri Shimbun, which adds new restrictions on platforms even as the court removes an old one on speakers.

Whether the Diet amends the law will depend on the appeal and on the parties' calculation of who benefits from young campaigners.

The law was written for a Japan of sound trucks and paper; the court's ruling and the platforms' rules are both attempts to bring it to a Japan of phones.

COURTS

Mito Nail Artist Murder: 21 Years Sought for the Former Boyfriend, Verdict on the 30th

By Daisuke Ito | Investigations & Longform

Prosecutors have sought a 21-year prison term for the former boyfriend of a nail artist murdered in the Mito case, and the court will deliver its verdict on the 30th, according to the reports available.

Friday's report adds two details to Thursday's: the accused is the victim's former boyfriend, and the verdict date is set for Wednesday.

A relationship between the accused and the victim places the case in the category of domestic and intimate-partner violence, in which the sentencing pattern reflects the breach of trust involved.

The prosecution's demand of 21 years indicates a case in which a long fixed term, rather than life imprisonment, was judged appropriate, and courts often impose somewhat less than the demand.

The trial is heard by a lay judge panel of six citizens and three professional judges, which decides both the verdict and the sentence.

The defence's closing arguments, which followed the prosecution's demand, will have addressed the accused's state of mind and the circumstances of the killing, details not included in the reports available.

Verdicts in lay judge trials are delivered in open court, with the reasoning read by the presiding judge, and the accused retains the right of appeal.

The victim's occupation, a nail artist, has been the detail by which the case is reported, and the reports do not indicate a connection between her work and her death.

The case is one of several this week involving violence against women, including the death of a 52-year-old woman in Ota, Gunma, where a man has fled.

Under Japanese procedure, the accused is presumed innocent until the verdict is given on the 30th.

SOCIETY

Emergency Repairs Begin at Inbanuma, and Solar Panels Burn in the Floodwater

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

Emergency repairs have begun on the breached embankment of Inbanuma, where flooding continues, and solar panels in the flooded area have caught fire, according to the reports available.

The repairs are the step on which everything else depends. While the breach is open, the lake feeds the flood, and pumping the lowlands is pointless; once it is closed, drainage can begin in earnest, subject to the Tone River's level.

Emergency closure uses sandbags, steel sheet piles and dumped rock to plug the gap, followed by a temporary embankment and, over months, permanent reconstruction to a standard informed by the review of why the levee failed.

Warning-level rain today, on the stalled autumn front, is the repair's enemy. Rain raises the lake and the river, increases the flow through the breach and endangers the crews working in it.

The solar panel fires are a hazard that Japan's recent floods have made familiar. Panels continue to generate electricity when submerged, and floodwater can create short circuits that ignite panels, wiring and inverters.

Fire authorities warn that submerged or flood-damaged solar installations should not be approached, that panels may be live even when disconnected from the grid, and that residents should report them rather than attempt to move them.

The lowlands around the lake host solar installations on former farmland, and their fires add an electrical danger to a flood that was already a health and structural one.

The Inbanuma sensors that monitor water levels became a point of contention this week, with reports of delays in observation data and in recovery decisions, according to the technology coverage available.

The 150 areas without power and the districts without water depend on the same recovery, and today's rain sets it back before it has properly begun.

The lake's water has not receded, and with the front stalled above it and Surige to the south, the timeline for the district around Sakura Station stretches into October.

SOCIETY

The Eleventh Death, and the State Steps In

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The death toll from Typhoon No. 25 in Chiba and Kanagawa rose to eleven on Friday, with some people still missing, and the government plans to designate the storm a severe disaster, according to NHK and NTV News.

The eleventh death came from the search that has continued since Monday in the landslide debris of the Boso and Miura peninsulas, where the missing were last seen.

Each recovery reduces the number of missing and increases the number of dead, the arithmetic by which landslide searches proceed, and the searchers now face warning-level rain on the slopes where they work.

Rain halts searches, since the ground can move again and machinery can bring more earth down, and today's forecast means the families of the missing may wait through another day without news.

The severe-disaster designation, planned under the law of 1962, raises the state's share of restoration costs for public works, agriculture and small businesses, and it follows an assessment that the season's damage exceeds what the prefectures can bear.

The damage includes the breached Inbanuma embankment, the Uchibo Line's months of repair, the Kominato Railway's suspended rails, 500 schools with facility damage, flooded farmland and power and water outages with no outlook.

Designation does not reach households directly; the damage certificates that municipalities issue, and the household reconstruction support system, are the routes for that, and both wait on the water receding.

The government's plan was announced as the front stalled and the typhoon named Surige turned toward Okinawa, which means the designation may cover a disaster that is not yet over.

Kanagawa's landslide deaths, including those in Yokosuka where a slope had shed soil for some time, will be examined by the reviews that follow every fatal landslide.

Eleven dead, in a storm that made landfall on a holiday and whose consequences have filled every working day since.

SOCIETY

The Last Time Chiba Was a Severe Disaster: 2019, and What the Designation Bought

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

The government's plan to designate Typhoon No. 25 a severe disaster follows the precedent of 2019, when two typhoons in a month devastated Chiba and the designation was made for both.

In September 2019, a typhoon that made landfall at Chiba brought winds that toppled transmission towers and left hundreds of thousands of households without power for up to two weeks; in October, a second typhoon brought rain that flooded rivers across eastern Japan and killed dozens.

Both were designated severe disasters under the law of 1962, raising the state's subsidy rate for the restoration of public works, agricultural facilities and small businesses.

The designation funded the rebuilding of Chiba's power infrastructure, the repair of the Boso Peninsula's roads and railways, including the Kominato Railway, and the restoration of farmland and fishing ports.

It also exposed the designation's limits. Households received support through damage certificates and the reconstruction support system, but the certificates took months to issue, and many residents lived under blue tarpaulins through the winter.

The 2019 recovery took more than a year, and its lessons, from the speed of power restoration to the management of evacuation centres, shaped the response to this month's storms.

This year's damage, with eleven dead, a breached embankment at Inbanuma and the Uchibo Line closed for months, is larger in some respects and arrives on ground hit three times since August.

The designation raises subsidy rates; the pace of recovery depends on the crews, the weather and the roads, and today's warning-level rain will slow all three.

For municipalities, the designation allows planning on the assumption of the higher subsidy, which lets contracts be signed before the ordinance is issued.

Chiba knows the designation from 2019; it also knows that the designation is where the recovery begins, not where it ends.

SOCIETY

Leaving Again: What a Second Evacuation Asks of Districts That Have Not Come Home

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Warning-level rain in Chiba today may bring evacuation orders to districts whose residents have not yet returned from the first, and the second evacuation is harder than the first in every way that matters.

Residents who left on Sunday with a bag and a car may have neither now: cars submerged in the first flood are total losses, and supplies used in a week of shelter have not been replaced.

The railways that carried some to safety are closed, the Uchibo Line for months and the Kominato Railway in sections, and the expressways remain restricted, so that the routes out are roads that the first storm damaged.

Warnings reach fewer people. The 150 areas without power cannot receive alerts by phone or television, and municipalities must reach them by loudspeaker, by vehicle and by neighbours.

Shelters are already occupied by those displaced from the first storm, and schools that reopened this week may be asked to close again to house the second wave.

Older residents, who make up much of the affected population and most of the dead, are the least able to move twice in a week, and the reviews of the first storm's deaths will ask whether they were reached in time.

The slopes that failed last week remain under warnings that light rain could trigger; warning-level rain is not light, and the districts below them are the first to be ordered out.

The lowlands around Sakura, still flooded, would take today's rain on top of the water that has not receded, and the emergency repairs at the breach would be tested before they are complete.

Municipalities issue evacuation information in stages, and residents are urged to act on the earlier stages rather than wait for orders, since orders may arrive after the roads have closed.

A second evacuation within a week is the season's cruellest demand, and Chiba is being asked to meet it this morning.

SOCIETY

Ibaraki Under Warning: The Prefecture That Remembers 2015

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

Asahi Shimbun's report that Ibaraki, like Chiba, may see warning-level rain from morning to evening today places under the stalled front a prefecture whose flood memory is recent.

In September 2015, days of rain on a stalled front broke the levee of the Kinugawa River at Joso, and the river poured across the city, sweeping away houses and stranding residents on rooftops, in images that defined the year's disasters.

The Joso flood killed residents, displaced thousands and prompted a national review of levee standards and evacuation practice, and its lessons, including the danger of a stalled autumn front, are the ones forecasters cite this weekend.

Ibaraki's rivers, the Kinugawa, the Kokai and the Tone itself, drain the same northern Kanto rain that has kept the Tone high and stalled the drainage of Inbanuma across the border in Chiba.

Warning-level rain on their upper reaches today would raise them further, delaying Chiba's drainage and threatening Ibaraki's own lowlands.

The prefecture's evacuation systems were rebuilt after 2015, with earlier warnings and clearer maps, and today is a test of them.

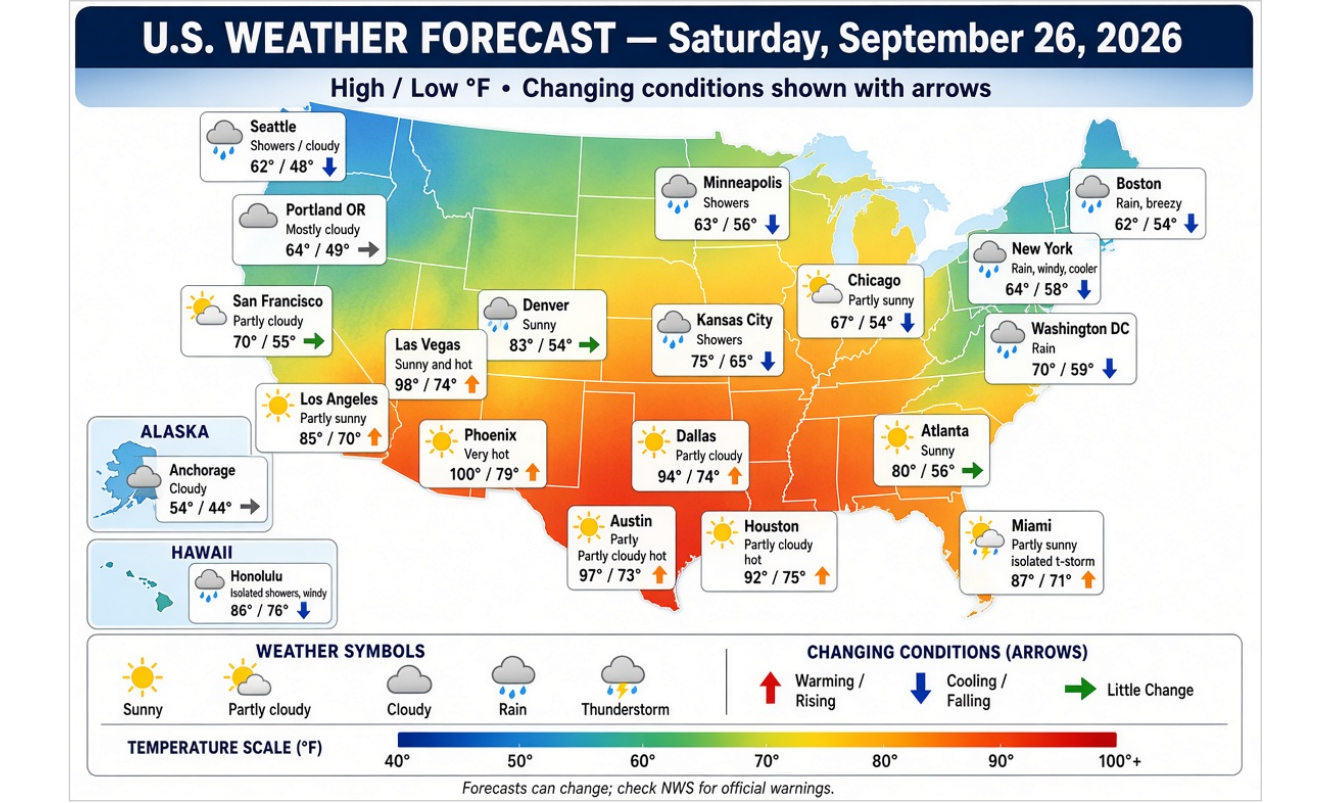
Tochigi's rain from before dawn to early morning, at the front's northern edge, feeds the same rivers from above.

The M3.7 earthquake off Ibaraki's coast this week was unconnected, but it reminded the prefecture that it faces hazards from the sea as well as the rivers.

The stalled front's behaviour today, and Surige's track next week, will decide whether Ibaraki adds a second disaster to Chiba's.

Joso's rebuilt levees will hold or not; the prefecture will know by evening.

WEATHER ABROAD



United States weather forecast for Saturday, September 26, 2026: highs and lows in degrees Fahrenheit, with arrows showing warming, cooling and little change. Map supplied for this edition.

SOCIETY

Weather Abroad: A Warm South-West, Rain in the North-East and a Cool Pacific Coast Across the United States

Saturday's forecast for twenty American cities, from Anchorage to Miami
By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Today's United States forecast map, shown above, describes a country divided by a warm south-west and a rainy east, on the weekend after a summit that filled Japanese front pages.

The Pacific coast is cool. Seattle has showers and cloud with a high of 62 degrees Fahrenheit and a low of 48, about 17 and 9 Celsius; Portland, Oregon is mostly cloudy at 64 and 49; San Francisco partly cloudy at 70 and 55.

The south-west is hot. Phoenix is very hot at 100 and 79, about 38 and 26 Celsius; Las Vegas sunny and hot at 98 and 74; Los Angeles partly sunny at 85 and 70.

Denver is sunny at 83 and 54, and Kansas City has showers at 75 and 65.

Texas is warm: Dallas partly cloudy at 94 and 74, Austin partly cloudy and hot at 97 and 73, Houston partly cloudy and hot at 92 and 75.

The Midwest is cooler and wetter, with Minneapolis under showers at 63 and 56 and Chicago partly sunny at 67 and 54.

The east is wet. New York has rain, wind and cooler air at 64 and 58; Boston rain and breezy at 62 and 54; Washington, D.C. rain at 70 and 59, about 21 and 15 Celsius.

