

★ SOFTBANK HALTS QUAKE ALERTS UNTIL MONDAY ★ CHAMPI PASSES YONAGUNI ★ MATSUI TO MANAGE GIANTS ★ KOMEITO TO OPPOSE 31-SEAT CUT ★ PETROL SUBSIDY UNDER REVIEW ★

SoftBank Halts Earthquake and Tsunami Alerts Until Monday Over the PHP Flaws, as the Government Forms a Team of White-Hat Hackers

Phones on SoftBank, Y!mobile and LINEMO will not sound alarms for strong quakes until October 26; ministries, local governments and companies weigh keeping sites offline against keeping services running, and Microsoft says Chinese state-linked hackers are using AI to break in within hours

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent



The Emperor and Empress with their daughter, Princess Aiko, right, in a file photo. The revised Imperial House Law, under which women of the imperial family will keep their status after marriage and male descendants of the former branch families may be adopted, takes effect on Saturday, and on Friday the Cabinet approved the princess's official visit to Singapore from November 17 to 21. Reports, Page 21. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SoftBank stopped sending emergency alert mail, the messages that make mobile phones sound an alarm before strong shaking arrives or when a tsunami warning is issued, at 6:47 a.m. on Friday. It is the most serious consequence for public safety so far of the two critical flaws in the programming language PHP that were disclosed this week, and the company said delivery would not resume until Monday, October 26.

The suspension covers SoftBank's own customers and those of its budget brands, Y!mobile and LINEMO. Until delivery resumes, their phones will not sound an alert tone if strong shaking from an earthquake is expected, and the disaster and evacuation information that local governments send through the same service will not reach them either. SoftBank urged customers to install other apps to receive warnings in the meantime.

The announcement did not say which part of the alert system depends on PHP, the language behind about seven in ten of the websites whose server-side software can be identified, or why the pause would last four days. It came as Typhoon No. 30, Champi, passed close to the Sakishima Islands, where the Japan Meteorological Agency has warned of violent winds and possible linear rainbands until early Saturday.

A few hours later the government said it would put together a team of so-called white-hat hackers, security specialists who use attackers' techniques to defend systems, to help stop the run of unauthorised access to companies and public bodies. Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Ryosei Akazawa announced the plan at a news conference after Friday's Cabinet meeting. He did not say how large the team would be or when it would begin work.

Three days on

The PHP project disclosed the flaws, which allow an attacker who is not logged in to run code on a web server from across the internet, before dawn on Wednesday, Japan time, and released fixed versions late that night. Many organisations that took their websites offline as a precaution have since applied the fixes and switched them back on. Others are still working.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's own website was taken down on Wednesday night and restored on Thursday morning, according to an official at the Prime Minister's Office. Komeito and the Constitutional Democratic Party also suspended their party websites; Komeito said on Thursday it had no prospect yet of restoring its site, and the

Constitutional Democrats said theirs would return once its safety had been confirmed.

The health and finance ministries made some of their pages unavailable, the transport ministry suspended part of its site and the general website for My Number cards was stopped. JR West suspended about 60 websites, JR Shikoku's official site went down, taking its train running information with it, and the Saga prefectural police closed their site. The Asahi Shimbun reported that the weather agency's website was also affected, and that ticket sales by some tourism and aviation businesses were halted.

Local governments moved the same way. Osaka Prefecture disabled parts of its website, including press releases, statistics and the pages that follow its budget compilation; Fukuoka Prefecture switched off its event calendar, the search for tenders and its survey forms while it inspected its servers; and Aomori Prefecture stopped publishing Kuma Log Aomori, its map of bear sightings. Sendai stopped services including its SENDAI Portal app, which carries weather and disaster information, and Abashiri in Hokkaido and the city of Miyazaki suspended their official LINE accounts.

JR Central suspended its private work booths at Tokyo, Nagoya and other major stations, whose reservation system runs on PHP, with no date set to reopen them, and carried out maintenance on websites including SMART EX, the online booking service for the Tokaido Shinkansen. Customers could still book through the app.

Working through the night

Some companies worked around the clock. A railway operator in the Tokyo area said it had applied the fix repeatedly across sites run by its many businesses and that some staff had stayed up all night. A major securities firm told Kyodo News it had been unable to deliver its market reports to clients or calculate foreign exchange rates, and that a complete fix could take nearly a month.

The Yomiuri Shimbun described the choice facing companies as a dilemma: suspending services protects customers from attacks, but it also cuts them off from the services they rely on. The Asahi Shimbun said the question of whether such preventive suspension becomes standard practice is now part of the government's discussion of rules for AI, which it aims to settle by the end of the year.

TYPHOONS

Champi Makes Its Closest Approach to the Sakishima Islands, Putting Yonaguni, Ishigaki and Miyakojima Inside Its Storm Winds

The large, very strong typhoon is forecast to slow and turn west of Yonaguni overnight, then head north through the East China Sea; waves of up to 11 metres and linear rainbands are possible in Miyako and Yaeyama until early Saturday

By the Weather Desk

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, made its closest approach to the Sakishima Islands on Friday afternoon as a large, very strong typhoon, putting Yonaguni, Ishigaki and Miyakojima inside the area of storm-force winds. At 3 p.m. its centre was about 80 km south-south-east of Yonaguni, with a central pressure of 950 hectopascals and winds of 45 metres a second near the centre, gusting to 60, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

It was moving north-north-west at 20 km/h. Storm-force winds of 25 metres a second or more reached 330 km to its north and 280 km to its south, and gale-force winds of 15 metres a second or more extended 850 km to the north-east and 600 km to the south-west. Taipei was also inside the storm area, and Naha, on Okinawa's main island, was in the gale area.

The agency urged the strictest vigilance against violent winds, high waves and swells, landslides and storm surges, and called for care over flooding in low-lying areas and rising or overflowing rivers. It said strong winds on Friday and Saturday could be enough to bring down some houses, and that waves of up to 11 metres were possible.

Rainbands

The agency also said linear rainbands, lines of thunderclouds that can stay over the same area and bring torrential rain for hours, could form over the Miyako and Yaeyama regions of Okinawa Prefecture from early Friday afternoon to early Saturday morning. Up to 250 millimetres of rain was forecast in some areas of the Okinawa region in the 24 hours to midnight on Friday, and up to 150 millimetres in the following 24 hours.

The track

According to the 3:50 p.m. bulletin, Champi will slow and turn west overnight, passing west of Yonaguni and lying about 70 km west-south-west of the island at 3 a.m. on Saturday, still at 950 hectopascals. It is then forecast to turn north and to be about 200 km north of Yonaguni by 3 p.m. on Saturday, still a strong typhoon.

It is expected to weaken to a severe tropical storm over the East China Sea by Sunday afternoon and to a tropical storm west of Kyushu by Monday afternoon. On its forecast centre line it passes about 30 km north of Kagoshima on Monday evening, and it is forecast to become an extratropical low near the Izu Islands, about 350 km south of Tokyo, by Tuesday afternoon.

The forecast has moved south since Thursday, when the centre line took the storm close to Fukuoka on Monday morning and into the Sea of Japan. The agency has said the later stages of the forecast remain uncertain.

Rain further north

Forecasters warned that heavy rain was possible from Kyushu to Hokuriku even before the storm arrives, with a front lingering over the country. On today's weather map, rain spreads from Fukuoka to Matsue, Hiroshima, Takamatsu and Kochi tonight, and the Amami region was warned of high waves and swells. Naha reached 30 degrees on Friday.

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WEATHER — TOKYO



Sapporo

16°



Osaka

24°



Fukuoka

21°



Naha

30°

21°C

Low 14°C · Sunny, then cloudy

A cold start in the north, with 1°C in Kushiro; Tokyo 21°C and clouding over; rain spreads across western Japan tonight; Naha 30°C as Typhoon No. 30, Champi, passes Yonaguni. Full weather, Page 19.

TODAY IN BRIEF

- Cyber: SoftBank stops quake and tsunami alerts until Monday over the PHP flaws; a white-hat team is formed.
- Typhoon: Champi, at 950 hPa, puts Yonaguni, Ishigaki and Miyakojima inside its storm winds.
- Politics: Takaichi orders a review of petrol subsidies; Komeito moves to oppose the 31-seat cut.
- Markets: the Nikkei falls 1,400 yen before ending 214 lower; core inflation is back at 2.1%.
- Courts: the Supreme Court again rules the welfare cuts were illegal.
- Sports: Hideki Matsui is named Giants manager; Tokito Oda wins Para gold and a Paralympic place.

ALERTS

- SoftBank, Y!mobile, LINEMO.
- Stopped 6:47 a.m. Friday.
- Due back Monday, Oct. 26.
- Use TV, radio and apps.

TODAY

- Champi at 950 hPa.
- Tokyo 21, then cloudy.
- Rain tonight in the west.
- Matsui: Giants No. 90.

MARKETS

Nikkei 225 (Fri)	62,693.16 ▼ 214.68
Topix (Fri)	3,965.81 ▼ 31.69
Dow (Thu)	52,867.98 ▲ 11.89
Nasdaq (Thu)	26,008.86 ▼ 694.00
Core CPI (Sept)	+2.1% year on year
Yen (Fri, 10 a.m.)	156.46-47 per \$
Bank of Japan	meets Oct. 29-30

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THE WEEK

- Sat. 24: Japan Series opens.
- Sat. 24: Imperial law in force.
- Sun. 25: Kikuka Sho.
- Tue. 27: Israel votes.

THE TROPICS

- Champi: 950 hPa, very strong.
- Near Kagoshima Monday night.

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The government's response

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said on Thursday that the National Cyber Office would lead efforts to share information quickly through social media, and he asked people to follow its accounts. He said no damage to government bodies had been reported. The office had warned on the afternoon of October 21 that a fix would be released that night and suggested that temporarily suspending a website was an effective measure for those who could not apply it.

On Thursday the head of the office and the director-general of the National Police Agency's cyber police bureau briefed Takaichi, Kihara and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhiro Tsuyuki at the Prime Minister's Office. The National Security Council met the same day, with Toshiharu Furukawa, the minister in charge of cybersecurity, taking part, to discuss the revision of the national security strategy and cybersecurity.