The south-east is warm, with Atlanta sunny at 80 and 56 and Miami partly sunny with an isolated thunderstorm at 87 and 71.

Anchorage, in Alaska, is cloudy at 54 and 44, and Honolulu has isolated showers and wind at 86 and 76.

The map's arrows show warming in the south-west and Texas, cooling in the north-east and the Pacific north-west, and little change in San Francisco, Atlanta and Anchorage.

For Japanese readers with family, business or travel in the United States, the map's east coast rain arrives as Tokyo's own Saturday brings an 80% chance, so that the two capitals share a wet weekend.

The forecast is supplied for this edition, and the National Weather Service's warnings are the official guide for each city.

SOCIETY

Saturday's Map: Rain Across the East, Thunder in Niigata and Hiroshima, Heat in the South-West

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Saturday's map is a map of rain on the Pacific side, where the autumn front has stalled, and of heat in the south-west, where summer holds on.

Sapporo has humid weather with afternoon rain and drizzle, with a high of 24 and a low of 18, after Hokkaido recorded the season's first sub-zero temperatures earlier in the week.

Sendai has morning rain then cloudy skies, at 25 with a low of 21.

Niigata has rain and thunderstorms in the morning, with a high of 27 and a low of 22.

Tokyo is cloudy then turns to afternoon rain with a stray thunderstorm, at 24 with a low of 19 on the map. Asahi's weather section gives the capital a high of around 21 and an 80% chance of rain; readers

should check the meteorological agency's latest forecast, and residents of Chiba and Ibaraki should follow the warning-level rain information through the day.

Yokohama is cloudy then rain, with a high of 23 and a low of 19.

Nagoya is cloudy with rain, at 25 with a low of 21, and Kyoto cloudy then rain, at 26 with a low of 20.

Osaka is cloudy at times sunny then rain, with a high of 25 and a low of 21.

Hiroshima is sunny then a possible afternoon thunderstorm, at 32 with a low of 24, the map's first reading above 30.

Fukuoka is mostly sunny to cloudy, at 32 with a low of 24.

Kagoshima is mostly sunny and hot, with the map's highest reading of 34 and a low of 25.

Naha is sunny at times cloudy with isolated showers, at 32 with a low of 27, as Typhoon No. 26, Surige, approaches from the south, with rough seas and high waves expected from Sunday.

The map's own wording is used for each city, and Chiba and Ibaraki, not shown on the map, are the prefectures under the warning-level rain forecast today.

SOCIETY

Surige's Path: Okinawa on Sunday and Monday, Then Perhaps the Main Islands

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Typhoon No. 26, Surige, will approach Okinawa around the 27th and 28th, and it may then approach Kyushu and Honshu, according to Asahi Shimbun and Weathernews, reporting the meteorological agency's announcement.

The name, contributed to the regional list by the Philippines, is the international designation; Japanese reports will call the storm No. 26.

An approach to Okinawa on Sunday and Monday means rough seas and high waves from Sunday, as reported, and the suspension of ferries and flights to the outer islands, whose supplies depend on them.

The possibility of a subsequent approach to Kyushu and Honshu is the forecast's larger implication. A track that curves north-east after Okinawa would carry the storm along the archipelago's length, and a track that continues west would take it toward the continent.

The agency's forecast circles at that range are wide, and the weekend's updates will narrow them.

For Kanto, still under warning-level rain from the stalled front and still counting No. 25's damage, a typhoon approach next week would be the compound event that Chiba's fourth storm since August had already described.

The autumn rain front stalled over the Pacific coast is itself a factor: typhoons approaching a stalled front feed it moisture, and the rain ahead of the storm can be heavier than the storm's own.

Preparation in the south begins today: securing boats, stocking supplies, and reviewing the evacuation

routes that Okinawa's residents know from a lifetime of storms.

The Sakishima Islands, told to remain cautious while the system was a depression, are the first Japanese territory in its path.

Surige's numbering as the twenty-sixth typhoon of the year, in the last week of September, describes a season that has not slowed.

SOCIETY

Why Flooded Solar Panels Catch Fire, and Why You Should Not Touch Them

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The solar panels that have caught fire in the Inbanuma floodwater illustrate a hazard that Japan's expansion of solar power has added to its floods.

A solar panel generates electricity whenever light falls on it, and it continues to do so when submerged, damaged or disconnected from the grid.

Floodwater, particularly muddy or salty water, conducts electricity, and water entering junction boxes, connectors and inverters creates short circuits that can ignite wiring and the panels themselves.

The fire risk persists after the water recedes, since damaged insulation and corroded connections can arc when the panels dry and resume generating.

Fire authorities warn that submerged or flood-damaged panels should be treated as live, that they should not be approached or touched, and that residents should report them rather than attempt removal.

The panels around Inbanuma stand on former farmland in the lowlands, where solar installations spread after the feed-in tariff of 2012 made them profitable, and their siting in flood-prone lowlands has been criticised before.

Japan's solar capacity is among the largest in the world, and the floods of recent years, including those of 2019 and 2020, produced similar fires and similar warnings.

Installers are required to provide for disconnection and to mark installations, but the panels' generation cannot be switched off while the sun shines.

For the residents of the flooded lowlands, the burning panels add an electrical hazard to a flood that was already a structural and health one, and the warning-level rain forecast today will spread the water further.

The solar farms that were meant to be the lowlands' new crop have become, this week, one of their dangers.

SOCIETY

Rails in Mid-Air: The Kominato Railway Suspends Sections for the Time Being

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

The Kominato Railway will suspend service all day on some sections for the time being, according to the reports available, after the typhoon washed the ground from beneath its track and left rails suspended in mid-air.

The railway runs from Goi, on the Uchibo Line in Ichihara, inland through the Boso hills to Kazusa-Nakano, where it connects with the Isumi Railway to form a route across the peninsula.

It is a small private line of about 39 kilometres, run with diesel railcars through countryside that has made it one of the most photographed rural railways in the capital region, particularly in spring when the rapeseed blooms beside the track.

Rails hanging in the air describe an embankment or a cutting washed out completely, with the track's ballast and formation gone and the rails held only by their fastenings to each other.

Repairing such damage requires rebuilding the formation from the ground up, and a small railway's resources for that are limited, which is why the suspension is described as for the time being rather than for a stated period.

The Kominato has recovered from washouts before, including the damage of the 2019 typhoons, and its survival has depended on support from the prefecture and its municipalities as well as on its tourist traffic.

The line's suspension, alongside the Uchibo Line's closure for months and the Sobu Line's for about one, leaves the peninsula's interior with road transport

only, on roads that are themselves restricted.

Students and older residents who use the line to reach Ichihara's schools, hospitals and shops face substitute buses on the hill roads.

The severe-disaster designation the government plans would raise the state's share of restoration costs for public works, and the railway's repair may qualify for support under it.

For a railway whose appeal is the countryside it runs through, the countryside has this time run through it.

SOCIETY

The Little Railway Through the Boso Hills

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Kominato Railway, some of whose sections are suspended for the time being with rails hanging in mid-air, is among the best loved of Japan's small rural railways.

It runs about 39 kilometres from Goi, on Tokyo Bay, inland through the hills of the Boso Peninsula to Kazusa-Nakano, where it meets the Isumi Railway, so that the two together cross the peninsula from bay to Pacific.

The line was built in the 1920s with the aim of reaching Kominato on the Pacific coast, which it never did; the name survives as a record of the ambition.

Its diesel railcars, some of them decades old, run through rice fields, bamboo groves and river valleys, and the spring rapeseed along the track has made the line a destination for photographers and day-trippers from Tokyo.

The railway's finances have depended on that tourism, on the schools and hospitals its passengers reach, and on support from Chiba Prefecture and the municipalities along the line.

The typhoons of 2019 damaged it, and the line recovered with help; this year's damage, with the ground washed from beneath the track, is of a similar kind and, on the reports available, greater.

Small railways in Japan have closed in numbers over the past two decades as rural populations have shrunk, and each disaster raises the question of whether repair is justified.

The Kominato's case for repair rests on its tourism, its role in the peninsula's transport and the affection in which it is held, and the severe-disaster designation the government plans would help with the cost.

Its suspension, alongside the Uchibo and Sobu lines' closures, leaves the peninsula's interior dependent on hill roads that are themselves damaged.

The rails hanging in the air will be photographed too, as the line always is, and the photographs will make its case.

SOCIETY

Thirty-Seven Schools Closed, Five Hundred Damaged: The Typhoon in the Classroom

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Thirty-seven schools are closed because of Typhoon No. 25, and more than 500 schools suffered facility damage, according to Asahi Shimbun.

The numbers describe the storm's reach into daily life beyond the flooded districts: a school damaged by wind, water or a fallen tree is a school whose pupils, staff and parents are disrupted even where homes were spared.

Closures concentrate in the areas hit hardest, on the Boso Peninsula and in Kanagawa's coastal cities, where roads are cut, power is out and buildings are unsafe.

Schools that remain open in the affected areas serve as evacuation centres, and the two roles compete when the water rises again, as it may today.

Damage to 500 schools across the two prefectures will be assessed and repaired over months, with the severe-disaster designation the government plans raising the state's share of the cost of public facilities.

Pupils in closed schools lose days of instruction that the school year will have to recover, and the boards of education will arrange substitute teaching where buildings cannot be used.

Warning-level rain today, and the possibility of Surige next week, mean that closures may extend or return, and boards will decide day by day.

SOCIETY

The influenza surge reported this week, with one clinic seeing thirty times its normal rate, adds a health dimension to school closures that boards will weigh.

The typhoons of 2019 closed schools across Chiba for days and damaged hundreds, and the recovery then took months; this year's damage is larger.

For the children of Sakura, Kamogawa and Yokosuka, the storm's longest consequence may be the school year it has bent.

SOCIETY

The School as Shelter: When the Gymnasium Is Both Classroom and Refuge

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The 37 schools closed and 500 damaged by Typhoon No. 25 include many that serve, in Japan's disaster system, as evacuation centres, and the two roles compete when a second storm arrives.

Schools are the designated shelters in most municipalities because they are public, sturdy, distributed across neighbourhoods and equipped with gymnasiums that can hold hundreds.

When residents evacuate to a school, the gymnasium fills with families on mats, the classrooms may house the elderly and the ill, and the staff room becomes an office for the municipal workers who run the centre.

Lessons cannot resume in a school that is sheltering evacuees, and boards of education must choose between reopening for pupils and keeping the building for the displaced.

Warning-level rain today, and Surige's possible approach next week, mean that schools reopened this week may fill again with evacuees before their pupils return.

The influenza surge reported this week, with one clinic seeing thirty times its normal rate, is the hazard that crowded gymnasiums add, and public health teams monitor centres for outbreaks.

Damage to 500 schools will be repaired over months, with the severe-disaster designation raising the state's share of the cost, and the buildings that are unsafe cannot serve either role.

The 2019 typhoons closed Chiba's schools for days and filled them with evacuees for weeks, and the boards learned to plan for both.

For pupils, the school year bends around the disaster; for their neighbours, the school is where they sleep when the water rises.

The gymnasium that hosted the sports day in spring hosts the district in the storm, which is what it was built to do.

SOCIETY

What 'Warning Level' Means, and What to Do at Each Step

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The forecast of warning-level torrential rain for Chiba and Ibaraki today uses a term from the meteorological agency's five-level system for disaster information, adopted in 2019 to make warnings easier to act on.

Level one is early information, issued days ahead when heavy rain is possible; level two is an advisory, at which residents are asked to check evacuation routes and hazard maps.

Level three is a warning, at which older residents and those needing time to move are asked to evacuate; level four is an evacuation order for everyone in the affected area; level five means a disaster is occurring and residents should take whatever action protects their lives.

Warning-level rain corresponds to level three and above, and municipalities issue the evacuation information at each level based on the agency's forecasts and their own observations.

The system was introduced after the floods of 2018, in which residents received warnings but did not act on them, and its purpose is to tie each level to a specific action.

Today's forecast means that residents of Chiba's slopes and lowlands should be ready to move at level three and should move at level four, without waiting for level five, at which movement may be impossible.

The stalled autumn front produces rain that continues for hours, and levels can rise through the day as the ground saturates and the rivers respond.

Households without power, in the 150 areas with no

outlook, cannot receive the levels by phone or television, and municipalities reach them by other means.

Surige's approach to Okinawa on Sunday and Monday will bring the same system into use in the south, with typhoon information added.

The levels are a ladder; the advice is to climb it early.

SOCIETY

The Stalled Front: Why Autumn's Rain Sits Over the Pacific Coast

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The autumn rain front stalled over the Pacific coast, which puts Chiba and Ibaraki under warning-level rain today, is the season's counterpart to the rainy season of June.

In autumn, as the Pacific high retreats south and cool air advances from the continent, the boundary between the two air masses settles over Japan as a front, and when the pattern around it is static the front stalls.

A stalled front produces days of rain along its length, and when a typhoon approaches from the south, as Surige does now, the storm's moisture feeds the front and the rain ahead of the typhoon can exceed the typhoon's own.

That combination has produced some of Japan's worst autumn floods, including those of 2019, and it is the reason the meteorological agency's warnings this weekend cover the front as well as the storm.

Chiba's position on the Pacific coast, at the front's eastern end, and its saturated ground from three storms since August make it the prefecture most at risk today.

Tochigi's rain from before dawn to early morning, reported by Asahi, describes the front's northern edge, and Tokyo's 80% chance its centre.

The front will move when the pattern changes, most likely with Surige's approach, which will push the boundary north or draw it south depending on the storm's track.

For the recovery at Inbanuma, where emergency repairs have begun on the breached embankment, the front's rain is the immediate obstacle, before the typhoon's.

Autumn fronts are less regular than June's rainy season and less predictable, and their stalling is the pattern forecasters watch for at this time of year.

The front sits over the coast today; where it sits tomorrow depends on the storm to the south.

SOCIETY

No Water, No Outlook: The Chiba Districts Where the Taps Are Dry

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Power and water outages continue in parts of Chiba with no clear outlook for restoration, according to the reports available, and the water outages are the harder to live with.

Water supply depends on electricity at every stage, from the pumps that lift water from rivers and wells to the treatment plants that clean it and the pumps that push it through the mains, so that a power outage becomes a water outage within hours.

Districts without power for a week are districts without running water for a week, and their residents depend on water trucks, bottled water and the emergency wells that some municipalities maintain.

Toilets that cannot flush, kitchens that cannot wash and baths that cannot fill are the conditions that public health teams watch for outbreaks, and the influenza surge reported this week adds to their concern.

The Self-Defense Forces' water trucks and the municipalities' distribution points supply the minimum, and residents queue for it in the rain today.

Restoration of water follows restoration of power, and the 150 areas with no outlook for electricity have none for water either.

Damage to the mains themselves, from landslides that cut pipes and floods that contaminated them, will keep some districts dry after the power returns, and the mains must be flushed and tested before supply resumes.

The 2019 typhoons produced the same pattern in Chiba, and the lesson then was that water outages outlast power outages in the hardest-hit districts.

The severe-disaster designation the government plans would raise the state's share of the cost of restoring waterworks, which are public facilities under the law.

For the residents of the dry districts, today's warning-level rain is the bitterest irony: water everywhere, and none in the tap.

SOCIETY

Frost in the North, Swells in the South: The Country's Two Ends This Weekend

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Hokkaido has recorded its first sub-zero temperatures of the season, with cold mornings and evenings, while Okinawa expects rough seas and high waves from Sunday as Typhoon No. 26 approaches, according to the reports available.

The two ends of the country describe the season's range: winter's first signal in the north, the typhoon season's continuation in the south, and a stalled rain front between them.

Numakawa's freeze earlier in the week, eleven days earlier than last year, was the first, and cold mornings have since spread across the island's interior, with today's Sapporo panel showing humid weather and afternoon rain at 24 and 18.

Hokkaido's farmers race the frost to lift the last of the potato and onion harvest, and the island's autumn colours spread down from the peaks with each cold night.

Okinawa's rough seas from Sunday will halt the ferries to the outer islands and close the beaches, and the Sakishima Islands, first in Surige's path, will see the worst.

Today's Naha panel shows sun at times cloudy with isolated showers at 32 and 27, the calm before the approach, and the islands will use the day to prepare.

Between the two, eastern Japan lies under the stalled front, with warning-level rain in Chiba and Ibaraki and an 80% chance in Tokyo.

The Japanese archipelago's length, from the Sea of Okhotsk to the East China Sea, is why a single weekend can hold frost, flood and typhoon at once.

The meteorological agency's forecasts for each region are updated through the day, and this weekend's are among the busiest of the year.

Frost, rain and swell: three seasons, one Saturday.

SOCIETY

Chiba-kun's Activities Suspended After Insensitive Remarks About Promotion Outside the Prefecture

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Chiba-kun, the prefecture's official mascot, has had its activities suspended after receiving insensitive comments regarding public relations activities outside the prefecture, according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

The mascot, a red dog-like character shaped like the prefecture itself, has represented Chiba at events across the country since 2007, and its appearances are a fixture of the prefecture's tourism and product promotion.

The controversy concerns promotional work outside Chiba while the prefecture counts eleven dead and hundreds of thousands affected by Typhoon No. 25, and the comments that prompted the suspension were described as insensitive in the report.

The suspension reflects a judgment that a cheerful mascot promoting the prefecture elsewhere, while its own residents are flooded and without power, sends the wrong message.

Mascots are a serious part of Japanese local government, with budgets, schedules and staff, and their conduct is judged as the prefecture's own.

Kumamon, the mascot of Kumamoto, is the model the others follow, and its handling of the 2016 earthquakes, when its activities were suspended and then resumed as a symbol of recovery, is the precedent Chiba will consider.

Chiba-kun's return will be timed to the recovery, and the mascot may yet play the role Kumamon played, as the face of a prefecture rebuilding.

The controversy is small beside the disaster, and its reporting reflects the attention that mascots receive rather than any effect on the recovery.

The prefecture's public relations office will decide

when activities resume, and the decision will be watched by the mascot's considerable following.

For now, Chiba-kun is at home, like the prefecture it represents.

SOCIETY

Woman, 52, Found Dead in Her Home in Ota, Gunma; a Man Has Fled

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

A 52-year-old woman was found dead in her home in Ota City, Gunma Prefecture, and a man has fled, with murder suspected, according to Asahi Shimbun.

Police are searching for the man, and the circumstances of the death, including the relationship between the woman and the man and the cause of death, were not detailed in the report available.

Ota is an industrial city in eastern Gunma, home to Subaru's main plants and to a large community of foreign workers, and it is among the prefecture's largest municipalities.

Cases in which a suspect flees the scene prompt searches that draw on neighbouring prefectures' police, and the man's description and vehicle, if any, will have been circulated.

Gunma prefectural police will conduct the investigation, and an arrest warrant would follow the identification of the suspect.

Reports of this kind are published with restraint in Japan until charges are brought, and the same restraint applies here.

The case arrives in a week in which Mito prosecutors sought 21 years for the murder of a nail artist in neighbouring Ibaraki, with the verdict due on the 30th.

Violent crime against women in their homes is the category in which Japanese police have expanded protective measures over the past decade, including restraining orders and shelters.

Whether the case involves such a history was not indicated in the report.

The investigation continues, and the man's arrest will be reported when it occurs.

SOCIETY

Tokaido Line Between Shinagawa and Yokohama, and the Whole Keihin-Tohoku Line, Suspended Overnight

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

The JR Tokaido Line between Shinagawa and Yokohama and the entire Keihin-Tohoku Line were temporarily suspended on Friday night, with resumption expected around 1 a.m., according to Yomiuri Shimbun.

The two lines carry the heaviest traffic between Tokyo and Yokohama, and a suspension on a Friday night strands the passengers of the week's busiest evening.

The cause was not detailed in the report available, and JR East's announcements will have given it; suspensions of this scope typically follow an incident, an equipment failure or an inspection triggered by weather.

The Keihin-Tohoku Line runs from Omiya in Saitama through central Tokyo to Yokohama, and its suspension across the whole line affects passengers far from the Shinagawa-Yokohama section.

Passengers were directed to the Keikyu line, the Tokyu lines and the Yokosuka Line, whose capacity absorbed some of the traffic, and taxis and buses the rest.

A resumption around 1 a.m. means the last trains ran after the ordinary end of service, carrying passengers who had waited hours.

The suspension coincided with the stalled autumn front's rain and with the week's typhoon disruption, though the report did not connect them.

JR East's handling of suspensions, including information to passengers and the provision of alternatives, is a recurring subject of complaint and review.

Saturday's services were expected to run normally, subject to the warning-level rain forecast for Chiba and Ibaraki.

For a region whose railways carried it through the week's disruptions, the Friday-night stoppage was a

SOCIETY

reminder of how much depends on two lines.

SOCIETY

Influenza Surges Early, With One Clinic Reporting Thirty Times Its Normal Rate

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Influenza cases have surged, with one clinic reporting thirty times its normal rate, and prolonged rain has been identified as the cause, according to the reports available.

An influenza surge in September is early. The season in Japan typically begins in late autumn and peaks in January and February, and a September surge suggests conditions that favour transmission before the usual season.

Prolonged rain keeps people indoors, in closer contact and in less ventilated spaces, and the weeks of rain over eastern Japan, culminating in the typhoon and the stalled front, have produced exactly those conditions.

Evacuation centres, in which residents of flooded and landslide-hit districts have been sheltering since Monday, are places where respiratory infections spread, and public health authorities monitor them for outbreaks.

A thirty-fold increase at a single clinic is a local observation rather than a national statistic, and the national surveillance data, published weekly, will show the surge's extent.

Vaccination for the coming season begins in October, and an early surge raises the question of whether the schedule should be advanced.

School closures for the typhoon, affecting 37 schools, and the crowding of those that remain open as evacuation centres, may either interrupt or accelerate transmission among children.

Older residents in evacuation centres are the most vulnerable, and the combination of flood, cold nights and influenza is one that disaster medicine has learned to expect.

Public health advice is the familiar kind: hand washing, masks in crowded indoor settings, and staying home when ill, which the rain makes easier and the evacuation centres make harder.

The season's first wave has arrived with the autumn rain, and the two may run together into October.

SOCIETY

Health in the Shelters: Influenza, Cold Nights and the Crowded Gymnasium

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The influenza surge reported this week, with one clinic seeing thirty times its normal rate, arrives as Chiba's evacuation centres prepare to fill again under warning-level rain.

Evacuation centres are the settings in which respiratory infections spread fastest, with families on mats in gymnasiums, shared toilets and water points, and residents who arrived tired and wet.

The lessons of the 2011 disaster and the floods since include the placement of health teams in shelters, the separation of the ill, and the provision of masks, hand sanitiser and ventilation, and Chiba's centres have applied them since Monday.

Cold nights, which have arrived with the front, add the risk of hypothermia and of the cardiovascular events that disaster medicine associates with sudden cold, particularly among older evacuees.

The centres also serve residents whose homes have no power or water, who come by day for supplies and by night for warmth, and the mixing of the sheltered and the visiting increases exposure.

Vaccination for the season begins in October, and health authorities may advance it for evacuees and for the staff who serve them.

Schools that serve as shelters cannot also be classrooms, and the boards of education's choice between the two is partly a health choice.

Public health teams monitor the centres daily, and an outbreak in one would prompt the isolation measures the system has developed.

For older evacuees, the combination of flood, cold and influenza is the one the system fears most, and today's rain brings all three together.

The advice is the familiar kind, masks and hands and

rest, and the shelters are where it is hardest to follow.

SOCIETY

How a Landslide Search Proceeds, and Why Rain Stops It

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

The searches that raised the typhoon's toll to eleven on Friday, and that continue for the missing, follow a method that rain interrupts.

A landslide buries its victims in a mass of earth, rock and debris that can be metres deep, and the search begins with the places where the missing were last seen, reported by families and neighbours.

Search dogs, trained to detect human scent, cover the surface first, followed by teams with probes and listening devices, and then by excavators working carefully under the direction of officers who mark where to dig.

Fire and police teams, the Self-Defense Forces and volunteers from neighbouring prefectures work in rotation, since the labour is heavy and the ground unstable.

Rain halts the work because a slope that has failed once can fail again, burying the searchers, and because water turns the debris to mud that cannot be excavated safely.

Today's warning-level rain in Chiba will stop the searches on the Boso Peninsula, and the landslide warnings in Kanagawa will keep the Yokosuka and Miura slopes closed to teams as well.

The families of the missing wait at the evacuation centres or at the edge of the search zones, and the officers who brief them are trained for the conversations that each day without news requires.

The arithmetic of a landslide search, in which each recovery reduces the missing and raises the dead, is the hardest in disaster response, and it proceeds at the ground's pace.

The 2019 typhoons produced similar searches in Chiba, and the lessons, from the placement of dogs to the timing of excavation, are applied this week.

The searchers will return when the rain stops; the slopes will decide when that is safe.

SOCIETY

Two Hundred Tomatoes Stolen Just Before Harvest in Fukaura, Aomori

By Grace Park | Food & Restaurants

Two hundred tomatoes were stolen just before harvest in Fukaura, Aomori Prefecture, according to the reports available, in the latest of the agricultural thefts that have become a recurring feature of rural policing.

Fukaura, on the Sea of Japan coast at the foot of the Shirakami mountains, is a fishing and farming town whose growers sell to the prefecture's markets and to visitors on the coastal road.

Thefts of produce just before harvest are timed to the crop's peak value, and they suggest thieves with knowledge of when fields are ready and when growers are absent.

Two hundred tomatoes is a modest theft in value and a significant one for a grower whose season's work is taken in a night.

Agricultural theft has grown with produce prices, and police in rural prefectures have responded with patrols, cameras and appeals to markets and buyers to question the provenance of cheap produce.

The theft coincides with reports from Chiba of tomatoes and rice damaged by re-flooding during the harvest, so that growers at both ends of Honshu have lost their crops this week to different causes.

Aomori police will investigate, and the theft will be reported to the agricultural co-operative, whose members share information about such incidents.

Fruit and vegetable thefts in Japan have included melons, grapes and cherries worth far more per piece than tomatoes, and organised groups have been arrested for some.

For the grower, the loss is the season's; for the town, the theft is a reminder that fields on a quiet coast are not safe from the road.

The tomatoes, wherever they went, were ripe.

SOCIETY

Wild Boars Spotted in Fukui City

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News Reporter

Wild boars have been spotted in Fukui city, according to the reports available, bringing to the prefectural capital an animal whose incursions into urban Japan have grown year by year.

Boars entering cities are drawn by food, from crops on the urban fringe to garbage and the acorns of park trees, and they are pushed by the expansion of their range as rural land is abandoned and hunters age.

Fukui's city lies on a plain ringed by hills, and boars from those hills reach residential districts along rivers and green corridors.

Boars are dangerous when cornered or surprised, and injuries from them have risen with their urban sightings; police and municipal staff respond to sightings with warnings and, where necessary, capture.

Residents are advised not to approach or feed boars, to keep distance if one is encountered, and to report sightings to the city.

The autumn is the season in which boars feed most actively before winter, and sightings in cities peak in the months ahead.

Bears have dominated Japan's wildlife news this year, with record incidents in Tohoku and Hokkaido, and boars are the second animal in the same story of wildlife moving into human space.

Fukui's crab season opens in November, and the prefecture's autumn is otherwise dominated by the Echizen crab brand, whose misuse in hometown tax gifts was reported this week.

The city's sighting is one of hundreds reported across Japan each autumn, and it will be handled by the routine that municipalities have developed.

Boars on the streets are a reminder that the hills are closer to Japan's cities than their residents assume.

SPORTS

Marathon Morning, a Stacked Night: 400m Finals, Tanaka's 1500m, Japan v North Korea and the Women's Basketball Final

Saturday is the Games' busiest day, from the downtown Nagoya marathons at dawn to a quarter-final with a political edge and a gold-medal game

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

The Asian Games' Saturday began before most of Japan was awake, with the men's marathon at 7:30 a.m. and the women's at 7:50 a.m. on a course through downtown Nagoya, according to the Japan Association of Athletics Federations.