The Metropolitan Police Department held an emergency meeting of its cyber terrorism council with operators of critical infrastructure in Tokyo, including electricity, railway and financial companies, to share the latest attack methods. The Yomiuri Shimbun said 59 companies took part.

The internal affairs ministry, meanwhile, opened an expert panel on how telecommunications carriers should protect their data against attacks made more dangerous by AI. It expects to confirm the importance of carriers being willing to shut systems down themselves to repair them, and to report in the summer of 2027 on whether the Telecommunications Business Act needs to change.

AI on both sides

Microsoft said on Wednesday that a hacker group it believes has ties to the Chinese government had used artificial intelligence to run largely automated attacks on hundreds of organisations around the world. In some cases, the company said, less than three hours passed between the choice of a target and the seizure of administrator privileges in the cloud.

Microsoft calls the group Storm-0940 and says it has been active since 2021 with the aim of stealing data. Since September at the latest, it said, the group has exploited ARTEX, a publicly available framework for AI-assisted penetration testing, to carry out reconnaissance, unauthorised logins and data theft with little human involvement. Its targets included the automotive, chemical, financial, government, media and military sectors. Kyodo News reported that the same tool was used in a large-scale attack

that caused damage at Japanese companies.

The PHP flaws themselves were found with the help of AI. OpenAI said several security firms had used generative AI, including its GPT-5.6 model, to find them, and predicted that similar discoveries would surge in the coming months. A body involved in PHP's development said reports of vulnerabilities had been arriving one after another since August, and that defenders and attackers alike could now find flaws faster than ever.

Amazon said it had found signs that attackers tried to exploit the flaws before they were made public, and Matthew Prince, the chief executive of Cloudflare, said attempts to exploit them rose sharply after the disclosure.

The Yomiuri Shimbun reported that the government is concerned that if attackers using AI find vulnerabilities first, damage could spread across Japan overnight, and that the National Security Council is likely to discuss the issue. Takahiro Anno, the leader of Team Mirai and an AI engineer, said on Thursday that systems would have to be protected with the help of AI as well, or they would become impossible to manage.

Abroad

In China, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology warned users that the flaws could lead to leaks of information and asked them to inspect their systems and upgrade immediately. Tencent said its cloud service was affected, Alibaba issued a warning and the video service Bilibili carried out maintenance on its game.

What to do

Anyone who runs a website should check that it uses PHP 8.5.12, 8.4.27, 8.3.36 or 8.2.35, or ask the hosting company whether the update has been applied. SoftBank, Y!mobile and LINEMO customers can receive earthquake early warnings and tsunami warnings through television and radio and through other alert apps until Monday, and should follow their municipality's evacuation information through every channel available.

One organisation was untouched. PHP Institute, the Tokyo publisher, posted on Thursday that it was "not related at all" to the programming language. It said it had received no flood of inquiries, though its own website, which also runs on PHP, needed emergency maintenance.

AI to seize cloud accounts in under three hours.

EXPLOITS: Amazon saw attempts before disclosure; Cloudflare says attempts rose sharply after it.

CHINA: The industry ministry warned users; Tencent's cloud was affected.

PUBLISHER: PHP Institute says it is "not related at all".

TECHNOLOGY

Who Switched Off, and What Came Back

Precautions reported on Thursday and Friday by Japanese organisations after the PHP flaws
By the Technology Desk

PRIME MINISTER: Sanae Takaichi's website was taken down on Wednesday night and restored on Thursday morning.

KOMEITO: Suspended its website; said on Thursday there was no prospect yet of restoring it.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRATS: Suspended their website, to return once its safety is confirmed.

MINISTRIES: Some pages of the health and finance ministries were made unavailable; the transport ministry suspended part of its site.

MY NUMBER: The general website for the cards was stopped.

OSAKA: The prefecture disabled press releases, statistics and budget pages; the city stopped some services.

FUKUOKA: The prefecture turned off its event calendar, tender search and survey forms during a server check.

AOMORI: Stopped publishing Kuma Log Aomori, its map of bear sightings.

SHIZUOKA: Disabled the "like" button on the prefectural website.

SHIGA: Stopped parts of the prefectural site, the Boat Race Biwako site and the sites of prefectural high schools.

SENDAI: Stopped services including the SENDAI Portal app for weather and disaster information.

LINE ACCOUNTS: Abashiri and Miyazaki suspended their official accounts.

JR CENTRAL: Private booths at major stations closed indefinitely; SMART EX had maintenance, with the app still working.

SOFTBANK: Emergency alert mail suspended until Monday.

TECHNOLOGY

How Emergency Alert Mail Works, and How to Get Warnings Until Monday

The messages that make every phone in an area sound at once are sent by the mobile carriers, not by an app, which is why a pause at one carrier matters

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The alarm that sounds from every phone in a room before an earthquake is not an app notification. It comes from a broadcast sent by the mobile carrier to all compatible handsets in the affected area at once, without any need to register or sign up.

NTT Docomo calls its service Area Mail; KDDI, SoftBank and Rakuten Mobile use the name emergency alert mail. The messages carry the Japan Meteorological Agency's earthquake early warnings and tsunami warnings, its emergency warnings for extreme weather, and the evacuation information issued by municipalities.

The earthquake early warning

The earthquake early warning is the best known. When seismometers near an epicentre detect the first, faster waves of a quake, the agency estimates its size and location and, if strong shaking is expected, issues a warning before the stronger waves arrive. The margin is often only seconds, and places close to the epicentre may get no warning at all, but a few seconds are enough to get under a table, step away from windows or stop a machine.

Why one carrier's pause matters

Because the broadcast is sent by each carrier through its own network, a suspension at one carrier affects only its own customers. SoftBank's pause, which began at 6:47 a.m. on Friday and is due to end on Monday, covers phones on SoftBank, Y!mobile and LINEMO. Customers of other carriers are not affected.

Other ways to receive warnings

Television and radio broadcasters carry earthquake early warnings and tsunami warnings as they are issued, and NHK interrupts its programmes to do so. Free apps from broadcasters and internet portals also deliver warnings to smartphones, which is what SoftBank asked its customers to use in the meantime.

Local information

Municipalities send evacuation information through many channels besides alert mail, including outdoor loudspeakers, community radio, their own email services and official social media accounts. Several cities have suspended some of those channels this week as a precaution, so it is worth checking which ones your own municipality is still using.

In the islands

In the Sakishima Islands, where Typhoon Champi is bringing storm-force winds, residents should follow the instructions of their town or city through every available channel and not wait for a phone alert before moving to safety.

Before Monday

SoftBank customers can install an alert app now, turn on its notifications and check that it is allowed to make a sound when the phone is set to silent.

TECHNOLOGY

Switch Off or Stay On: The Choice Behind This Week's Outages

Taking a website offline is the surest way to keep attackers out of it before it is fixed. It is also a way of cutting customers off from services they need, and the decision is rarely as simple as it looks
By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

When the PHP project announced on Wednesday that two flaws let outsiders run their own code on web servers, the advice from governments was the same everywhere. Apply the fix at once; if you cannot, take the system off the internet until you can.

Japan's National Cyber Office said temporarily suspending a website was an effective measure, and Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi repeated the point on social media. In Europe, the European Commission's cybersecurity service told organisations that could not apply the fix to consider disconnecting.

Why the advice is blunt

A remote code execution flaw is the most serious kind. An attacker who can run code on a server can read what it stores, change what it shows, plant software that stays after the hole is closed and use it to reach other systems. Attempts to exploit the flaws rose sharply after they were disclosed, according to Cloudflare, and Amazon said it had seen attempts even before.

Why patching takes time

Applying the fix is simple on a single server. A railway group or a prefecture may run dozens of sites built by different contractors at different times, on different versions of the language, and each must be found, updated and tested. A railway operator in the Tokyo area said it had applied the fix repeatedly across its businesses and had to coordinate with outside vendors.

The cost of switching off

Every site that goes dark takes something with it. In Aomori it was a map of bear sightings; in Sendai, an app that carries disaster information; at a securities firm, reports and exchange rates for clients. The Yomiuri Shimbun described the choice facing companies as a dilemma between protecting customers and serving them.

A question for the rules

The Asahi Shimbun reported that whether such preventive suspensions become standard practice is now part of the government's discussion of the AI and Digital Reform Principles it aims to compile by the end of the year. The internal affairs ministry's new expert panel on telecommunications is expected to confirm the importance of carriers shutting systems down to repair them.

What would help

Security specialists have long argued that knowing exactly which software runs where, keeping it up to date as a routine and designing services so that one failing part does not take everything down are the best protection against weeks like this one. They are also the least glamorous parts of running a service, and the first to be cut when budgets are tight.

FROM PAGE 1

Champi Makes Its Closest Approach to the Sakishima Islands, Putting Yonaguni, Ishigaki and Miyakojima Inside Its Storm Winds

Continued from Page 1

A pause at the Senkakus

The approaching storm appears to have broken a long run of Chinese government ships near the Senkaku Islands. The 11th Regional Coast Guard Headquarters in Naha said no China Coast Guard vessels were seen in the contiguous zone around the islands on Thursday, ending a streak of 74 consecutive days that began on August 9. The two ships that had been there left one after the other on Wednesday afternoon, possibly to avoid the typhoon.

The government set up an information liaison office at the Prime Minister's Office on Thursday to gather information on the storm.

Another storm

Far to the east, a tropical depression near the Marshall Islands at noon on Friday is forecast to become a tropical storm by Saturday and a strong typhoon by Monday, drifting towards Wake Island, well away from Japan for now.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 19.

Crossword, Page 29.

TECHNOLOGY

The PHP Fallout: Day Three at a Glance

By the Technology Desk

THE FLAWS: Two critical vulnerabilities in PHP, CVE-2026-109618 and CVE-2026-109619, let an attacker who is not logged in run code on a web server.

THE FIX: PHP 8.5.12, 8.4.27, 8.3.36 and 8.2.35, released late on Wednesday night, Japan time.

ALERTS: SoftBank stopped emergency alert mail at 6:47 a.m. on Friday for SoftBank, Y!mobile and LINEMO users, until Monday.

WHITE HATS: Industry Minister Ryosei Akazawa says the government will form a team of white-hat hackers.