It ends with an evening in which the men's and women's 400 metres finals and the women's 1500 metres final are run at Paloma Mizuho Stadium, Japan's under-21 footballers meet North Korea in the quarter-finals, and the women's basketball final is played for gold.

Nozomi Tanaka is scheduled to compete in one of the evening's track finals, and the qualifying rounds of the men's 110 metres hurdles, with Rachid Muratake and Shunsuke Izumiya, are also on the evening's programme.

Yuma Maruyama and the other decathletes contest the first day's events, from the 100 metres to the 400 metres, and the javelin qualifying rounds, including the women's event in which Haruka Kitaguchi competes, are scheduled today.

The football quarter-final against North Korea carries the history of a rivalry shaped by politics, including the World Cup qualifier of 2024 that Pyongyang declined to host and that FIFA awarded to Japan 3-0.

The women's basketball final gives Japan's women, silver medallists at the Tokyo Olympics, the chance to add a Games gold to the men's team's silver.

Baseball's Super Round brings Japan against Chinese Taipei, with South Korea's professionals the team that awaits the winner of the group.

Table tennis moves to its mixed doubles final and to the men's and women's singles and doubles quarter-finals, two days after the men's team beat China 3-2 for a first team gold in 60 years.

Fencing's women's foil team and men's sabre team contest their semi-finals and finals, diving opens, and archery's compound events begin.

The weather is the day's complication: Nagoya's map panel shows cloud with rain at 25 degrees, conditions

that the marathoners will have welcomed and that the evening's sprinters will not.

Away from the Games, the Japan Women's Open golf championship continues, with NHK's coverage featuring Momoko Ueda on the tournament's highlights, and the Aki Basho reaches its fourteenth day with Onosato still competing for the title.

Professional baseball's weekend games continue the Climax Series races in both leagues.

Saturday's results will fill tomorrow's sports pages, and the medal table's final week will be shaped by tonight.

SPORTS

North Korea's Athletes at a Japanese Games: Table Tennis, Football and the Rules of Neutrality

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Tonight's football quarter-final between Japan and North Korea is the most visible of the North Korean team's appearances at a Games hosted by Japan, and the appearances raise questions the Games' rules answer.

The Olympic Council of Asia requires host countries to admit all member delegations and to treat them neutrally, and Japan's admission of North Korean athletes follows that rule despite the absence of diplomatic relations and the disputes over abductions and missiles.

North Korea's table tennis players contested the semi-finals against China this week, and its footballers have reached the quarter-finals with the physical, organised game that its teams are known for.

Japanese authorities treat fixtures against North Korea as security events, with arrangements for the players' movement and for the crowds, and the Aichi venues have been prepared accordingly.

The senior teams' World Cup qualifier of 2024, cancelled after Pyongyang declined to host the return leg in Pyongyang, showed the political fragility of the fixture; a Games match on neutral rules is more stable.

North Korea's return to international competition after the pandemic has brought its athletes to Games and championships across Asia, and its results in weightlifting, wrestling and football have been strong.

For Japanese spectators, the match is football first, with the under-21s' Olympic prospects at stake, and the political dimension is one they are used to setting aside for ninety minutes.

The Lee Jae-myung post this week, on the handover of two North Korean soldiers to the South, is a reminder of the peninsula's tensions running alongside the Games.

Neutral treatment is the Games' rule, and Japan's observance of it is part of hosting.

Kick-off is tonight, and the whistle, not the politics, will decide who plays the semi-final.

SPORTS

Today at the Games: Hour by Hour

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

7:30 a.m.: the men's marathon starts in downtown Nagoya; 7:50 a.m.: the women's.

Daytime: decathlon day one, 100m to 400m, with Yuma Maruyama; javelin qualifying, women's with Haruka Kitaguchi and men's; diving opens; compound archery begins.

Daytime: table tennis singles and doubles quarter-finals; the mixed doubles final.

Daytime: fencing, women's foil team and men's sabre team, semi-finals to finals.

Daytime: baseball Super Round, Japan v Chinese Taipei, in Aichi.

Evening: men's and women's 400m finals and women's 1500m final at Paloma Mizuho Stadium, with Nozomi Tanaka scheduled in one of the finals.

Evening: 110m hurdles qualifying, with Rachid Muratake and Shunsuke Izumiya.

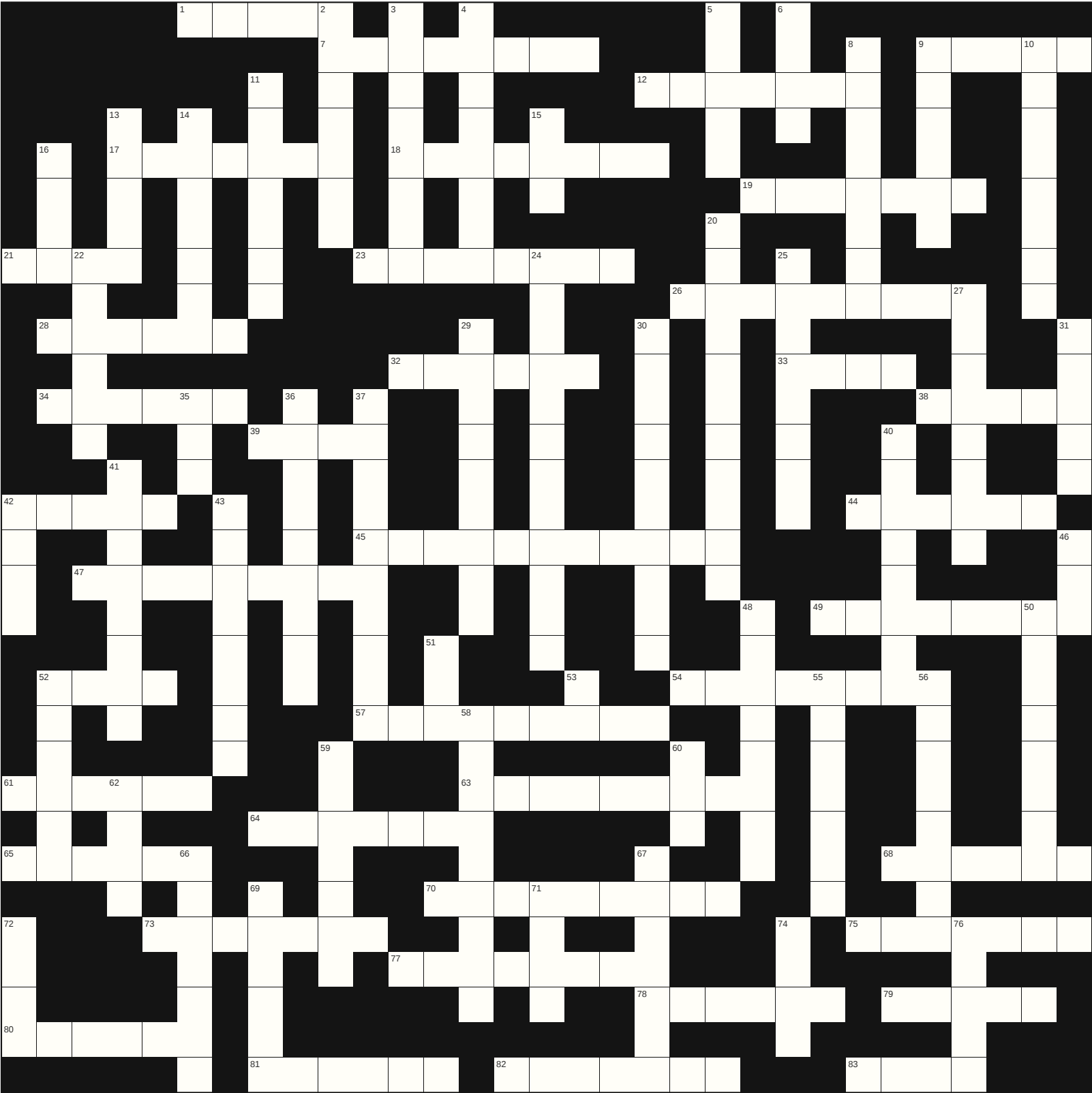
Evening: football quarter-final, Japan v North Korea.

Evening: women's basketball final.

Elsewhere: the Japan Women's Open golf; Aki Basho day 14 with Onosato in the race; professional baseball's Climax Series races.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 86 Words



SPORTS

3-2 Against China: The Men's Team Gold, Confirmed and Counted

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Japan's men's table tennis team defeated China 3-2 to win the Asian Games team gold for the first time in 60 years, with Tomokazu Harimoto and Teruaki Matsushima among the players, according to Nikkei, whose reporting on the Thursday final continued into the weekend.

The scoreline, now confirmed, describes the tie that the result implied: a final that went to a fifth and deciding match, won by Japan against the sport's dominant nation.

A 3-2 victory means that Japan's three players won three rubbers against opponents who are, individually, among the best in the world, and lost two, and that the tie turned on the last of the five.

Harimoto, born in Sendai to parents who played for China, and Matsushima, the younger of the pair, carried the tie with the third member of the team named by Sponichi in the semi-final line-up, Shunsuke Togami.

The last men's team gold came at the Bangkok Games of 1966, when China did not compete and Japan's principal rivals were South Korea and the other Asian powers of the day; Thursday's was won against China in a final.

The women's team final against China, played the same evening, was not reported in the accounts available, and its result will be published when confirmed.

The men's players now contest the singles and doubles quarter-finals, and the mixed doubles final is today.

China's response to the defeat will be watched at those events, since the country's players do not lose team finals often and rarely twice in a week.

Japanese table tennis's revival over fifteen years, built on players identified young and trained intensively, produced the Olympic mixed doubles gold of 2021 and team medals at four consecutive Olympics; the Asian Games team gold was the result it had lacked.

3-2 is the score that will be remembered, and the fifth match that decided it will be replayed in Japanese table tennis for years.

SPORTS

Dawn in Downtown Nagoya: The Marathons Open the Games' Longest Day

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Asian Games men's and women's marathons were held early this morning on a course through downtown Nagoya, with the men starting at 7:30 a.m. and the women at 7:50 a.m., according to the Japan Association of Athletics Federations.

The early starts are a concession to the heat that a Games in late September can still produce, though this morning's conditions, cloud with rain at 25 degrees on the map, were kinder than the organisers feared.

Nagoya knows marathons. The Nagoya Women's Marathon, run each March, is among the largest women's races in the world, and the city's course through its central districts is familiar to Japanese runners.

Japan's marathon tradition is deep, from the corporate teams that produce its distance runners to the ekiden relays that fill the winter's television, and the Asian Games marathon is a title Japanese runners have won often.

The women's race brings Japan's strongest distance runners against the East African-born athletes who represent Bahrain and other Gulf states, and the men's race the same.

A marathon through a city's centre closes roads for hours, and Nagoya's Saturday morning was arranged around the runners.

The results, known by mid-morning, will be reported in tomorrow's edition, and the runners' times will be judged against the conditions.

The marathon opens a day that ends with the 400 metres and 1500 metres finals under the stadium's lights, so that athletics spans Saturday from dawn to night.

Haruka Kitaguchi's javelin qualifying and the decathlon's first day fill the hours between.

For the city, the marathon is the Games' most public event, run through its streets rather than inside a stadium, and its residents lined the course.

SPORTS

Japan and the Asian Games Marathon: A Title Often Won, Contested at Home

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

This morning's marathons through downtown Nagoya continue an event in which Japanese runners have won often, and which a home Games gives them the chance to win before their own crowd.

At the Jakarta Games of 2018, Hiroto Inoue won the men's marathon for Japan, and Japanese women have taken the title in several editions, drawing on the country's deep tradition in the distance.

The tradition rests on the corporate teams that employ distance runners, the ekiden relays that give them a winter of competition, and the major city marathons, including Nagoya's own women's race each March.

The Asian Games field brings the East African-born runners who represent Bahrain and other Gulf states, whose times at world level exceed Japan's, and the race at a Games is tactical rather than fast.

An early start, at 7:30 a.m. for the men and 7:50 a.m. for the women, is a concession to heat, though this morning's conditions, cloud with rain at 25 degrees, were kinder than feared.

The course through the city's centre, closed for the morning, is the Games' most public stage, and Nagoya's residents lined it.

Japan's marathoners will contest the Los Angeles Olympics of 2028 with the depth that the Games' results will help to reveal, and the domestic selection process is the most competitive in the world.

The women's race, in particular, has produced Japan's Olympic marathon medallists, from the 1990s to Naoko Takahashi's gold in Sydney and Mizuki Noguchi's in Athens.

The results, known by mid-morning, will be reported in tomorrow's edition.

The marathon opened the Games' longest day, and the runners were home before the track finals began.

DOWN

2. Thirty-seven closed, five hundred damaged (7)
3. The man holding the net in the cartoon (8)
4. Satellite that failed on this day in 1958 (8)
5. Vice President at the fraud-recovery podium (5)
6. Tokyo's chosen response (4)
8. Low-malt beer imitation (8)
9. If said the Republic of China fought alongside the U.S. (6)
10. Run at dawn through Nagoya today (8)
11. Showers and cloudly on the U.S. map (7)
13. Panels that caught fire in the floodwater (5)
14. Rain before dawn there (7)
15. Its undervaluation is 'a problem' (3)
16. New crop at close to 1,000 yen (4)
20. Treaty ally with a 1951 pact (11)
22. Dead in Chiba and Kanagawa (6)
24. Tokyo said the exchange was within them (12)
25. Finance minister who called the Treasury (8)
27. Lake with a breached embankment under repair (8)
29. —, 2, sealed on this day in 1991 (9)
30. Women's final tonight (10)
31. Autumn rain —, stalled over the coast (5)
35. Gunma city where a woman, 52, was found dead (3)
36. Ten events over two days (9)
37. Teruaki, his teammate (10)
40. If it needs one, it is not peace, per the cartoon (8)
41. Allies are not a — service, per the placard (8)
42. Testing radiation data by satellite (4)
43. Yuma, decathlete on day one (8)
46. Its Watch 9 covers Surige tonight (3)
48. Railway with rails hanging in mid-air (8)
50. What the caption says they ask Washington to do (8)
51. Jae-myung, who posted about a breached agreement (3)
52. Carrier with satellite phone service (6)
53. He demanded 'opposition' to Taiwan independence (2)
55. Index in which Japan ranks first (7)
56. Chief crop in the purchase talk (8)
58. The cartoon's signpost (9)
59. 'Overjoyed,' said the President (7)
60. Network whose exclusion prompted a boycott (3)
62. Document the caption says is notarised (4)
66. Shunsuke, the other hurdler (7)
67. Kitaguchi's event (7)
69. Marathon city (6)
71. Nail artist murder verdict due on the 30th (4)
72. Networks that refused to broadcast the talks (4)
74. Mid-Autumn one, on Friday (4)
76. Third in the tourism index (5)

SPORTS

SPORTS

Nozomi Tanaka, the Middle-Distance Runner Who Took Japan Into an Olympic Final

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Nozomi Tanaka, scheduled to compete in one of tonight's track finals at Paloma Mizuho Stadium, is the runner who changed what Japanese middle-distance women expect of themselves.