GOVERNMENT SITES: Pages of the health, finance and transport ministries and the My Number website were suspended.

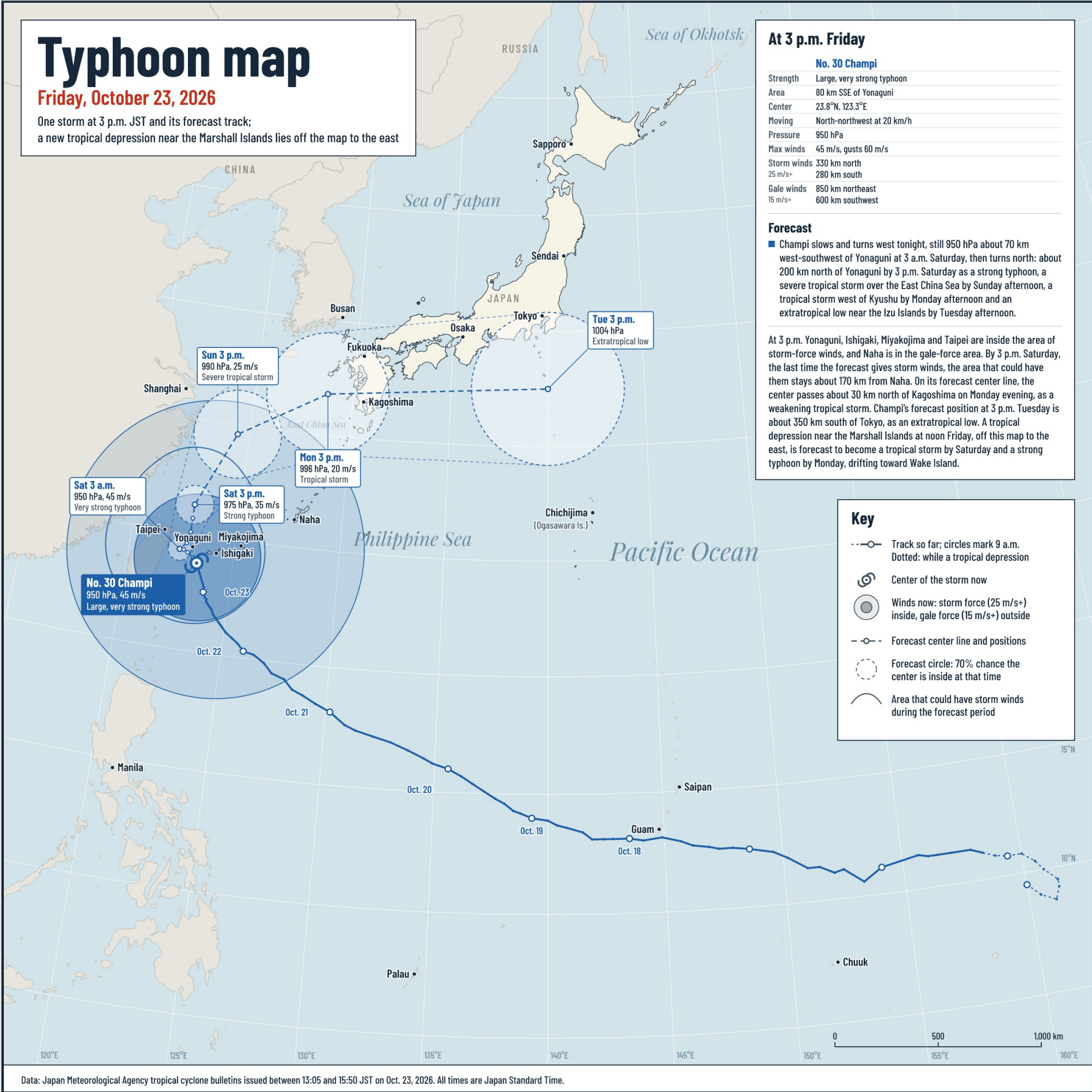
PARTIES: The prime minister's site was down on Wednesday night; Komeito and the Constitutional Democrats paused theirs.

RAILWAYS: JR West suspended about 60 sites; JR Shikoku's site went down; JR Central closed its station booths.

POLICE: The Metropolitan Police met critical infrastructure operators; the Saga police closed their site.

AI: Microsoft says a Chinese state-linked group used

TYPHOONS



Typhoon No. 30, Champi, at 3 p.m. on Friday and its forecast track, in the map supplied for this edition: a large, very strong typhoon about 80 km south-south-east of Yonaguni at 23.8N, 123.3E, moving north-north-west at 20 km/h, with a central pressure of 950 hPa and maximum winds of 45 m/s, gusting to 60. Storm-force winds extend 330 km to the north and 280 km to the south; gale-force winds 850 km to the north-east and 600 km to the south-west. It is forecast to slow and turn west tonight, still at 950 hPa about 70 km west-south-west of Yonaguni at 3 a.m. Saturday, then turn north: about 200 km north of Yonaguni by 3 p.m. Saturday as a strong typhoon of 975 hPa; a severe tropical storm of 990 hPa over the East China Sea by Sunday afternoon; a tropical storm of 996 hPa west of Kyushu by Monday afternoon, its centre line passing about 30 km north of Kagoshima that evening; and an extratropical low of 1,004 hPa near the Izu Islands, about 350 km south of Tokyo, by Tuesday afternoon. At 3 p.m. Yonaguni, Ishigaki, Miyakojima and Taipei are inside the storm-force winds and Naha is in the gale area; by 3 p.m. Saturday the area that could have storm winds stays about 170 km from Naha. Each dashed circle is where the centre is expected to be at that time with a probability of 70 per cent; the solid outline encloses the area that could have storm-force winds during the forecast period. The line to the south-east is the track so far, with circles at 9 a.m. each day. A new tropical depression near the Marshall Islands lies off the map to the east. (Data: Japan Meteorological Agency tropical cyclone bulletins issued between 1:05 p.m. and 3:50 p.m. on October 23)

Champi Slows Near Yonaguni Before Turning North: The Forecast, Step by Step, From Saturday's Storm Winds to an Extratropical Low South of Tokyo

The 3:50 p.m. bulletin keeps the typhoon at 950 hPa through the night and moves its later track south, across southern Kyushu on Monday evening and towards the Izu Islands

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Typhoon No. 30, Champi, will linger near Yonaguni overnight before turning north into the East China Sea, according to the forecast issued by the Japan Meteorological Agency at 3:50 p.m. on Friday. The map on this page shows the storm at 3 p.m. and the agency's forecast positions for the next four days.

At 3 p.m. the large, very strong typhoon was about 80 km south-south-east of Yonaguni, at 23.8 degrees north and 123.3 degrees east, moving north-north-west at 20 km/h. Its central pressure was 950 hectopascals and its winds near the centre 45 metres a second, with gusts of 60.

Tonight and early Saturday

The agency expects Champi to slow and turn west tonight, passing slowly west of Yonaguni. At 3 a.m. on Saturday it is forecast to be about 70 km west-south-west of the island, still a very strong typhoon at 950 hectopascals with winds of 45 metres a second. Because the storm is slowing down, the islands will be exposed to strong winds for longer than they would be if it kept moving at Friday's pace.

Saturday afternoon

It is then forecast to turn north. By 3 p.m. on Saturday it is expected to be about 200 km north of Yonaguni as a strong typhoon, at 975 hectopascals with winds of 35 metres a second. That is the last point at which the forecast gives the storm an area of storm-force winds, and the area that could have them stays about 170 km from Naha.

Sunday

By 3 p.m. on Sunday Champi is forecast to be a severe tropical storm over the East China Sea, at 990 hectopascals with winds of 25 metres a second, moving north-east.

Monday

By 3 p.m. on Monday it is expected to be a tropical storm west of Kyushu, at 996 hectopascals with winds of 20 metres a second. On the forecast centre line, the centre crosses southern Kyushu on Monday evening, passing about 30 km north of Kagoshima as a weakening tropical storm.

Tuesday

By 3 p.m. on Tuesday Champi is forecast to have become an extratropical low of 1,004 hectopascals near the Izu Islands, about 350 km south of Tokyo. An extratropical low no longer draws its energy from warm seas, but it can still bring strong winds and rain over a wide area.

How the forecast has changed

Thursday's bulletin had the storm passing close to Fukuoka on Monday morning and becoming an extratropical low over the Sea of Japan by Tuesday. Friday's forecast is slower and further south, which brings southern Kyushu and the Pacific coast closer to its path and takes it further from northern Kyushu and the Sea of Japan coast.

Reading the circles

Each dashed circle on the map is the area in which the centre is expected to be at that time with a probability of 70 per cent. The circles grow larger with time because the forecast becomes less certain, and the circle for Tuesday afternoon reaches the Pacific coast from the Tokai region to the Boso Peninsula, its edge passing just south of Tokyo. A storm does not have to pass through a place for that place to be hit by its wind and rain.

Its journey so far

The solid line to the south-east shows the track since the storm formed, with circles at 9 a.m. each day. Champi passed close to Guam on October 18, crossed the open Pacific east of the Philippines and headed north-west towards the Sakishima Islands on Wednesday and Thursday. On Thursday morning it was a violent typhoon of 905 hectopascals; it has weakened since, but its wind field remains huge.

Another storm

A tropical depression near the Marshall Islands, off the map to the east at noon on Friday, is forecast to become a tropical storm by Saturday and a strong typhoon by Monday, drifting towards Wake Island.

TYPHOONS

Champi at a Glance

By the Weather Desk

NAME: Typhoon No. 30, Champi.

AT 3 P.M. FRIDAY: About 80 km south-south-east of Yonaguni, at 23.8N, 123.3E.

STRENGTH: Large, very strong; 950 hPa; winds 45 m/s near the centre, gusts 60.

MOVING: North-north-west at 20 km/h, slowing and turning west tonight.

STORM WINDS: 25 m/s or more, 330 km to the north and 280 km to the south.

GALE WINDS: 15 m/s or more, 850 km to the north-east and 600 km to the south-west.

INSIDE THE STORM AREA: Yonaguni, Ishigaki, Miyakojima and Taipei; Naha in the gale area.

3 A.M. SATURDAY: About 70 km west-south-west of Yonaguni; 950 hPa, 45 m/s, very strong.

3 P.M. SATURDAY: About 200 km north of Yonaguni; 975 hPa, 35 m/s, strong.

3 P.M. SUNDAY: Severe tropical storm over the East China Sea; 990 hPa, 25 m/s.

3 P.M. MONDAY: Tropical storm west of Kyushu; 996 hPa, 20 m/s; about 30 km north of Kagoshima that evening on the centre line.

3 P.M. TUESDAY: Extratropical low of 1,004 hPa near the Izu Islands, about 350 km south of Tokyo.

WARNINGS: Violent winds, waves of up to 11 m, storm surges and landslides in the Sakishima Islands; linear rainbands possible in Miyako and Yaeyama until early Saturday.

RAIN: Up to 250 mm in parts of the Okinawa region in the 24 hours to midnight Friday, then up to 150 mm.

SOURCE: Japan Meteorological Agency bulletins issued between 1:05 p.m. and 3:50 p.m. on Friday.

TYPHOONS

Linear Rainbands: Why a Line of Storm Clouds Can Be More Dangerous Than the Typhoon's Wind

The weather agency's warning for Miyako and Yaeyama is about rain that keeps falling on the same place for hours

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The Japan Meteorological Agency said on Friday that linear rainbands could form over the Miyako and Yaeyama regions of Okinawa Prefecture from early Friday afternoon until early Saturday morning, as Typhoon Champi passes. The term, senjo kosuitai in Japanese, has become familiar in recent summers, often in reports of deadly floods.

What they are

A linear rainband forms when well-developed cumulonimbus clouds, the towering clouds that produce thunderstorms, are generated one after another and line up. The agency describes the resulting area of intense rain as roughly 50 to 300 km long and 20 to 50 km wide, passing over or stalling above almost the same place for several hours.

Why they are dangerous

A single thunderstorm can drop torrential rain, but it usually passes or dies out within an hour. In a rainband, new clouds keep forming upwind and moving over the same ground, so the rain does not stop. Rivers rise quickly, small streams overflow and hillsides become saturated, raising the risk of landslides.

Typhoons and rainbands

Typhoons carry enormous amounts of moisture, and the bands of cloud that spiral around them can organise into lines of thunderstorms, sometimes far from the centre. That is why the agency's warning covers rain as well as the wind that dominates most discussion of a typhoon.

Forecasting them

Predicting exactly where a rainband will form is still difficult. The agency began announcing half a day in advance, for broad regions, that rainbands might form in 2022, and in 2024 it began issuing these advance notices for individual prefectures. It also issues information on significant heavy rain when a rainband has actually formed.

What to do

An advance notice does not mean a rainband will certainly form, but it is a signal to prepare early:

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check hazard maps, know the nearest safe building and move before the rain becomes intense, especially at night, when evacuation is more dangerous. In the Sakishima Islands on Friday night, the wind made that advice all the more important.

TYPHOONS

Why a Slowing Typhoon Worries Forecasters

When a storm stalls, the same islands are battered for longer, and the rain adds up

By the Weather Desk

The most striking feature of Friday's forecast for Typhoon Champi is not its strength but its speed. The agency expects the storm, which was moving at 20 km/h on Friday afternoon, to slow down and turn west overnight near Yonaguni before heading north on Saturday.

Longer exposure

A typhoon that keeps moving passes over an island in a matter of hours. One that slows or stalls keeps the same places inside its storm-force winds for much longer, and every hour of wind adds to the damage to buildings, trees and power lines that have already been weakened.

Rain adds up

Slow movement matters even more for rain. A storm that lingers keeps its bands of heavy rain over the same ground, and totals that would be manageable over a few hours become dangerous over a day. That is one reason the agency has warned of possible linear rainbands in Miyako and Yaeyama.

Waves and surges

Long exposure to strong winds also builds bigger waves and can push sea water onto low coasts for longer. The agency has warned of waves of up to 11 metres around the Sakishima Islands.

Why storms slow down

Typhoons are steered by the large-scale winds around them. When those steering winds weaken or change direction, as they often do when a storm moves out of the tropics and begins to turn north, a typhoon can slow, wander or stall before picking up speed again.

The islands' experience

The Sakishima Islands are among the places in Japan most often affected by typhoons, and their buildings and infrastructure are built with that in mind. A slow storm tests even well-prepared communities, which is why the agency has asked for the strictest vigilance until the winds ease.

POLITICS

The Week Ahead

By the News Desk

- SAT. 24: Revised Imperial House Law takes effect; Japan Series Game 1 at Yokohama Stadium; Japan v Fiji rugby at Chichibunomiya.
- SAT. 24: World Wrestling Championships open in Astana; Shosoin Exhibition opens in Nara; Champi about 200 km north of Yonaguni by 3 p.m.
- SAT. 24 (JAPAN TIME): World Series Game 1 in Milwaukee, Brewers against Rays; figure skating Grand Prix in Angers.
- SUN. 25: Kikuka Sho at Kyoto; Fukushima governor and Naha mayoral elections; Europe's clocks go back.
- MON. 26: SoftBank alert mail due to resume; parties give the LDP their views on the 31-seat cut; Champi west of Kyushu.
- TUE. 27: Inter-party talks on the lower house resume; Israel votes in a general election; security panel's fifth meeting.
- OCT. 27-28: U.S. Federal Reserve meets.
- OCT. 29-30: Bank of Japan policy meeting.
- OCT. 30: Vice-capital law takes effect.
- NOV. 1: Tax-free shopping switches to refunds at departure.
- NOV. 3: Order of Culture ceremony at the Imperial Palace; U.S. midterm elections.
- NOV. 8-11: Vietnam's To Lam visits Japan.
- NOV. 17-21: Princess Aiko's official visit to Singapore.

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POLITICS

Katayama Signals the New Income-Linked Benefit Could Reach Lower Earners, a Concession Komeito Has Sought

The government has been working with a lower limit of 1.06 million yen a year; Komeito wants 530,000 yen

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama suggested on Friday that the government's planned income-linked benefit could be extended to people on lower incomes, opening the door to one of the main demands of Komeito.

The new system, which the government plans to introduce in fiscal 2027, would pay benefits linked to income. The government has been considering a lower income limit of around 1.06 million yen a year for eligibility. Komeito wants that limit lowered to 530,000 yen, so that people who earn less would also qualify.

Answering questions in the House of Representatives' finance committee on Friday morning, Katayama said the goal of covering a wider range of people carried great weight. Her answer was taken as a sign that Komeito's proposal could be reflected in the system.

Details by cabinet order

The bill will not specify who is eligible or how much they would receive; those details are to be set later by cabinet order. That leaves room for the government to adjust them after the bill passes.

A bargaining card

The benefit is part of the package the government has presented alongside its bill to cut the consumption tax on food. The ruling parties are said to want to accept some of the opposition's demands as a bargaining card to win support for the bill.

Komeito, which left the coalition with the Liberal Democrats last year, has argued that cash payments would help households faster than a tax cut and has asked the government to show the numbers behind both.

In the upper house

In the House of Councillors, the opposition is pressing for a special committee to examine the tax bills. On Thursday Yoshitaka Saito, the Constitutional Democrats' upper house Diet affairs chief, asked his Liberal Democratic counterpart, Yoshihiko Isozaki, to set one up. Isozaki argued that the bills should be examined by the existing finance committee but did not reject the request outright and took it back for consideration.

Why the threshold matters

Where the lower limit is drawn decides whether people with the lowest earnings receive the benefit at all. Halving it to 530,000 yen would bring in many part-time workers and others on very small incomes.

POLITICS

Takaichi Orders a Review of Petrol Subsidies, Seeking Gradual Cuts and an Exit Plan

The payments hold regular petrol near 170 yen a litre; 'nothing has been decided' on the amount or the end date, she says

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said on Friday that she would instruct Ryosei Akazawa, the minister of economy, trade and industry, to review the subsidy that holds down petrol prices, after lawmakers in both the ruling and opposition parties raised concerns about the burden on public finances.

Akazawa is to study reducing the subsidy in stages and an exit strategy, Takaichi told reporters at the Prime Minister's Office.

Asked how large the subsidy per litre would be and when it would end, she said only: "Nothing has been decided yet."

Money for now

She said she would also ask Akazawa to work with Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama to secure the money needed to keep the payments going for the time being.

Since March

The government has paid the subsidy since March, with the aim of keeping the national average price of regular petrol at about 170 yen a litre.

The average rose to 170.20 yen this week, its first increase in three weeks, according to the government's weekly survey.

The oil price

The payments have become more expensive as crude prices have climbed. New York crude rose back into the 99-dollar range on Thursday on concern about exports from the Middle East, where the conflict with Iran and attacks on Saudi oil facilities have unsettled supplies.

A busy day

Earlier on Friday Akazawa announced that the government would form a team of white-hat hackers to help stop the run of unauthorised access to companies and public bodies, as reported on Page 1.

Tax and subsidies

Japan has used subsidies paid through oil wholesalers to restrain fuel prices since 2022. The provisional surcharge on the petrol tax, 25.1 yen a litre, was abolished at the end of last year under an agreement between the ruling and opposition parties.

Prices at home

Fuel subsidies have helped to hold down energy costs in the consumer price index, which rose 2.1 per cent in September from a year earlier, excluding fresh food.

The concern

The worry voiced across party lines is the open-ended cost: the subsidy has no announced end date, and the gap it must cover widens whenever oil becomes more expensive. The instruction to plan an exit signals that the government is preparing to wind it down.

POLITICS

LDP Calls the Data Leaks a 'Serious Crisis' and Seeks a Response Led by the Prime Minister's Office

Takaichi tells Masaaki Taira that public anxiety is 'on a completely different scale'

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The Liberal Democratic Party handed Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi an urgent proposal on Friday that describes the series of cyberattacks leaking personal information from Japanese companies as a "serious crisis" and calls for a new response headquarters under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Office.

Takaichi received the proposal at the Prime Minister's Office from Masaaki Taira, who heads the party's National Cybersecurity Strategy Headquarters, and other lawmakers.

"Public anxiety is on a completely different scale from before. It has become a serious situation," she said.