At the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, she reached the final of the 1500 metres, a result no Japanese woman had achieved, and she set national records on the way through the rounds.

She holds the Japanese record in the 1500 metres and has competed at world championships and the Paris Olympics since, in an event dominated by East African and European runners.

Her rise came through the ekiden relays and the corporate and university running culture that produces Japan's distance runners, and through a willingness to race abroad against the world's best.

The Asian Games 1500 metres brings her against the East African-born runners who represent Bahrain and other Gulf states, the continent's strongest middle-distance fields, and a home stadium gives her the crowd.

The women's 1500 metres final is among tonight's showpieces, with the men's and women's 400 metres finals, and the reports available place her in one of the evening's finals without specifying which.

Nagoya's map panel shows cloud with rain at 25 degrees, conditions that middle-distance runners tolerate better than sprinters do.

A medal at home would add to a Japanese athletics tally that has been built on relays, walks and throws, and would confirm her as the face of the country's middle-distance running.

The Los Angeles Olympics of 2028 are her next target, and the Games are a step toward them.

The final is tonight, and tomorrow's edition will carry the result.

SPORTS

Thirteen Seconds and Falling: Japan's Hurdlers and the Qualifying Rounds Tonight

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

The qualifying rounds of the men's 110 metres hurdles this evening bring Rachid Muratake and Shunsuke Izumiya, the leading figures of a Japanese hurdling revival that has sent the national record falling repeatedly.

A decade ago, Japanese hurdlers rarely reached the finals of world championships; in recent years they have reached them regularly, and the national record has come down toward the 13-second barrier that the world's best cross.

Muratake reached the Olympic final at the Paris Games in 2024, and Izumiya has been among the country's fastest, and the two have pushed each other through the seasons since.

The revival reflects coaching, the corporate and university programmes that support athletes through their twenties, and the example of sprinters whose relay medals showed that Japanese athletes could compete at world level in the fast events.

Asian hurdling has produced world-class athletes, notably China's Liu Xiang, the Olympic champion of 2004, and the Games' final will be contested at a high standard.

Qualifying rounds require only a place among the fastest, and the final later in the Games is where the medals are decided.

Rain on the map for Nagoya would make the hurdles hazardous, since wet tracks and wet barriers combine badly, and the conditions will shape the evening.

The hurdles share the evening with the 400 metres and 1500 metres finals and with the decathlon's first day, in which Yuma Maruyama contests the events from the 100 metres to the 400 metres.

Japanese athletics' strengths have been relays, walks and throws; the hurdles are the newest, and tonight's rounds are their stage.

Thirteen seconds is the standard, and the two men who have brought Japan closest to it run tonight.

SPORTS

Ten Events, Two Days: The Decathlon That Yuma Maruyama Begins Today

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Yuma Maruyama and the other decathletes begin their competition today with the events from the 100 metres to the 400 metres, the first day of the ten-event test that decides the Games' most complete athlete.

The first day runs the 100 metres, long jump, shot put, high jump and 400 metres, and the second day the 110 metres hurdles, discus, pole vault, javelin and, at the end, the 1500 metres.

Each performance is converted to points by tables that reward excellence in every event, so that a decathlete must be fast, strong and skilled across disciplines that specialists spend careers on.

Maruyama, who competed at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, is among Japan's leading decathletes, in an event in which Japanese athletes have reached world level without yet winning a global medal.

The decathlon's day-one events are the running and jumping disciplines in which Japan's athletes are strongest, and the second day's throws and vault decide the final standings.

Nagoya's rain, on the map at 25 degrees with cloud, would affect the long jump runway, the shot circle and the 400 metres, and the decathletes contend with the conditions across two days.

The event's tradition of camaraderie, with competitors supporting one another through ten events, makes it the Games' most collegial contest and its most exhausting.

The winner is decided by the 1500 metres tomorrow evening, run by athletes who have already competed nine times.

Asian decathlon has been led by Kazakhstan, China and Japan, and the Games' title is one the region's best contest seriously.

Two days from now, the most complete athlete at the Games will be known, and Maruyama's first day begins the count.

SPORTS

Kitaguchi's Qualifying Day: The Olympic Champion Throws at Home

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The qualifying rounds of the women's javelin, in which Haruka Kitaguchi competes, are scheduled today at the Asian Games, according to the reports available.

Kitaguchi won the Olympic javelin gold at the Paris Games in 2024, the first Olympic field event title by a Japanese woman, and she won the world title in Budapest the year before.

Her success came through an unusual route: after struggling in Japan, she moved to the Czech Republic to train under a coach whose methods rebuilt her technique, and she has competed on the European circuit since.

A home Games gives her the Japanese crowd that her career abroad has denied her, and the qualifying round is the first step toward a final that would be among the Games' most anticipated.

The javelin is decided by a single best throw across six attempts in the final, and qualifying requires only a throw beyond the standard or a place among the top twelve.

Kitaguchi's rivals in Asia include the Chinese throwers who have contested world finals with her, and the continental title is one she has not yet held.

The men's javelin qualifying rounds are also today, in an event in which Asia has produced an Olympic champion, India's Neeraj Chopra, and in which Japanese throwers have reached world finals.

Field events at Paloma Mizuho Stadium run alongside the track programme, and the javelin's qualifying will share the evening with the 400 metres and 1500 metres finals.

Rain on the map for Nagoya would affect the runway and the throwers' grip, and the conditions will be part of the story.

Kitaguchi's throw today decides only her place in the final; the final decides whether the Olympic champion adds an Asian title at home.

SPORTS

Japan v North Korea Tonight: A Quarter-Final With More Than Football in It

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan's under-21 footballers meet North Korea in the Asian Games quarter-finals this evening, according to the reports available, in a fixture whose history has been shaped as much by politics as by play.

Japan reached the quarter-finals with a 3-0 win over Thailand, in which Keita Kosugi scored immediately after joining the squad, and its under-age teams have been the strongest in Asia in recent years.

North Korea's teams are physical, defensively organised and difficult to break down, and its youth teams have won continental titles.

The senior teams' last scheduled meeting, a World Cup qualifier in Pyongyang in 2024, was never played after North Korea declined to host it, and FIFA awarded Japan a 3-0 win; the first leg in Tokyo had ended 1-0 to Japan.

Every fixture between the two countries is treated by Japanese authorities as a security matter as well as a sporting one, and the Games' rules require neutral treatment of all delegations.

The match is played in Aichi, and North Korea's presence at a Games hosted by Japan, alongside its table tennis players, follows its return to international competition after the pandemic.

The winner advances to a semi-final against the winner of another quarter-final, and the tournament's medals are decided next week.

The Olympic team for Los Angeles in 2028 will be drawn largely from the players at these Games, which gives the match a significance beyond the tie.

Japan's senior team beat Uruguay 3-1 on Thursday, with debut goals from Kuryu Matsuki and Kento Shiogai, and the under-21s are the generation behind them.

Kick-off is this evening, and the result will lead tomorrow's football coverage.

SPORTS

The Women's Basketball Final Is Tonight

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The women's basketball final at the Asian Games is played this evening, according to the reports available, and Japan's women, who reached the quarter-finals from the group stage earlier in the week, contest it if their knockout run has carried them there.

The reports available did not name the finalists, and the semi-final results decided them; the final's line-up will be confirmed with tonight's result.

Japan's women carry the country's strongest basketball record, with the Olympic silver of the Tokyo Games in 2021 and five consecutive Asia Cup titles from 2013 to 2021, before China regained the continental crown.

Their game is built on speed, three-point shooting and pace, a style developed against taller opponents and one that has troubled every team in Asia except, on most occasions, China.

The men's team took silver on Sunday after losing the final to South Korea 67-57, the first men's basketball medal in 64 years, and a women's gold would complete a tournament in which both teams reached the medal rounds.

The Emperor and Empress watched a women's game earlier in the Games, one of the imperial couple's sporting appearances in Aichi.

A final at a home Games, in an arena that the Japanese women have filled through the tournament, is the stage the programme has built toward since Tokyo.

The B.League's new season, which opened on Tuesday, gives the sport a domestic stage to which the national teams' players return after the Games.

Tonight's final shares the evening with the football quarter-final against North Korea and the track finals at Mizuho, the Games' busiest night.

The result will be reported in tomorrow's edition.

SPORTS

Super Round: Japan v Chinese Taipei, With South Korea Waiting

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Japan's baseball team plays Chinese Taipei in the Asian Games Super Round, according to the reports available, as the tournament's knockout stage decides who reaches the medal games.

Japan advanced from its group after wins over China and Palestine and a final group game against the Philippines, and the Super Round brings the top teams of both groups together.

Chinese Taipei's teams draw on a professional league and on players with experience in Japan and the United States, and they have been Japan's most frequent opponents in Asian baseball.

South Korea, chasing a fifth consecutive Asian Games gold with a squad of professionals, is the team Japan must beat for a first gold since Hiroshima in 1994.

Japan's squad, drawn from the corporate leagues because the professional season is running, has done what corporate baseball would hope: reached the medal round without alarm.

The tournament is played at Okazaki and Toyohashi in Aichi and concludes on the 27th, with the medal games at its end.

Corporate-league players rarely get a stage of this size, and a home Games gives them one that their predecessors in Hangzhou and Incheon did not have.

Japan's recent results at the Games have been bronzes, in 2014 and 2023, and the Super Round is where those campaigns ended short of the final.

Professional baseball's own weekend continues, with the Climax Series races in both leagues and SoftBank already Pacific League champions.

The medal games tomorrow will decide whether corporate Japan can do what its professionals have not done for three decades.

SPORTS

Also Today: Table Tennis Mixed Doubles Final, Fencing's Team Medals, Diving Opens and Compound Archery Begins

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

The Games' Saturday programme extends beyond its headline events to finals and openings across the sports.

Table tennis holds its mixed doubles final, the event in which Japan won its Olympic gold in 2021, and the men's and women's singles and doubles quarter-finals, two days after the men's team beat China 3-2.

Fencing contests the women's foil team and men's sabre team events from the semi-finals to the finals, following Koki Kano's individual épée title, won in his hometown.

Japan's women's foil team and its men's sabre team have both won medals at world level, and team events reward the depth that Japan's fencing programme has built.

Diving opens today, an event in which China's dominance is as complete as in table tennis, and in which Japanese divers have reached Olympic finals.

Archery's compound events begin, a discipline added to the Olympic programme for Los Angeles in 2028 and one in which Asian archers, particularly from South Korea and India, lead the world.

The Super Round baseball game against Chinese Taipei, the marathons, the track finals and the two evening ties in football and basketball are the day's other fixtures.

The Japan Women's Open golf championship continues, with NHK featuring Momoko Ueda on its highlights, and the Aki Basho reaches its fourteenth day.

Rain across eastern Japan, with Nagoya under cloud and rain at 25 degrees, affects the outdoor events, and the indoor ones proceed regardless.

The medal table's final week begins with Saturday's results.

SPORTS

SPORTS

Team Foil, Team Sabre and the Compound Bow: The Disciplines Behind Today's Lesser Headlines

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Fencing's women's foil team and men's sabre team medals, diving's opening and compound archery's first day fill the parts of Saturday's programme that the marathon and the track finals do not.

Foil is the discipline of the light blade and the torso target, governed by right of way, in which the fencer who initiates an attack correctly scores when both hit; sabre adds cutting to thrusting and targets the body above the waist.

Japan's men's foil team won the Olympic gold in Paris in 2024, and its women's foil and men's sabre teams have won world-level medals, so that team events reward the depth the programme has built.

Koki Kano's individual épée title, won in his hometown, gave Japanese fencing its Games headline, and the team events are where the medal count multiplies.

Diving opens today in an event in which China's dominance is as complete as in table tennis, and in which Japanese divers have reached Olympic finals and won world medals in synchronised events.

Compound archery, with its mechanical release and sights, is a discipline distinct from the recurve bow of the Olympic programme, and its addition to the Los Angeles Games of 2028 has raised its profile.

South Korea and India lead Asian archery, and the Games' compound events are a preview of the Olympic contest to come.

Japan's archers have won Olympic medals in recurve, and the compound programme is newer to them.

The indoor events proceed regardless of the rain that affects the marathon, the track and the field events at Mizuho.

Saturday's medals in fencing, and the openings in diving and archery, are the Games' second tier of news, and tomorrow's edition will carry them.

SPORTS

The Japan Women's Open Is Under Way, and NHK Turns to Momoko Ueda for the Highlights

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Japan Women's Open golf championship is under way, and NHK's coverage features an interview with Momoko Ueda on the tournament's highlights, according to the reports available.

The Women's Open is the domestic tour's national championship, run by the Japan Golf Association rather than the tour itself, and its status as a major gives it a place in the season that the weekly tour events do not have.

Ueda, a former winner of the championship and one of the Japanese players who established the country's women on the international tours, brings a champion's perspective to the broadcast.

Japanese women's golf has risen to the top of the world in the past decade, with major championships won abroad and a domestic tour whose depth is the sport's deepest outside the United States.

The Women's Open's course setup, long and demanding, is designed to test the field as the national championship should, and the weekend's weather, with rain across the east, will test it further.

The tournament shares the weekend with the Asian Games' busiest days, and NHK's coverage of both reflects the breadth of Japanese sport's calendar this month.

The leaderboard after the first rounds, and the players in contention, were not included in the reports available.