Takaichi told them the government would put the necessary structure in place under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Office and speed up countermeasures across ministries.

'A cyber emergency'

Taira, a former digital minister, urged the government to "recognise that this is a cyber emergency and work to dispel the public's anxiety."

A week of disclosures

The proposal came at the end of a week of disclosures. Capcom said on Thursday that about 11.77 million email addresses had leaked. On Friday Sagawa Express said up to 53.23 million items of personal data may have leaked from its parcel tracking service, Park24 confirmed the leak of about 1.46 million images of identity documents and Arcadia said about 1.42 million suspicious emails had been sent through its disaster information service.

Also on Friday the reuse retailer Treasure Factory said about 750,000 customer email addresses had leaked, and Mos Food Services, which runs the Mos Burger chain, said information on more than 1.13 million prepaid cards had leaked.

The PHP flaws

At the same time, companies and public bodies are still repairing systems exposed by two critical flaws in the programming language PHP. SoftBank suspended its emergency alert mail on Friday until Monday, and Akazawa announced that the government would form a team of white-hat hackers, as reported on Page 1.

The cyber office

The National Cyber Office is coordinating the government's response and sharing information through social media, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said on Thursday.

A headquarters

The party's proposal goes further, calling for a dedicated headquarters with the authority of the Prime Minister's Office behind it.

POLITICS

Politics in Brief

By the Political Desk

OGAWA APOLOGISES: Junya Ogawa, who led the Centrist Reform Alliance, apologised on Friday for the 584.7 million yen in government party subsidies the group received although it has effectively been dissolved. The alliance split in September and survives only to wind up its affairs, with one member of the House of Representatives. Ogawa, who now heads the Democratic Reform Association, said he had thought the situation unavoidable but that the responsibility was ultimately his, and that people had told him it was very hard to understand.

HOSONO'S REPORT: Reconstruction Minister Goshi Hosono said on Friday he had corrected his campaign spending report for the 2024 general election, removing the costs of a liaison office that he said had been listed by clerical error. He said no campaigning had taken place there. Some media had reported that he set up more offices than the two the Public Offices Election Act allows a candidate and his party in one district.

RE-ELECTION TALK: A year into Sanae Takaichi's government, some Liberal Democrats are already speaking of supporting her re-election as party president, while groups outside the party's mainstream are taking a wait-and-see approach, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported. Her current term as president runs until September 2027.

TABLETS IN THE CHAMBER: The House of Representatives is considering lifting its ban on tablet computers in plenary sessions, limited to lawmakers asking questions and members of the government answering them, with communication functions blocked, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported. The house has traditionally restricted electronic devices in the chamber.

TAX BILL COMMITTEE: In the upper house, the Constitutional Democrats asked on Thursday for a special committee to examine the bills on cutting the consumption tax on food; the Liberal Democrats prefer the finance committee and took the request back for consideration.

SECURITY COUNCIL: The National Security Council met at the Prime Minister's Office on Thursday to discuss the revision of the national security strategy and cybersecurity, with Toshiharu Furukawa, the minister in charge of cybersecurity, attending.

PRINCESS AIKO: The Cabinet approved Princess Aiko's official visit to Singapore from November 17 to 21 at the invitation of President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, marking 60 years of diplomatic relations.

MEGA-SOLAR: The environment ministry announced a plan to expand Kushiro Shitsugen National Park in Hokkaido by 2,444 hectares, part of the government's measures to regulate large solar power developments and protect the wetland, which is registered under the Ramsar Convention.

KUSHIMA: Officials of the industry ministry explained the survey of documents that is the first step in choosing a disposal site for high-level nuclear waste to the city of Kushima in Miyazaki Prefecture on Friday. The mayor said the city had only listened to an explanation, and the governor said the prefecture had been told nothing in advance. The story is reported in full on the Society pages.

YONESAKA LINE: Niigata Prefecture, the city of Murakami and the village of Sekikawa, which have accepted converting their section of JR East's Yonesaka Line to buses, met JR East on Thursday and confirmed they would aim for an agreement within this fiscal year. The line has been suspended across the Yamagata-Niigata border since heavy rain in 2022; Yamagata Prefecture, attending as an observer, has not ruled out restoring the railway.

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POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at the rostrum of the House of Representatives, in a file image. The Liberal Democrats have offered to cut 31 proportional representation seats from the lower house rather than 45, and Komeito decided on Friday to move towards opposing the plan. (File photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

Komeito Moves to Oppose the Liberal Democrats' Plan to Cut 31 Lower House Seats, as Ishin Accepts It 'for Now' and the Democratic Party for the People Sees Merit

The compromise would trim the proportional representation seats by less than the 45 in the ruling parties' bill and switch to a method that gives smaller parties a better chance; the parties are to reply on Monday

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

Komeito decided on Friday to move towards opposing the Liberal Democratic Party's proposal to cut 31 seats from the proportional representation section of the House of Representatives, setting up a difficult week for a plan the governing party had offered as a compromise.

At a meeting of its political reform headquarters, Komeito left the final response to the headquarters' head, Secretary-General Makoto Nishida. The party's policy chief, Hiromasa Nakano, had said on Thursday that he had grave doubts about the plan, telling reporters that a very large change to the system was undesirable and that he greatly doubted whether it was appropriate.

The proposal

The Liberal Democrats presented the plan on Thursday at talks between the ruling and opposition parties on the electoral system for the lower house. The bill submitted by the ruling parties, the Liberal Democrats and Ishin, calls for cutting 45 proportional representation seats. The 31-seat figure was offered as a compromise that takes account of objections from the opposition.

The lower house has 465 seats, of which 289 are elected in single-seat districts and 176 by proportional representation in 11 regional blocks. Keisuke Suzuki of the Liberal Democrats said the figure was derived from projections of population decline: comparing the population in the 2015 census with the projected population in 2030 gives a fall of 6.7 per cent, and applying that rate to the 465 seats produces 31.

A new way of counting

The proposal would also change the way proportional seats are shared among parties, from the D'Hondt method now in use to a modified Sainte-Lague method, which tends to give seats more readily to smaller parties. The change reflects a proposal from Team Mirai.

The Japan Innovation Party, which had demanded the full 45-seat cut, did not oppose the compromise. Its

lawmaker Ryuna Kanemura said the party would "accept it for now". Motohisa Furukawa, the acting leader of the Democratic Party for the People, said the plan had parts that could be appreciated, citing the change of method, and that his party would take it back for internal discussion.

The timetable

The parties confirmed that they would try to reach a conclusion by the end of the month. They are to give the Liberal Democrats their views on Monday, and the next round of talks is expected on Tuesday. Suzuki said after Thursday's talks that he wanted an agreement during the coming week.

Why it matters

Cutting the number of lawmakers was a central demand of Ishin when it agreed to support the Takaichi government, and the 45-seat bill was the result. The opposition parties argue that reducing proportional seats alone would hurt smaller parties and narrow the range of views represented in the chamber, while the Liberal Democrats need enough support to pass a change to the rules of the election itself, which parties have traditionally tried to settle by broad agreement.

The change to a modified Sainte-Lague method is an attempt to answer that objection: fewer seats, but a fairer share of them for the smaller parties. Whether that is enough for Komeito, which left the coalition with the Liberal Democrats last year and now sits in opposition, will become clear on Monday.

Next steps

If the parties agree by the end of the month, the bill would still need to pass both houses before the current Diet session ends on December 12, alongside the government's bills on cutting the consumption tax on food.

Sainte-Lague

The Sainte-Lague method divides by the odd numbers, 1, 3, 5, 7 and so on. The gap between divisors is larger, so each additional seat costs a large party more votes, and smaller parties have a better chance of winning seats.

The modified version

The modified Sainte-Lague method, versions of which are used in Scandinavia, raises the first divisor above 1, to 1.4 in Norway for example. That makes the first seat a little harder to win for the very smallest parties, while keeping the method's fairness to mid-sized ones.

An example

Suppose three parties win 50,000, 30,000 and 20,000 votes for 10 seats. Under D'Hondt they win five, three and two; under pure Sainte-Lague the result is the same here, but with more parties and closer totals the odd divisors tend to move a seat or two from the largest party to smaller ones.

Why it matters now

Cutting seats from proportional representation alone would make each remaining seat harder to win, which hurts smaller parties most. Switching to a modified Sainte-Lague method is meant to offset part of that effect.

The numbers in play

The lower house has 176 proportional seats in 11 regional blocks. The ruling parties' bill would cut 45 of them; the Liberal Democrats' compromise would cut 31.

POLITICS

Koizumi Is Open to Debating Nuclear Submarines; Japan and the U.S. Agree to Close a Henoko Helipad

Crews on diesel boats cannot shower every day, the defence minister says, but no decision has been made

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said on Friday that it was important to discuss nuclear-powered submarines, comparing them with every other form of propulsion, as the government revises its three main security documents by the end of the year.

Speaking in the House of Representatives' security committee, Koizumi pointed to operational considerations such as speed and the ability to stay submerged, and to the working conditions of the crew. Nuclear submarines, he said, can remain underwater for long periods.

Showers

He noted that the Maritime Self-Defense Force's diesel-powered submarines have to limit their use of electricity, so crew members cannot shower every day.

Koizumi stressed that nothing had been decided in advance and that the study of both the advantages and the disadvantages needed to be deepened.

Nuclear deterrence

On the separate question of nuclear deterrence, he repeated that the government was not ruling out any option.

The documents

The national security strategy and two related documents are being revised this year. A government panel of experts is expected to deliver its recommendations in early December rather than November, a delay that officials say takes account of the Diet debate on the food tax cut and the question of how to fund defence.

Henoko

At a news conference earlier on Friday, Koizumi said Japan and the United States had agreed to close the Phoenix helicopter landing zone, a helipad used by U.S. military helicopters at Henoko in Nago, Okinawa Prefecture.

He did not give further details of the timing. Henoko is also the site where the government is building the facility intended to replace the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma air station in Ginowan.

Why it matters

Japan has never operated nuclear-powered submarines, and the idea touches on public sensitivities about nuclear technology as well as cost and the training of crews. Australia's decision to acquire them under the AUKUS partnership has given the debate new life in the region.

POLITICS

Security Panel Will Report in Early December, After the Diet Debates the Tax Cut

Officials fear a call for much higher defence spending in mid-debate would feed worries about the public finances

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The government's panel of experts on revising the three security documents is arranging to compile its report in early December and present it to Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, government officials said on Thursday. The panel had originally aimed for November.

The change reportedly takes account of the Diet debate on the bill to cut the consumption tax on food and drink. Several officials said the question of how the tax cut will be paid for is expected to become a point of contention between the ruling and opposition parties.

What it will say

The report is expected to call for higher defence spending to strengthen Japan's capabilities and for the government to secure stable sources of funding for it.

The next meeting

The panel's fifth meeting is being arranged for Tuesday, October 27, with defence and the economy and the funding of defence as its main themes.

Members' caution

At earlier meetings some members said any increase in defence spending should take account of fiscal soundness and of confidence in international financial markets.

The worry

An official at the Prime Minister's Office was quoted as saying that a report calling for a large increase in defence spending in the middle of the tax debate could heighten concern about the state of the public finances. The opposition may also press the government to set out how it would pay for defence alongside its plans for the tax cut.

The current target

The existing national security strategy sets a goal of spending the equivalent of 2 per cent of gross domestic product on defence and related items.

The documents

The three documents, the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy and the Defense Buildup Program, were adopted in December 2022 under Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, with the 2 per cent goal set for fiscal 2027. Takaichi brought that target forward to fiscal 2025 soon after taking office last October.

POLITICS

Ministry Asks 13 Large Social Media Firms to Stop Paying Posters Who Spread Election Falsehoods and to Flag Harmful AI Fakes

The draft guidelines, open for comment from Saturday, will apply to next spring's unified local elections

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The internal affairs ministry published on Friday draft guidelines asking 13 large social media operators to reduce the harm caused by false or misleading information that undermines the fairness of elections, including by stopping payments to people who post it.

The draft calls on the operators to suspend monetisation, the payments made to users according to how many times their posts or videos are viewed, when information that undermines the fairness of an election is posted. It also asks them to set requirements for who may receive such payments and to apply them strictly.

AI fakes

As an example of what platforms could do, the draft suggests detecting harmful images and videos generated by artificial intelligence and showing warnings to users.

Comments and timing

The ministry will accept public comments from Saturday. Internal Affairs Minister Hisayuki Fujii told a news conference that the guidelines could be finalised as early as this year and that the ministry would publicise them widely so that effective measures were taken.

The law

In July the Diet passed a revision of the Information Distribution Platform Act requiring large operators to take measures to reduce such harm, and the ministry was to set out those measures in guidelines. The revised law takes effect on March 1 next year and will apply to the unified local elections next spring.

Why now

False information and paid-for viral content have featured prominently in recent national and local elections, and the use of generative AI to create convincing fake images and videos has made the problem harder to police.

The operators

The ministry has designated large platforms, including the main video-sharing and social media services, as operators subject to the law's obligations.

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POLITICS



A news conference in the press room of the Prime Minister's Office, in a file photo. The Cabinet approved bills on Friday requiring permission for land purchases near Self-Defense Force bases and requiring companies to report their beneficial owners. (File photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

Cabinet Approves Prior Permission for Land Purchases Within About a Kilometre of Self-Defense Force Bases and on Remote Border Islands

Sales to foreign governments and military personnel would in principle be barred, deals made without permission would be void, and offenders could face up to three years in detention

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The Cabinet approved on Friday a bill to tighten the rules on buying land near facilities that matter for national security, requiring the government's permission in advance for purchases in designated zones and, in principle, barring sales to foreign governments and foreign military personnel.

The amendment to the Land Use Regulation Act would designate as controlled zones the areas within about 1,000 metres of Self-Defense Force bases and similar facilities whose functions could be seriously disrupted by a drone attack, as well as uninhabited islands on the national border. The government submitted the bill to the Diet the same day and aims to pass it during the current session.

Permission first

Anyone wishing to acquire land in a controlled zone would need the national government's permission beforehand. Transfers of ownership to foreign governments or foreign military personnel would not, in principle, be allowed. A transaction made without permission would be void, and the Legal Affairs Bureau would not register it.

Violators could face up to three years' detention or a fine of up to 3 million yen.

Who would be barred

Within the zones, people who are obliged to cooperate with the intelligence activities of a foreign government would also be barred from acquiring land, as would companies effectively controlled by foreign governments or foreign military personnel.

POLITICS

Companies Would Have to Name the People Who Really Control Them Under a Bill Aimed at Money Laundering

Shareholders with more than 25 per cent of votes or strong influence would be reported to the Legal Affairs Bureau; Onoda says she wants it passed this session

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The Cabinet approved on Friday a bill that would require companies to report the people who ultimately control them, known as their beneficial owners, to strengthen measures against money laundering.

The requirement would cover all companies except those listed on a stock exchange. The individuals to be reported are those who hold more than 25 per cent of the voting rights, or who otherwise have a strong influence over the company's decisions. Their names and addresses would be provided to the Legal Affairs Bureau and other bodies.

Keeping it current

Companies would have to report changes to the information, and deliberately false reports would be punished. Investigators and the relevant ministries could request the information when they need it.

Land

The government expects the information to help it keep track of land owned by foreign nationals through companies, a concern that also lies behind the land bill approved the same day.

If a company became ineligible through a merger or a similar event, the government would order it to transfer the land to a third party within a year. If it did not, the government would ask a court to order the land sold at auction.

Inspections

The bill would also create a system of on-site inspections, under which Cabinet Office staff could enter properties to check how the land is being used.

Background

The current law, which took full effect in 2022, requires prior notification of purchases in the most sensitive zones and lets the government investigate how land is used, but does not require permission. Concern about land acquisitions near bases by foreign buyers has been raised repeatedly in the Diet, and the Takaichi government has made economic security and the protection of sensitive sites a priority.

A companion bill

The Cabinet also approved a bill on Friday requiring companies to report their beneficial owners, which the government says will help it track foreign ownership of land. That bill is described in the report below.

The minister

Kimi Onoda, the minister for economic security, told reporters after the Cabinet meeting that she would do everything she could to have the bill passed during the current Diet session.

Why it matters

Shell companies whose real owners are hidden are a common tool for laundering money and evading sanctions, and international bodies have long urged Japan to make information on beneficial owners easier for the authorities to obtain.

Exemptions

Listed companies, whose large shareholdings must already be disclosed under securities law, are outside the scope of the bill.

POLITICS

Experts Discuss Making People Who Lobby for Foreign Governments Register, While Some Warn of Limits on Freedom

The government plans bills on strengthening intelligence as early as next year's ordinary Diet session

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

Experts advising the government on strengthening Japan's intelligence capabilities discussed the need for a foreign agent registration system, under which people who lobby on behalf of a foreign government would have to register, according to the summary of the panel's first meeting released on Thursday.

The panel, chaired by Toshiya Watanabe, a professor

emeritus at the University of Tokyo, first met on September 28.

Defining the targets

Members said that if penalties were attached to such a system, it would be important to define clearly who it covered.

Freedom

Some participants raised concerns that strengthening intelligence activities could restrict the freedoms of citizens.

Foreign interference

One expert said foreign interference in elections had become serious and that cooperation between China and Russia had grown very strong.

Next steps

Based on the panel's discussions, the government plans to submit related bills as early as the ordinary Diet session next year.

Abroad

The United States has required agents of foreign principals to register since 1938, and Australia and Britain have introduced similar schemes in recent years. Critics in those countries have argued over how broadly the rules should apply to journalists, academics and non-profit groups.

POLITICS

Paper First for Younger Pupils: Draft Guidelines Make Hybrid Textbooks the Norm From 2030 and Bar Fully Digital Ones Below Fifth Grade

Fully digital textbooks would be allowed only for some subjects, such as English, music and art, from the fifth grade up

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The education ministry presented on Thursday a draft of guidelines for the textbooks to be used from fiscal 2030, making hybrid textbooks, which combine paper and digital material in one book, the standard for every subject from elementary through high school.

Under the draft, presented to an expert panel, fully digital textbooks would not be permitted for pupils in the fourth grade of elementary school or below. From the fifth grade up, they would be allowed only for certain subjects.

Paper at the centre

For the fourth grade and below, hybrid textbooks should be mainly paper, with the digital part playing a supplementary role. The Yomiuri Shimbun described the approach as paper-centred, with digital material as a supplement.

Where digital fits

Fully digital textbooks would be allowed for English as a foreign language from the fifth grade, and for practical subjects such as music and art. In those subjects even hybrid textbooks could be built around digital content.

The law

In June the Diet revised the School Education Act and related laws to make digital materials official textbooks. From fiscal 2030, textbooks will come in three forms: paper only, digital only and hybrid.

How it will be used

The guidelines will guide publishers and the boards of education that choose textbooks. The panel is expected to finalise them by the end of the year.

The thinking

The draft takes account of children's stages of development and of the subjects in which digital material is especially effective.

The debate

Experts quoted by Kyodo News said the cautious start reflected concern about relying too heavily on screens, and that the effects would need to be checked continuously.

POLITICS

Vice-Capital Law Takes Effect October 30; Hokkaido, Aichi, Osaka and Fukuoka Likely to Qualify

A prefecture would need a designated city with at least 1.2 per cent of the national population

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The government decided at Friday's Cabinet meeting that the law on creating a vice-capital, a city that could take over the functions of the capital if Tokyo were hit by a major disaster, would take effect on

October 30.

The law is also intended to ease the concentration of people and functions in Tokyo.

Who qualifies

Under the requirement, a prefecture would qualify if it contains a government-designated city with at least 1.2 per cent of the national population. The requirement is to be set by cabinet order as early as next week. Four prefectures are expected to qualify: Hokkaido, Aichi, Osaka and Fukuoka.

How it works

Once the law takes effect, the prime minister will designate a vice-capital on application from prefectures that meet the requirements.

The timetable

In November the government plans to present a schedule for the designation and its basic thinking on what a vice-capital should be. A basic policy for developing the vice-capital is to be compiled around October next year.