Golf's audience in Japan, large and loyal, follows the women's tour with particular attention, and the Open's final round on Sunday is among the season's most watched.

Ueda's commentary, from a player who won the championship, is the broadcast's connection between the tour's past and its present.

The championship concludes on Sunday, and the winner will be reported in Monday's edition.

SPORTS

The Japan Women's Open: The Championship That Made the Tour's Majors

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

The Japan Women's Open, under way this weekend with NHK featuring Momoko Ueda on its highlights, is the oldest of the domestic tour's major championships and its national title.

It has been played since 1968, before the Japanese women's tour existed in its present form, and it is run by the Japan Golf Association, the sport's governing body, rather than by the tour.

Its course setup is longer and harder than the weekly tour events, in the tradition of national opens, and its winners include the players who defined each era of Japanese women's golf.

Momoko Ueda won the championship in 2007, in the year she topped the domestic money list at 21, and she went on to play the American tour and to become one of the players who established Japanese women abroad.

The tour's rise since has been remarkable, with Japanese women winning major championships in the United States and Britain and a domestic tour whose depth is unmatched outside America.

The Open's status as a major gives its winner a place in the tour's history that a weekly title does not, and the weekend's final rounds are among the season's most watched.

Rain across eastern Japan, with an 80% chance in Tokyo and warning-level forecasts in Chiba and Ibaraki, will test the course and the field.

The leaderboard after the first rounds was not included in the reports available, and Sunday's final round will decide the champion.

NHK's coverage of the Open shares the weekend with its coverage of the Asian Games and the Aki Basho, a measure of the breadth of the month's sport.

The champion on Sunday joins a list that began in 1968 and that includes the commentator explaining the highlights.

SPORTS

Day Fourteen: Onosato Still Competing for the Title as the Aki Basho Nears Its End

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Autumn Grand Sumo Tournament reaches its fourteenth day today, with Onosato continuing to compete for the top spot, according to the reports available.

The yokozuna has led through the tournament's middle days, securing his winning record on day nine and forcing out Fujinokawa on day eleven, and the race for the title continued into day thirteen.

The fourteenth day's bouts pair the leaders against one another by the judges' design, and the outcome will decide whether Sunday's final day is a formality or a decider.

If two or more wrestlers finish level after fifteen days, a playoff is held after the final day's bouts, and the possibility remains open.

The Ryogoku Kokugikan has been full through the holiday and the working week, and the final weekend draws the tournament's largest crowds and television audiences.

NHK broadcasts the day's bouts in the late afternoon, sharing the evening with the Asian Games' track finals, the football quarter-final and the basketball final.

Onosato's rise was among the fastest in modern sumo, and a title on Sunday would confirm him as the dominant figure of the current era.

The tournament ends on Sunday, September 27, with the presentation of the Emperor's Cup and the champion's parade.

Each bout's winning technique is announced and recorded, and the force-out that beat Fujinokawa was the most common of the 82 recognised techniques.

One day from the decider, the race remains open.

SPORTS

Paloma Mizuho Stadium: The Rebuilt Ground Where Tonight's Finals Are Run

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Tonight's 400 metres and 1500 metres finals, the hurdles qualifying and the field events are held at Paloma Mizuho Stadium, the athletics ground rebuilt for the Games in Nagoya's Mizuho Park.

The old stadium, which had hosted Nagoya's football club and the city's athletics for decades, was demolished and replaced with a new stadium built for the Games as the main venue of the athletics programme.

The new ground holds tens of thousands, with a roof over the stands and a track built to the standards that world-level competition requires, and it will remain Nagoya's principal stadium after the Games.

Mizuho Park, in the city's south, also holds the arena and the pools that the Games have used, so that the park is the Games' centre as the Olympic Park was Tokyo's in 2021.

The stadium's name reflects the naming rights sold to a Nagoya company, a practice common to Japanese venues, and its formal name is the Mizuho Park Athletics Stadium.

Nozomi Tanaka's final, Haruka Kitaguchi's qualifying and the decathlon's first day give the stadium its busiest night, and the crowd will be the largest for athletics in Japan since the Tokyo Olympics.

Rain on the map for Nagoya, with cloud and rain at 25 degrees, will fall on the open track, and the roof over the stands keeps the spectators dry but not the runners.

The stadium's legacy is the city's, and Nagoya's football and athletics will use it for decades.

Aichi's venues, from Okazaki's baseball ground to the arenas of central Nagoya, have carried the Games' programme without the disruptions that the typhoon brought to eastern Japan.

Tonight, under its lights, the Games' athletics reaches its middle weekend.

SPORTS

The Second Week: What Remains at the Games Before the Closing Ceremony on October 4

By Oliver Brooks | Japan Sports Desk Editor

Saturday's marathon, finals and quarter-final mark the Games' middle weekend, and the second week that follows holds the programme's largest share of medals.

Athletics continues through the week at Paloma Mizuho Stadium, with the decathlon's second day tomorrow, the hurdles final later in the week, the javelin finals and the relays that have been Japan's strongest events at the last two Olympics.

Football's semi-finals and final follow tonight's quarter-final against North Korea, and the under-21s' progress will shape the squad for the Los Angeles Olympics of 2028.

Baseball concludes tomorrow at Okazaki and Toyohashi, with South Korea's professionals the team to beat for a first Japanese gold since 1994.

Table tennis's singles and doubles medals are decided in the week, with the men's team champions seeking to add individual titles against a Chinese team that lost a team final for once.

Fencing's team events, diving's full programme and archery's compound and recurve medals fill the arenas, and the sports that begin later, including some of the combat sports, close the Games.

The Aki Basho ends tomorrow and professional baseball's Climax Series races run through the week, so that the domestic calendar competes with the Games for the country's attention.

The closing ceremony is on Sunday, October 4, and the medal table's final order will be settled by the athletics and the team sports of the second week.

Typhoon No. 26's possible approach to the main islands next week is the second week's unknown, and the organisers' contingency plans for outdoor events will be tested if it comes.

The Games' first week belonged to swimming, gymnastics and table tennis; the second belongs to the track, the pitch and the diamond.

SPORTS

Scoreboard and Fixtures

Compiled by the Sports Desk

ASIAN GAMES — MEN'S TABLE TENNIS TEAM FINAL (Sept. 24): Japan 3-2 China. Gold, the first in 60 years; Tomokazu Harimoto, Teruaki Matsushima (Nikkei).

ASIAN GAMES — WOMEN'S TABLE TENNIS TEAM FINAL: Japan v China, Sept. 24. Result to be confirmed.

ASIAN GAMES — SWIMMING: Programme concluded Sept. 25. Shin Ohashi's 200m breaststroke world record, 2:04.83, stands as its headline.

ASIAN GAMES TODAY: Marathons, 7:30 and 7:50 a.m., Nagoya. Track: 400m finals, women's 1500m final, 110mH qualifying. Field: decathlon day one, javelin qualifying.

ASIAN GAMES TODAY: Football QF, Japan v North Korea, evening. Women's basketball final, evening. Baseball Super Round, Japan v Chinese Taipei.

ASIAN GAMES TODAY: Table tennis mixed doubles final; singles and doubles QFs. Fencing: women's foil team, men's sabre team. Diving opens. Compound archery begins.

FOOTBALL (SENIOR, Sept. 24): Japan 3-1 Uruguay.

SUMO, AKI BASHO: Day 14 today; Onosato in the title race. Final day Sunday.

GOLF: Japan Women's Open, under way; final round Sunday.

NPB: Weekend games; Climax Series races in both leagues.

CULTURE

The Harvest Moon Rose on Friday; Saturday's Cloud Hides Its Second Night

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Mid-Autumn Festival fell on Friday, the 25th, with the full moon, and cloudy conditions will make observation difficult in some areas of eastern Japan on Saturday, according to the reports available.

The fifteenth night, as the festival is known in Japan, is the traditional evening for moon viewing, with offerings of dumplings and pampas grass set out on verandas and the moon watched from gardens and temple grounds.

The custom came from China in the Heian period and has been kept, in one form or another, ever since, with the moon's brightness in the clear autumn air its justification.

This year's moon rose over a capital region in which many households were more concerned with the rain forecast than with the sky, and over a Chiba where the moon's light fell on flooded lowlands.

Saturday's cloud, from the stalled autumn front, will hide the moon's second night, and the rain forecast for Chiba and Ibaraki will keep verandas empty.

Western Japan, with Hiroshima and Fukuoka under sun and Kagoshima at 34 degrees, has the better chance of a clear sky.

The moon-viewing sweets sold in shops this week, and the seasonal displays in department stores, mark the festival for those who cannot see the moon itself.

The Mid-Autumn moon is one of the year's two great moon nights, with the thirteenth night of the following month the other, and the second offers a second chance.

Higan ended on Saturday as well, closing the equinox week, so that the calendar's autumn markers have arrived together with the season's first cold and its first typhoon of the new front.

Those who saw the moon on Friday saw it; those who did not have October's thirteenth night to wait for.

CULTURE

Kumamon's Lesson: What a Mascot Does in a Disaster

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Chiba-kun's suspension after insensitive comments about promotion outside the prefecture raises a question that Kumamoto answered ten years ago: what a mascot does when its prefecture is in trouble.

Kumamon, Kumamoto's black bear with red cheeks, was created in 2010 to promote the prefecture when

CULTURE

the Kyushu shinkansen extended to it, and it became the most successful of Japan's local mascots, with merchandise sales in the billions of yen.

When the earthquakes of April 2016 struck Kumamoto, the mascot's activities were suspended, and its silence was itself a message: the prefecture was not in a mood for cheer.

Its return, weeks later, was managed as a symbol of recovery, with appearances at shelters and a role in the campaign to bring visitors back, and the mascot's popularity grew from the episode.

Mascots are a serious part of Japanese local government, with budgets, schedules, licensing revenue and staff, and their conduct is judged as the prefecture's own, which is why comments about Chiba-kun's promotional work outside the prefecture, while Chiba floods, drew the response they did.

Chiba-kun, the red dog-like character shaped like the prefecture, has represented Chiba since 2007 and is among the best known of the hundreds of mascots that prefectures, cities and companies maintain.

The suspension follows Kumamon's precedent, and the return will too, timed to the recovery and used, if the prefecture chooses, as its face.

The mascot boom of the 2010s has faded, and many local characters have been retired, but the ones that survived are those that came to stand for something, and disasters are where that is decided.

Chiba's residents, with eleven dead and thousands displaced, will judge the mascot's return by its timing.

A mascot that stays home in a disaster is doing its job; one that returns as the prefecture recovers is doing the other half of it.

CULTURE

Saturday Watch 9: What NHK Has Chosen to Explain Tonight

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

NHK's Saturday Watch 9 will focus tonight on the path of Typhoon No. 26, the autumn rain, the areas affected by Typhoon No. 25 and the liquor tax reform, according to the programme's preview.

The selection is a portrait of the weekend's public attention: two weather stories, a disaster recovery and a tax change that will alter the price of a can of beer in October.

The programme, the weekend edition of NHK's flagship news, reaches an audience that the weekday broadcasts do not, and its choice of subjects signals what the broadcaster expects the country to be discussing on Sunday.

Surige's path is the practical subject, with Okinawa expecting the storm on Sunday and Monday and the main islands watching the track beyond.

The autumn rain, stalled over the Pacific coast with warning-level forecasts for Chiba and Ibaraki, is the immediate one, and the programme will carry the day's damage.

The areas affected by No. 25, with eleven dead, a breached embankment, a suspended railway and 150 areas without power, are the continuing story, and the government's planned severe-disaster designation gives it a new chapter.

The liquor tax reform, completing the unification of beer tax rates in October, is the programme's service journalism, explaining a change that consumers will see on the shelf.

Absent from the preview are the summit, the Taiwan exchange and the yen, which dominated the week's front pages and which the programme has presumably judged the public will have absorbed by Saturday night.

The choice reflects a broadcaster's reading of what a Saturday audience wants: weather, safety and the price of things.

The programme airs tonight; the typhoon it explains arrives tomorrow.

CULTURE

The Boso Interior's Tourism, Cut Off at Both Ends

By Kenji Fukuda | Real Estate & Urban Development

The Kominato Railway's suspension in sections, with the Uchibo Line closed for months, cuts the Boso Peninsula's interior off from the visitors who sustain it.

The interior's attractions are modest and loved: the railway's own valleys, the Yoro Gorge with its

autumn colours, the hot springs of the hill villages and the rice terraces that the spring rapeseed frames for photographers.

Autumn is the interior's second season, after spring, with the gorge's leaves turning in November and the railway's trains full of day-trippers from Tokyo.

This year's autumn will be different. The railway is suspended, the roads restricted, and the villages counting their own damage, so that the season's visitors will not come and the businesses that wait for them will wait longer.

The Kominato's tourist trains, and the Isumi Railway's across the peninsula, were the interior's answer to the Aqua-Line, which carried the coast's visitors past the hills; without the trains, the answer is silent.

Chiba-kun's suspended activities, after comments about promotion outside the prefecture, describe a prefecture that cannot promote itself this month, and the interior is where the silence costs most.

The severe-disaster designation would help the railway's repair, and the prefecture's support has kept the line running through earlier crises.

Japan's first place in the Travel and Tourism Development Index, reported this week, rests on transport that works; the Boso interior's transport does not, for now.

The gorge will turn in November whether the trains run or not, and the villages hope the trains will run by then.

The rapeseed returns in March; the railway's return is the question the interior asks.

CULTURE

Fukaura, at the Foot of the Shirakami Mountains, Where the Tomatoes Were

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The theft of 200 tomatoes just before harvest in Fukaura, Aomori, took place in a town that most visitors know as the gateway to one of Japan's natural treasures.

Fukaura lies on the Sea of Japan coast at the south-western corner of Aomori Prefecture, where the Shirakami mountains come down to the sea and the coastal road and railway thread between cliffs and beaches.

The Shirakami Sanchi, the largest remaining beech forest in East Asia, was among Japan's first World Heritage sites, inscribed in 1993, and its trailheads on the Aomori side begin near the town.

The Gono Line, the railway along the coast, is famous for its views and for the sightseeing trains that run it, and Fukaura's stations are among its stops.