Osaka's ambition

The idea has long been championed by the Japan Innovation Party, whose roots are in Osaka, and it was among the conditions the party set for supporting the Takaichi government.

The competition

With four prefectures expected to qualify, the designation could become a contest between regions, each arguing that its city is best placed to back up Tokyo.

POLITICS

Vietnam's To Lam Will Visit From November 8 to 11; Japan and Bangladesh Are Set to Agree a 'New Cooperation Concept'

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The government announced on Friday that To Lam, the general secretary of Vietnam's Communist Party and the country's top leader, will visit Japan from November 8 to 11.

It will be one of the most important visits by a foreign leader this autumn. Japan and Vietnam upgraded their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2023, and Japan is among Vietnam's largest sources of development aid and investment.

Bangladesh

Japan and Bangladesh are set to agree on a "new cooperation concept", with the two countries' leaders issuing a joint statement on four pillars including infrastructure and energy, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

India

Japan and India are also preparing two-plus-two talks of their foreign and defence ministers in Tokyo next month.

Peru

Peru's President Keiko Fujimori is due in Japan on November 19 and 20.

Singapore

Princess Aiko's official visit to Singapore from November 17 to 21, approved by the Cabinet on Friday, will mark 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The pattern

The run of visits reflects the government's effort to deepen ties with South and Southeast Asia at a time of tension with China, and to present Japan as a partner for infrastructure, energy and security.

The Diet

Officials had said this week that To Lam was expected to address the Diet during his visit.

POLITICS

Lower House Constitution Commission Chairman Urges Members to Work Towards a Consensus on Revision

Keiji Furuya reported on a trip to Switzerland, Hungary and Italy and made his support for revision plain

By Michael Hayes | Political Correspondent

The Commission on the Constitution of the House of Representatives held its first session of the current Diet on Thursday, and its chairman, Keiji Furuya of the Liberal Democrats, urged members to move their

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discussions towards consolidating their views.

Furuya said the commission's role was to give the public the opportunity of a national referendum, so that citizens themselves could decide whether the Constitution should be revised.

The trip

Reporting on the commission's fact-finding trip to Europe in September, which visited Switzerland, Hungary and Italy, Furuya also gave his own view and made clear his support for revision. Lawmakers from Ishin, the Democratic Party for the People and Team Mirai also took part.

Other views

Yoshitaka Shindo of the Liberal Democrats, who went on the trip, said he felt that revision was needed now. Toru Kunishige, who joined the trip for the Centrist Reform Alliance and is now with Komeito, said the content and effects of any revision had to be examined carefully.

The numbers

A revision requires the approval of two-thirds of the members of each house and then a majority in a national referendum. The Constitution has never been amended since it took effect in 1947.

The topics

Parties that favour revision have focused on adding a clause on emergencies, including extending lawmakers' terms when an election cannot be held, and on writing the Self-Defense Forces into the Constitution. Opponents argue that neither is necessary.

Next

The commission usually meets on Thursdays while the Diet is in session.

POLITICS

Former Fukuoka Assembly Deputy Speaker Says He Paid About 6 Million Yen, Deepening Suspicion That Posts Were Bought

He testified that he handed 5 million yen to a senior Liberal Democrat on his faction leader's instructions in 2012
By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

A former deputy speaker of the Fukuoka Prefectural Assembly told a news conference on Friday that he had paid about 6 million yen in total in connection with posts in the assembly, deepening suspicion that money changed hands over assembly positions for many years.

The former member said that in May 2012, before he became deputy speaker, he had followed the instructions of the head of the faction he then belonged to and handed 5 million yen to a senior figure in the Liberal Democrats' group in the assembly, a former speaker.

Other testimony

On Thursday, a former chairman of the assembly's agriculture committee testified that he had paid 800,000 yen for golf in connection with the same matter.

Investigations

A third-party committee has begun an investigation, and the assembly has set up a special investigative committee under the Local Autonomy Act, which can compel testimony.

The question

The key question is how far the verification of the claims will go.

Why it matters

Assembly posts such as speaker and deputy speaker carry status and higher pay, and allegations that they were traded for money go to the heart of trust in local politics.

Many years

The testimony so far concerns payments made more than a decade ago. Kyodo News said it deepened suspicion that money changed hands over posts across the assembly for many years.

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POLITICS

Nakagawa Town Assembly Demands an Explanation From Former Agriculture Minister Yana Over His 'Budget Cut' Remark

The transport ministry says it received 554 requests on roads from lawmakers in a year, and again denies Yana swayed allocations
By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The assembly of Nakagawa, a town in Tochigi Prefecture, unanimously passed a resolution on Friday demanding an explanation from Kazuo Yana, the former agriculture minister, over his remark that he had cut the town's road budget.

In May, at a gathering in Otawara in the same prefecture, Yana said the road budgets for Nasukarasuyama and Nakagawa for the current fiscal year had been drastically cut. He made the remark after a local mayor did not support him in the House of Representatives election in February. He retracted it and apologised on October 5.

The mayor

Nakagawa's mayor said residents were now anxious about their livelihoods and had asked Yana for a careful explanation to the community. Nasukarasuyama's assembly passed a resolution protesting against the remark by a majority on October 14, and the mayor of Nasushiobara has said Yana should give an explanation people can accept.

554 requests

In the House of Councillors on Thursday, the transport ministry said it had received 554 requests about road projects from ruling and opposition lawmakers in the year to the end of September, counting those sent through its Diet liaison office.

Renho of the Constitutional Democrats, who asked for the figure, said it did not show the full picture because requests made outside the liaison office were not included.

Inquiries not recorded

The head of the ministry's road bureau said the ministry did not keep records of lawmakers' informal inquiries, but that his impression was that inquiries about budget allocations came a few times a month.

The ministry's position

The ministry said allocations were decided by weighing factors including requests from local governments, and again denied that Yana had influenced them. Yana asked officials about the two municipalities' allocations in mid-February, before telling the May meeting that he had cut them.

POLITICS

Iga Assembly Committee Finds the Mayor Harassed Staff and Plans a Criminal Complaint Over His Testimony

Mayor Inamori, 42, calls the finding unfair and says its conclusion was decided in advance
By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

A special investigative committee of the city assembly of Iga, in Mie Prefecture, compiled a report on Friday finding that remarks made by Mayor Inamori, 42, to city employees amounted to power harassment.

The committee, set up under Article 100 of the Local Autonomy Act, which gives assemblies the power to compel testimony, also said it planned to file a criminal complaint against the mayor on suspicion of violating the act by giving false testimony.

The mayor's response

Inamori said the committee's finding was unfair and that its conclusion had been decided in advance.

The process

A criminal complaint would be examined by the police and prosecutors, who would decide whether to pursue it.

Power harassment

Japanese law has required employers, including local governments, to take measures against power harassment, the abuse of a superior position to cause mental or physical distress, since 2020 for large employers and 2022 for smaller ones.

Similar cases

Allegations of harassment by local leaders have drawn intense attention since the case of Hyogo Governor Motohiko Saito, whose conduct towards staff was examined by the prefectural assembly's own

Article 100 committee in 2024.

The committee's powers

Article 100 committees can summon witnesses and require them to give evidence, and witnesses who lie under oath can be prosecuted, which is why the committee's finding on the mayor's testimony could lead to a criminal case.

POLITICS

U.S. Diplomat Visits the Fukui Beach Where Yasushi and Fukie Chimura Were Abducted, and Pledges Cooperation

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

A first secretary at the United States Embassy in Japan visited the area near Obama Park in Obama, Fukui Prefecture, on Thursday, where Yasushi Chimura and his future wife, Fukie, both now 71, were abducted by North Korea in 1978.

The diplomat told the Fukui prefectural police officers accompanying him that he was willing to cooperate in resolving the abduction issue.

At the site

He received a detailed explanation of the abduction from a police officer and asked how Yasushi Chimura was doing now.

The mayor

He then met the mayor of Obama, who told reporters afterwards that the diplomat had conveyed a strong commitment to considering every measure the United States could take.

Sado

In May last year the same diplomat visited Sado, in Niigata Prefecture, where he met Hitomi Soga, 67, who was abducted there in 1978, and toured the site.

The Chimuras

The couple were among the five abductees who returned to Japan in 2002, after North Korea admitted to the abductions. The Japanese government says 17 of its citizens were abducted and that 12 have not returned.

Why it matters

Japan has sought the support of the United States for resolving the issue, and successive American presidents have met the families of abductees.

POLITICS

U.S. Ambassador Glass Condemns Russia's Detention of the Hokkaido Shimbun Reporter as an Attempt to Silence Journalism

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

George Glass, the United States ambassador to Japan, has condemned Russia's detention of a reporter from the Hokkaido Shimbun, calling it a blatant attempt to intimidate and silence independent journalism.

In a post on X on Wednesday, Glass said the United States condemned Russia for detaining reporters and for refusing consular visits by Japanese diplomats.

The detention

The reporter was detained on October 13 in Sakhalin, in Russia's Far East. The Russian authorities suspect him of espionage.

Japan's demand

The Japanese government has asked Russia to release him immediately and to allow early consular access.

No visit yet

According to the Japanese Embassy in Russia, there was still no prospect of a consular visit being arranged as of Thursday morning.

Russia's reply

Russia's foreign ministry said this week it would "try to provide information" about the reporter.

The ally's voice

The ambassador's statement adds American weight to Japan's demands, and it came as Russia, the United States and Ukraine prepare to resume talks on ending the war.

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POLITICS

Tottori Governor Asks the Nuclear Regulator to Review Plans to Burn MOX Fuel at Shimane Strictly

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Tottori Governor Shinji Hirai visited the Nuclear Regulation Authority in Minato, Tokyo, on Thursday and handed officials a written request for a strict review of Chugoku Electric Power's plan to use plutonium-thermal power generation at Unit 2 of the Shimane nuclear power station in Matsue.

Hirai told reporters he wanted to confirm whether the plant was truly safe, and asked the regulator to review the plan carefully and address the concerns of residents in neighbouring Tottori Prefecture.

A joint request

The request was submitted together with the mayors of Yonago and Sakaiminato, two cities in Tottori within 30 kilometres of the plant. It asks the regulator to examine the operating rules, including the safety regulations, thoroughly and to explain its findings clearly to residents.