The town's economy rests on fishing, farming and the visitors who come for the forest, the coast and the hot springs, and its farms grow the vegetables that supply the prefecture's markets.

Two hundred tomatoes is a small theft in value and a large one for the grower whose season was taken, and the town's police will investigate as rural forces do, through the co-operative and the markets.

Agricultural theft has grown across Japan with produce prices, and the coastal road that brings visitors also brings the vehicles in which crops leave.

Fukaura's autumn is the forest's, with the beeches turning in October, and the town's tourism season is at its peak.

The theft coincided with reports of tomatoes damaged by re-flooding in Chiba, so that growers at both ends of Honshu lost their crops this week to different causes.

The forest is protected; the tomato field, it turns out, was not.

INTERNATIONAL

The Summit's Aftermath, in Brief

Compiled by the International Desk

Xi demanded opposition to Taiwan's independence; Trump did not disclose his remarks on Taiwan (Yomiuri).

Trump: China was an ally. Xi: the two countries fought against Japanese militaristic aggressors (Asahi, Sankei).

Tokyo: within expectations. Taipei: it was the Republic of China that fought alongside the U.S.

Farm purchases: China may expand them; Trump

says farmers are overjoyed; results due Monday (Sankei).

Five U.S. networks refused to broadcast the talks in protest at CNN's exclusion.

Katayama-Bessent call: the yen's undervaluation is a problem (Asahi).

Trade truce: extended two months, to late November.

Hormuz: three bills, including a de-Hormuz grant, to be submitted (Asahi); Motegi refuses extra costs.

Lee Jae-myung: the handover of two North Korean soldiers breached a confidential agreement (Yomiuri).

Still unread: the American words on Taiwan.

SOCIETY

325.7 Billion Yen Lost Last Year: Ten Ways Not to Add to It

Compiled by the Society Desk

A call from a relative in trouble asking for money: hang up and call the relative directly.

A call from police, a bank or an official demanding a transfer: no such agency asks by phone.

An investment with guaranteed returns through a messaging app: it is fraud.

A romantic contact online who asks for money: it is fraud, however long the relationship.

A request to buy prepaid cards and read out the numbers: fraud, always.

A part-time job with high pay for simple tasks via an encrypted app: criminal recruitment.

Gold offered at a discount by strangers, door to door or online: it is not gold.

Never install remote-access software at a caller's request.

Register a family password for emergencies, and use it.

Report attempts to the police consultation line, 9110, even if no money was lost.

ECONOMY

Saturday, in Order

Compiled by the Economics Desk

7:30 and 7:50 a.m.: the Asian Games marathons start in downtown Nagoya.

Morning: warning-level rain forecast for Chiba and Ibaraki; Tochigi's rain before dawn.

Day: emergency repairs continue at Inbanuma under the rain.

Day: decathlon day one; javelin qualifying with Kitaguchi; fencing team medals; diving opens.

Afternoon: Aki Basho day 14; Onosato in the title race.

Evening: 400m and 1500m finals at Mizuho; football QF Japan v North Korea; women's basketball final.

Evening: NHK Saturday Watch 9 on Surige, the rain, No. 25's areas and the liquor tax.

Sunday: Surige near Okinawa; Aki Basho final day; Women's Open final round.

Monday: Washington's farm-purchase announcement; Tokyo's first session after the summit's aftermath.

Late November: the trade truce's next deadline.

SOCIETY

Electricity and Floodwater: Ten Rules

Compiled by the Society Desk

Treat submerged solar panels as live; do not approach or touch them.

Report burning or smoking panels; do not attempt to move them.

Do not enter floodwater near downed lines or transformers.

Switch off the main breaker before water enters the home, if it is safe to reach.

Do not restore power to appliances that were submerged until an electrician has checked them.

Generators run outdoors only, away from windows; exhaust kills indoors.

Charge devices at municipal charging points if the home is without power.

Keep a battery radio for warnings when phones and televisions are dead.

Dry electrical outlets and wiring must be inspected before use.

When in doubt, leave it off and ask the utility.

SPORTS

Sumo's Ladder, From Yokozuna Down

Compiled by the Sports Desk

Sumo ranks are published before each tournament on a list called the banzuke.

Yokozuna, the grand champion, is the highest rank and cannot be lost through defeat.

A yokozuna who performs poorly is expected to withdraw or retire instead.

Ozeki is the second rank, followed by sekiwake and komusubi.

Together those three ranks below yokozuna form the sanyaku.

Below them are the maegashira, numbered from the top of the division downward.

The top division, makuuchi, has 42 wrestlers.

A winning record of eight victories generally brings promotion; a losing one, demotion.

Onosato, in the title race on day 14 of the Aki Basho, holds the rank of yokozuna.

The tournament ends tomorrow.

SOCIETY

The Earthquake Kit: Ten Things to Check This Weekend

Compiled by the Society Desk

Water: three litres per person per day, for at least three days.

Food that needs no cooking, rotated before it expires.

A battery or hand-crank radio for warnings when phones are down.

Torches and spare batteries; a power bank kept charged.

A first-aid kit and a week's supply of any regular medicines.

Copies of identification and insurance documents in a sealed bag.

Cash in small notes; card readers fail without power.

Sturdy shoes and gloves by the bed, for broken glass.

A whistle, to be found under debris.

An agreed meeting place and an out-of-area contact for the family.

ECONOMY

Monday's Watchlist

Compiled by the Economics Desk

Farm purchases: Washington's announcement of Chinese buying, due Monday.

Yen: the Katayama-Bessent call; intervention levels near 160.

Rates: 1.25% policy rate continues; 10-year yield at a 30-year high.

Nikkei: 65,513 after four gains; the summit's aftermath to price.

Rice: new rice near 1,000 yen; the minister's response.

Junglia: lenders' decision on additional funds.

Kobayashi Pharmaceutical: the board and the tender offer.

Typhoon: Surige's track; Chiba's severe-disaster designation; insurers and railways.

Beer: October's unified tax rates; brewers' pricing.

Diet: three de-Hormuz bills; the 1% food tax.

EDITORIAL & OPINION



Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki, Staff Cartoonist.

EDITORIAL

If It Needs a Blockade, It Is Not Peace. And an Answer Nobody Publishes Is Not an Answer.

Taro Suzuki draws Beijing's leader with warships on strings and a document marked PEACEFUL TAKEOVER. Xi demanded that Washington oppose Taiwan's independence; Washington has not said what it replied. The allies in the cartoon hold their treaties. This page asks that they be read aloud
By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki has drawn a sea this morning, and the sea has strings in it.

At the centre of the drawing, leaning over a map of the western Pacific, stands President Xi Jinping, and from his right hand hang four strings, each tied to a warship. The warships are arranged around Taiwan, which sits green and mountainous in the middle of the water, and they are labelled: PRESSURE, and, closer to the island, BLOCKADE DRILL.

In his left hand he holds up a document. Its heading is PEACEFUL TAKEOVER, with a red star, and beneath the heading a single instruction: YOU HANDLE THEM WITH PRUDENCE.

To the left, beside a Japanese flag and a map marker reading JAPAN, stands a Japanese official in glasses, holding a blue folder marked with the characters for the Japan-U.S. alliance.

To the right stand two men. One, grey-haired and in a dark suit, holds a black placard: ALLIES ARE NOT A DELIVERY SERVICE. The other, in the white shirt of the Philippines, holds a folder marked MUTUAL DEFENSE and a fishing net, and beside him a signpost reads NEIGHBORS, with the Philippine and American flags.

On the sea to the left sits a brass balance, and its pan marked COERCION hangs lower than the pan marked CONSENT. On the map, the Philippines lies to the south-east of Taiwan, its islands drawn in the same green.

Over the whole scene hangs a sign: IF IT NEEDS A BLOCKADE, IT IS NOT PEACE. And along the bottom, on a ribbon: They bully the neighborhood. Then they ask Washington to notarize the deed.

The occasion is Friday's reporting of what was said at the White House on Thursday. Mr. Xi demanded opposition to Taiwan's independence, and Mr. Trump did not disclose the content of his own remarks on Taiwan, Yomiuri Shimbun reported. Mr. Trump said China was an ally; Mr. Xi said the two countries had

fought against the Japanese militaristic aggressors; Tokyo said the exchange was within expectations; and Taipei replied that it was the Republic of China that fought alongside the United States.

This page agrees with the cartoon's sign, and it wants to say why, because the sign makes a claim that deserves to be defended rather than admired.

Begin with the document in Mr. Xi's hand. PEACEFUL TAKEOVER is the cartoonist's title, but the phrase it parodies is Beijing's own: peaceful reunification, the stated aim of Chinese policy toward Taiwan since the 1970s, and the aim that every Chinese leader has affirmed while adding that force is not renounced.

The word peaceful does work in that formula. It reassures the region, it places the burden of any conflict on Taipei and its friends, and it allows Beijing to describe every instrument short of invasion as consistent with peace.

The instruments are the ships on the strings. Since 2022, China's forces have staged exercises that surround Taiwan, declare zones around its ports, rehearse the interception of ships and aircraft approaching it, and practise, in the plainest terms, a blockade. They are announced, mapped and named, and their purpose is to demonstrate that the capability exists.

A blockade is not war, in the vocabulary Beijing prefers. It is also not peace. It is the coercive middle option, chosen precisely because it can be applied without the costs of invasion and described without the word force, and Taiwan's dependence on imported energy and food makes it the option that planners study most.

That is what Suzuki's sign says, and it is right. A peace that requires the rehearsal of a blockade to sustain it is a peace maintained by the threat of strangulation. The balance on the sea has the correct pan down.

Consider what a blockade would mean for the country whose readers hold this page, since the cartoon draws Japan at the edge of the map and the question is not academic. The sea lanes that carry Japan's oil from the Gulf and its goods to the world pass beside Taiwan. The south-western islands lie inside the zones that China's exercises declare. A blockade of Taiwan would be, in its first week, a disruption of Japan's own supply lines, and in its first month a security crisis on Japan's own territory. That is why Japan's security documents plan for it, and why the ships on Suzuki's strings are not somebody else's problem.

The exercises have grown each year in scale and in the frankness of their purpose. What began in 2022 as a response to a visit has become a routine, announced with maps and names, and the routine is the point: to make the encirclement of the island ordinary, so that the day it becomes real is indistinguishable, until it is too late, from the days it was rehearsed. A neighbourhood that stops noticing the rehearsals has already conceded something.

Now the demand.

Mr. Xi asked the President to oppose Taiwan's independence. American policy has said for decades that the United States does not support it. The distance between those verbs is the distance between declining to encourage a thing and undertaking to prevent it, and Beijing has sought to close that distance at every summit for years.

Why does one word matter? Because American ambiguity deters both sides. Beijing cannot be sure Washington would stand aside; Taipei cannot be sure Washington would intervene. Move the verb to opposition, and the first certainty tilts without the second changing. Beijing would read it as permission to press, and the ships on the strings would move closer.

The caption says it exactly. They bully the neighborhood; then they ask Washington to notarize the deed. The demand for a verb is a request for a signature on an arrangement that the ships have been enforcing.

And here is the part of the week that this page cannot let pass. Washington has not said what it replied.

Non-disclosure is not concession. Presidents decline to publish their words for many reasons, including a

refusal to hand Beijing a quotation to build on, and Friday's accounts, with their emphasis on co-operation, described a meeting that produced no new formulation.

But non-disclosure is not reaffirmation either. The verb on Taiwan has been the alliance's shared assumption since Japan and the United States wrote the strait into their joint statement in April 2021, and an unpublished answer to a demand for a different verb is a gap in a record that Tokyo has relied on for five years.

A gap can be filled by the other party. Beijing's account of the summit will say what it chooses, and if Washington's account says nothing, Beijing's becomes the only one in circulation. The ships do not need a signature to move; they need only the absence of a refusal.

So this page's first request is simple. Tokyo should obtain the sentence, verbatim, through the alliance briefing that follows every summit, and it should be prepared to say what it says. If the verb held, the calm of within expectations was warranted twice over. If it moved, Tokyo should tell Washington before Beijing tells the world.

There is a precedent for asking, and it is a good one. In April 2021, Tokyo asked Washington to put the strait into the leaders' joint statement, and Washington did, for the first time since 1969. The sentence that resulted, on the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, has been repeated in every statement since and echoed by other partners. It was obtained by asking. The sentence this week is the same kind, and it should be obtained the same way.

The television networks' boycott of the talks, in protest at CNN's exclusion, means there is no footage to consult; the official photographs show the room and not the words. That makes the briefing the only route, and it makes Tokyo's request for the verbatim sentence a matter of record rather than curiosity.

Now the two figures on the right of the drawing, because the cartoon's second argument is about them.

ALLIES ARE NOT A DELIVERY SERVICE, says the grey-haired man's placard, and the phrase answers the instruction on Mr. Xi's document: you handle them with prudence. The instruction assumes that the allies are Washington's to handle, that Japan and the

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Philippines are packages to be managed on Beijing's behalf, and that prudence is a word for keeping them quiet while the deed is notarised.

They are not packages. Japan is a treaty ally of the United States since 1951, with the alliance's institutions, planning and, this week, its confirmation of co-operation on the technologies Beijing seeks. The Philippines is a treaty ally since the same year, with the mutual defence commitment the Filipino figure holds, with American access to bases that face Taiwan, and with a reciprocal access agreement with Japan signed in 2024.

The signpost marked NEIGHBORS is the cartoon's quiet point and its best one. The alliance is not a set of bilateral wires running to Washington, along which instructions travel outward. It is a neighbourhood, in which Tokyo and Manila have built their own ties, in which Australia patrols beside both, and in which the question of Taiwan is a question of the neighbourhood's own sea.

A neighbourhood cannot be handled with prudence by a third party, because its members handle themselves. That is the answer to the document, and it is one that Tokyo and Manila should give jointly rather than wait for Washington to give for them.

The joint answer has a form already. Japan and the Philippines conduct patrols together in the South China Sea, with the United States and Australia beside them, and the reciprocal access agreement of 2024 lets their forces train on each other's territory. Coast guard vessels built in Japan patrol Philippine waters. None of that required Washington's handling, and none of it can be delivered to Beijing by a signature in the Oval Office, which is what the placard means.

Now the wartime frame, because it was the week's other message and it was aimed at the figure on the left.

Mr. Xi said the two countries fought against the Japanese militaristic aggressors. Mr. Trump said China was an ally. This page argued on Thursday, when the Foreign Ministry insisted the Charter's former enemy clauses are important for the post-war order, what the frame is for: to describe Japan by its past whenever it reaches for a larger role in the present.

Tokyo's answer was within expectations, and it was the right answer, for the reason this page gave on Thursday: the frame is designed to produce a reaction, and calm denies it one.

Taipei's answer was better still, because it was true. The government that fought beside the United States from 1941 to 1945 was the Republic of China, which lost the civil war and continues on the island whose independence Mr. Xi demanded that Washington oppose. The wartime alliance he invoked is claimed by the very government he was asking Washington to help him absorb.

That is not a debating point. It is the cartoon's map in a sentence: the island in the middle of the strings is the heir of the ally Beijing claims, and the claim is being used to arrange the ships.

The President's three words gave the frame a courtesy it did not deserve. The alliance's institutions will not, and the emphasis on co-operation in every account suggests that the meeting did not move on the substance. But Tokyo should note, without complaint, that its ally used Beijing's history rather than its own, and should be ready to supply the correction that Taipei supplied, the next time.

The frame has a further use that the cartoon's strings make visible. If the present is 1945, then the ships around Taiwan are the settlement's completion and the allies who object are the settlement's revisionists. That inversion, in which coercion is continuity and resistance is aggression, is the argument Beijing makes to the world, and it is why the wartime remark and the Taiwan demand were made in the same room on the same afternoon. They are one argument, and the answer to one is the answer to both.

Japan has spent seventy years earning a standing that the frame denies, and its calm this week is the standing's expression. But calm should not be mistaken for indifference to the map. The island in the middle of the strings is where the frame is being turned into ships, and Japan's interest in the sentence Washington has not published is the interest of a country that lives beside the island.

So what should Japan do, this weekend, with a sea full of strings?

First, the sentence. Ask for it, in writing, this week. This page said so on Friday about the summit's other unread outcomes; the Taiwan verb is the one that matters most.

Second, the neighbourhood. The Philippines is holding the net in the cartoon because it is the ally with the most to lose if allies were deliverable, and Japan's reciprocal access agreement, its coast guard vessels and its patrols with Manila are the means by which the neighbourhood answers for itself. Use them, visibly, in the weeks after a summit in which Beijing asked Washington to handle the neighbours.

Third, the ships. Japan's south-western islands lie within the reach of the zones China declares around Taiwan, and its security documents plan for the contingency the drills rehearse. The next exercise will be announced, mapped and named. Japan should say, when it is, what the cartoon's sign says: that a peace which needs a blockade is not one, and that the neighbourhood has noticed.

Fourth, the frame. Do nothing. Calm, correction and continued existence, as this page said on Thursday and Friday, are the answers to a provocation designed to produce a reaction. The correction came from Taipei this time; it can come from Tokyo next time, in a sentence, without heat.

Fifth, the deed. The caption's word is notarize, and a notary certifies that a document was signed, not that it was just. Washington's non-disclosure means the document is unsigned so far. Japan's interest is that it stays unsigned, and its leverage is the alliance's institutional depth, the working-level agreements on minerals and chips confirmed on Tuesday, and the fact that the American position on the Pacific depends on the neighbours it is being asked to handle.

There is a temptation, reading a cartoon like this, to see the whole sea as lost: the strings, the document, the unpublished reply, and to conclude that the deed is as good as signed.

This page resists that reading. The summit produced a two-month truce, an emphasis on co-operation and a farm-purchase announcement due on Monday; it did not, on any account available, produce a new American verb on Taiwan. The ships on the strings have been there for four years and have not tightened into a blockade. The neighbourhood has grown stronger, not weaker, through those years, with agreements between Tokyo and Manila that did not exist in 2022.

What the cartoon shows is a request, made and not yet answered, and the balance on the sea tilted by a party that would like the request granted. The sign above it is the standard by which the answer should be judged when it comes.

It should come. An answer nobody publishes is an answer that coercion can fill, and the neighbourhood is entitled to read it.

They bully the neighborhood, the caption says, and then they ask Washington to notarize the deed. This page's reply is the one the placard gives: the neighbours are not a delivery service, the deed is not theirs to sign, and the sea, strings and all, is still open.

One more word about the balance, because the cartoon puts it in the foreground and this page has argued from it.

COERCION outweighs CONSENT on the scales, and that is Beijing's method described exactly: pressure applied until the outcome it wants can be called a choice. The blockade drills are the pressure; the demand for a verb is the request to call the outcome consent.

The answer to coercion is not counter-coercion, which the neighbourhood neither wants nor could sustain. It is the refusal to certify: to say, in Tokyo and Manila and, when it publishes its sentence, in Washington, that consent extracted under strings is not consent, and that the island's future is not a deed to be notarised in a room it is not in.

Suzuki drew the room's absence deliberately. There is no White House in the picture, only the sea, the neighbours and the man with the strings. That is where the question will be decided, and the allies in the drawing are standing on it.

That absence is also a reminder of proportion. The summit was a week of ceremony; the sea is a decade of ships. A single unpublished sentence will not decide the island's future, and this page does not pretend it will. What the sentence decides is whether the neighbourhood knows where its largest member stands, and a neighbourhood that does not know is

one that the man with the strings can play against itself. The request for the sentence is therefore not alarm but housekeeping, of the kind an alliance does after every summit and should do after this one.

Read the sentence aloud, then, when it arrives. The neighbourhood is listening, and so, from the middle of the strings, is the island.

A last note, on the prudence the document recommends.

Prudence is a virtue when it means judgment. It is a vice when it means silence about what one's allies need to know. The prudence Beijing asks of Washington is the second kind: handle them, keep them quiet, sign here. The prudence Tokyo has shown this week, calm in the face of the frame and insistence in private on the sentence, is the first.

The difference is whether the ally is treated as a neighbour or as a package, and the cartoon's placard has the right of it. Nobody delivers Japan. Nobody delivers the Philippines. And nobody, on the evidence of the sea Suzuki has drawn, delivers Taiwan, however many strings are pulled.

That is the peace worth the name, and it does not need a blockade.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: The Recovery Meets the Rain

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Chiba's warning-level rain today arrives at the worst moment of a recovery that had barely begun.

Emergency repairs on the Inbanuma embankment started on Friday; rain raises the lake and the river, and it endangers the crews in the breach. Landslide warnings remain on slopes that light rain could trigger; warning-level rain will trigger them. And 150 areas without power will receive the rain without the means to hear the warnings.

The government's plan to designate the typhoon a severe disaster is the state's acknowledgment that the prefecture cannot bear the cost alone, and the toll of eleven dead gives the designation its gravity.

But designation raises subsidy rates; it does not stop rain. The autumn front stalled over the coast, and Surige approaching Okinawa with a possible track toward the main islands, mean that the recovery will be interrupted before it is under way.

The political test is the second evacuation. Districts evacuated last week may be told to leave again today, with the Uchibo Line closed for months, the Kominato Railway's rails hanging in the air and the expressways restricted.

Municipalities that managed the first storm through the ordinary machinery will manage the second with the machinery strained and residents' patience shorter.

The Prime Minister, back from New York, has a Diet session built around a tax cut, and the typhoon's supplementary budget will now have to cover a fourth event as well as the third.

Chiba-kun's suspension is a small sign of a prefecture in which nothing cheerful can be said this week; the severe-disaster designation is the larger sign that the state knows it.

By Monday, the rain will have shown whether the emergency repairs held and whether the slopes did, and Surige's track will have shown whether Kanto's fortnight holds a second typhoon.

The recovery has met the rain; the state must now meet the recovery.

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS: Rice at 1,000 Yen Is Not Good News

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Reporter

New rice selling for close to 1,000 yen in some shops sounds like relief after two years of shortage and surging prices, and the agriculture minister's description of it as undesirable will puzzle consumers who paid double last year.

The minister is right, and the reason is the growers. A price that collapses during the harvest is the worst outcome for farmers, who sell most of their crop at the season's prices and who cannot cover the cost of production if the price falls below it.

For farmers in Chiba, whose fields have been re-flooded during the harvest and whose crops will fall in grade, the collapse compounds the damage: the

rice they save sells for less, and the rice they lose is gone. Slapped back and forth is their phrase, and it is exact.

Rice policy has swung between two failures. The shortage of 2024 and 2025 produced prices that drove consumers to other staples and forced the government to release reserves and admit imports; the response, more planting and a large crop, has produced a glut that drives prices below cost.

A market that swings from 4,000 yen to 1,000 in two years serves neither the household nor the farm, and the minister's word describes a policy that has lost control of the swing.

The tools exist: reserve purchases that remove rice from the market, direct payments to growers, and the crop insurance that a severe-disaster designation would extend to the flooded fields.

Using them costs money, at a long-term rate of 3.075%, in a budget that carries a fuel subsidy, a tax cut and a typhoon recovery, and the finance ministry will resist.

The consumption tax on food falls to 1% from April 2027, which lowers the price at the till by a fraction of what the market has already taken off it, and does nothing for the grower.

A country that has just endured a rice shortage should not want its farmers to leave the crop, and a price of 1,000 yen is how they leave.

The good news for consumers is the bad news for the harvest, and the minister was right to say so.

SOCIETY

Before Surige: Okinawa's Checklist

Compiled by the Society Desk

Rough seas and high waves from Sunday: stay off breakwaters and beaches.

Ferries and flights to the outer islands will stop; travel today or wait.

Stock water, food and batteries for three days.

Charge phones and power banks; check whether your plan reaches satellites.

Secure boats, shutters and anything loose outside.

Check the hazard map for storm surge zones near the coast.

Fill vehicles; fuel deliveries pause in a storm.

Agree how neighbours who cannot move alone will be helped.

Follow the meteorological agency's typhoon information, updated every few hours.

If an evacuation order comes, leave early; the roads close before the wind peaks.

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EDITORIAL & OPINION

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Japan Morning Post corrects errors of fact as soon as they are identified. Correction requests may be sent to corrections@japanmorningpost.com, giving the date, page and headline of the article concerned.

No corrections have been received for Friday's edition. Friday's report of the men's table tennis team final did not give the score; Nikkei's continuing coverage confirms the result as 3-2 against China, as reported today.

The results of Thursday evening's women's table tennis team final and women's badminton team final, and of Friday's swimming and gymnastics apparatus finals, were not included in the reports available at the time of writing. They will be published when confirmed.

The 110m hurdler competing in tonight's qualifying rounds is identified in today's reports as Rachid Muratake; an earlier transliteration of his name in the wire summary has been corrected.

THE WEEK AHEAD

SATURDAY, SEPT. 26: Warning-level rain possible in Chiba and Ibaraki. Asian Games: marathons at dawn in Nagoya; 400m and 1500m finals; football quarter-final v North Korea; women's basketball final. Aki Basho day 14. NHK Saturday Watch 9 on Typhoon No. 26, the autumn rain, the areas hit by No. 25 and the liquor tax.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 27: Typhoon No. 26, Surige, near Okinawa on the 27th and 28th; rough seas from Sunday. Final day of the Aki Basho at the Ryogoku Kokugikan. Final round of the Japan Women's Open. Asian Games baseball concludes at Okazaki and Toyohashi; decathlon day two.

MONDAY, SEPT. 28: Washington's announcement of Chinese agricultural purchases. Tokyo markets' first session after the summit's aftermath and the Katayama-Bessent call. The new morning drama begins on NHK.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 30: Verdict in the Mito nail artist murder case. OCTOBER: Unified beer tax rates take effect. SUNDAY, OCT. 4: Closing ceremony of the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games. LATE NOVEMBER: Expiry of the two-month U.S.-China trade truce extension.

TYPHOON AND HEAVY RAIN ADVISORIES

Chiba and Ibaraki may experience torrential rain of warning level from morning to evening today, with the autumn rain front stalled over the Pacific coast, and Tochigi rain from before dawn to early morning. Residents of designated hazard zones in Chiba and Kanagawa should act on evacuation information at the earlier levels rather than wait for orders. Landslide warnings remain in force on saturated slopes.

Typhoon No. 26, Surige, will approach Okinawa around the 27th and 28th and may then approach Kyushu and Honshu. Rough seas and high waves are expected around Okinawa from Sunday. Follow the Japan Meteorological Agency's formal typhoon information, updated every few hours, and prepare early: ferries and flights to the outer islands will be suspended as the storm approaches.

Submerged or flood-damaged solar panels should be treated as live and reported to the authorities; do not approach or attempt to move them.

MARKET REFERENCE

Nikkei 225: 65,513 on Thursday, September 24, up 495, a fourth consecutive gain; intraday high 66,249. Yen: touched 159 on Thursday; Finance Minister Katayama and the U.S. Treasury Secretary confirmed by telephone that the yen's undervaluation is a problem. Bank of Japan policy rate: 1.25%, to continue. Long-term rate: 3.075% on Thursday, the highest in 30 years. Trade truce: extended two months, to late November; Chinese farm-purchase results due Monday, September 28.

PHOTOGRAPHS IN THIS EDITION

Front page: President Trump and Mrs. Trump with President Xi Jinping and Madame Peng Liyuan in the Oval Office during the state visit (White House Official). Politics: Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at the United Nations General Assembly (Photo: WPM Productions). International: the B-2 and fighter flyover at the arrival ceremony for President Xi's state visit (White House Official); Vice President JD Vance announcing the recovery of \$2.2 billion in Obamacare fraud (White House Official). Economy:

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the Tokyo Stock Exchange building at Kabutocho (Photo: TG2 (CC)). Weather Abroad: United States forecast map for Saturday, September 26, 2026, supplied for this edition. Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki, Staff Cartoonist.

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TOMORROW'S EDITION

Sunday's edition will carry the results of the Asian Games marathons, the 400m and 1500m finals, the football quarter-final against North Korea and the women's basketball final; the Aki Basho's fourteenth day; Typhoon No. 26's approach to Okinawa and the day's rain in Chiba and Ibaraki; and the weekend's diplomacy ahead of Monday's farm-purchase announcement.

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