Pluthermal

Plutonium-thermal generation recovers plutonium and uranium from spent fuel, turns them into mixed-oxide, or MOX, fuel and burns it in ordinary reactors.

The timetable

Chugoku Electric told the city of Matsue in February that it expected to begin using MOX fuel at Unit 2 in fiscal 2029. Tottori protested that it had not received a detailed explanation.

Tottori's role

In mid-October Hirai accepted the company's application for the regulator's review, while saying the final decision would be made after considering the results of the review and other factors.

The plant

Shimane Unit 2 restarted in December 2024. Chugoku Electric opened its safety measures at the plant to the media this week, saying it wanted to earn the trust of the region.

The application

On Friday Chugoku Electric submitted the detailed design for using MOX fuel at Unit 2 to the regulator and applied for approval of its design and construction plans, Kyodo News reported.

POLITICS

Finance Ministry Advisers Say Shrinking High Schools Is 'Unavoidable' and Propose Higher Tuition at National Universities

Pupil numbers have fallen by 29 per cent since 2001, but the number of schools by only 13 per cent
By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

A subcommittee of the Fiscal System Council, which advises the finance minister, said on Thursday that reducing the size of Japan's high school system was unavoidable as the number of children falls, and called for the scale and location of schools to be made more efficient.

The recommendation is aimed at putting the public finances on a sounder footing. The government is spending large sums to make high school tuition effectively free.

The numbers

According to the finance ministry, there were 2.874 million high school students in 2025, 29.3 per cent fewer than in 2001. The number of high schools, 4,761, fell by only 13.1 per cent over the same period, so schools with relatively few pupils make up a growing share.

Universities first

The council had previously called for the number of universities to be reduced. It now argues that high schools must shrink too, in line with each region's education and industrial policies.

Tuition

The finance ministry has also proposed that national universities be encouraged to raise their standard tuition fees in line with prices and wages, the Asahi Shimbun reported.

The press conference

Hiroya Masuda, the subcommittee's acting chairman and a former internal affairs minister, spoke to

POLITICS

reporters at the finance ministry on Thursday afternoon.

The other side

Education officials and local governments argue that small schools are often the only ones within reach in rural areas, and that closing them can speed the decline of the communities around them. At least 145 prefectural high schools are already set to close by 2040.

POLITICS

Health Ministry Considers Letting Single Parents on Welfare Keep a Car While Their Children Are Young

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The health ministry is considering relaxing the rules that in principle bar people receiving public assistance from owning a car, for households with children who have not yet started school, including single-parent families, the Asahi Shimbun reported on Friday.

Under the current rules, welfare recipients are generally required to give up cars, which are treated as assets that should be sold to cover living costs. Exceptions exist for people with disabilities and for those who live in areas with poor public transport and need a car to commute.

The change

The ministry is considering allowing such households to keep a car, the Asahi said. Kyodo News, citing sources, reported that the easing would cover single parents raising children below school age in areas where a car is essential for child care or work; large cities with good public transport are not expected to be included.

The reason

The aim is to let parents drive their children to nursery and gain more time for work, helping them to become self-reliant. The ministry judged that relying on public transport makes the nursery run and the commute take longer, limits working hours and can force families to change nurseries, Kyodo said.

Supreme Court

The report came on the day the Supreme Court again ruled that the government's cuts to welfare benefits from 2013 had been illegal. That ruling is reported on the Society pages.

Recipients

About 2 million people receive public assistance in Japan, and a large share of recipient households are elderly people living alone.

Next

The ministry is working out the conditions and consulting the local governments that share the cost of welfare payments, and aims to revise the rules by the end of the year, according to Kyodo.

INTERNATIONAL

Finland Licenses Onkalo, the World's First Final Repository for Spent Nuclear Fuel, 430 Metres Under an Island

It could start operating early next year; in Japan, the government explained the first stage of site selection to Kushima on Friday

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The Finnish government granted an operating licence on Thursday to Onkalo, a final disposal facility for high-level radioactive waste from nuclear power stations, making it the first such repository in the world to be allowed to operate.

The facility, about 430 metres underground, is designed to isolate the waste for more than 100,000 years. It could begin operating as early as the start of next year.

How it works

Spent nuclear fuel will be sealed in double canisters of copper and cast iron, surrounded by clay and buried in the bedrock, where it will stay isolated until its radioactivity falls to safe levels.

The site

Onkalo lies on the island of Olkiluoto in south-western Finland, in bedrock formed about 1.9 billion years ago, where the risk of major earthquakes or volcanic eruptions is considered almost nil.

Reactions

Ilkka Poikolainen, chief executive of Posiva, the company that runs the facility, called it a historic day for the company and for Finland. The minister for climate and the environment said ensuring the safety of nuclear energy was a responsibility owed to future generations. The licence runs until the end of 2070.

Japan's search

Japan has yet to choose a site for its own repository. On Friday officials of the industry ministry explained the first stage of the selection process, a survey of documents, to the city of Kushima in Miyazaki Prefecture. Surveys of this kind have been carried out in Suttsu and Kamoenai in Hokkaido, Genkai in Saga Prefecture, Minamitorishima in Tokyo and Hitachiomiya in Ibaraki Prefecture.

Geology

Japan's geology is far more active than Finland's, which is one reason the search has been slow and contentious.

The waste

Japan plans to reprocess its spent fuel and bury the vitrified waste that remains, while Finland buries the spent fuel itself.

Two decades of work

Excavation at Onkalo began in 2004, and the Finnish government granted a licence to build the repository in 2015. Posiva began a trial run in 2024.

Whose waste

The spent fuel will come from Finland's nuclear power stations at Olkiluoto and Loviisa, which are run by Posiva's owners, Teollisuuden Voima and Fortum.

Sweden

Sweden's government approved a similar repository at Forsmark, north of Stockholm, in 2022.

INTERNATIONAL

Putin Says Resumed Talks With the U.S. and Ukraine Would Cover Security After a Peace Deal, and Agrees It Must Involve All of Europe

Russia is ready to meet in mid-November; Zelensky will coordinate dates with the U.S. envoy and hopes for a three-way summit at the G20 in Florida

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that if talks among the United States, Ukraine and Russia resume, their purpose would be to discuss security arrangements for Ukraine and Russia after a peace agreement is reached.

He made the remarks in an interview with Russian state television. On Wednesday Putin met Steve Witkoff, the American special envoy for the peace negotiations, in Russia, and told him Russia was ready to resume the three-way talks in mid-November.

All of Europe

Putin said that in the meeting the American side had argued that discussing security between Ukraine and Russia required a discussion covering the whole of Europe, and that he had agreed.

He described Ukrainians as a very closely related people and said Russia was willing to talk with Ukraine to find ways out of the current difficult and complicated situation.

Ukraine's reply

President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Thursday that he would coordinate a schedule with Witkoff on Friday. He again expressed hope for a meeting of the three countries' leaders alongside the summit of the Group of 20 in Florida in December.

Fighting continues

Russian forces launched a large-scale attack on Ukraine, killing two people and injuring more than 30, NHK reported.

Japan

Japan has supported Ukraine with economic and humanitarian aid and sanctions on Russia, while Russia has criticised the delivery by a Japanese company of interceptor drones to Ukraine. A Hokkaido Shimbun reporter detained in Sakhalin on October 13 remains in custody.

The envoy

Witkoff thanked Putin this week for freeing Stephen Hubbard, an American former teacher who had lived

in Japan, and called him a humanitarian, drawing criticism in Washington.

What to watch

Whether a date is fixed for the talks, and whether Europe is given a seat at the table, will show how far the latest diplomacy can go.

INTERNATIONAL

U.S. and Israel Have Drawn Up Plans to Resume Strikes on Iran After the Midterms, The New York Times Reports

Iran's Revolutionary Guards threaten U.S. bases if Washington keeps urging ships through the Strait of Hormuz

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The American and Israeli militaries have drawn up a specific plan to resume attacks on Iran after the United States' midterm elections on November 3, The New York Times reported on Wednesday, citing several sources.

Talks aimed at ending the fighting have stalled, and the plan is reportedly meant to pressure Iran into concessions. It is not clear whether President Donald Trump will approve it.

Preparations

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth recently visited Israel and discussed resuming the attacks with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, according to the report. American forces are said to be continuing to deploy troops and equipment until early November, and the two militaries have already held an exercise over Iraqi airspace.

Targets

Energy facilities, nuclear sites and storage sites for missiles and drones are expected to be targeted. Oil facilities may be excluded, reflecting Trump's reported wish to avoid pushing up petrol prices further.

Hormuz

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said on Thursday that the United States was inciting ships to use an "illegal route" through the Strait of Hormuz, and warned that if this continued Iran would attack American military bases in the Middle East, Iran's state news agency IRNA reported.

Japan's stake

Most of the crude oil Japan imports comes from the Middle East, much of it through the Strait of Hormuz, and New York oil prices have risen close to 100 dollars a barrel. A government white paper on energy said this week that the situation in the Middle East had exposed Japan's weak points.

Embassy staff

The State Department ordered some staff at the U.S. embassy in Saudi Arabia to leave on Tuesday, citing attacks by the Houthis.

At home

The conflict has also pushed up diesel prices in American farm states, where Trump's party is fighting unexpectedly close races before the midterms.

INTERNATIONAL

Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon, a Likely Conservative Presidential Candidate, Is Acquitted on Appeal of Breaking Political Funds Law

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

The Seoul High Court on Friday overturned the conviction of Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon for violating South Korea's political funds law, acquitting a politician regarded as a likely presidential candidate for the main opposition People Power Party.

Oh, a conservative, had been accused of receiving opinion poll results from a political broker and having a supporter pay for them.

The lower court

Prosecutors had sought a prison sentence of one year and six months. In July the Seoul Central District Court convicted Oh and fined him 10 million won, about 1.2 million yen.

What was at stake

Oh won a fifth term as mayor in the unified local elections in June. Under the law, a fine of 1 million won or more would have cost him his post and barred him from standing for office for five years, so the appeal was closely watched for its effect on South

Korean politics.

The broker

The case grew out of investigations into the political broker, whose dealings with conservative politicians became a major issue in South Korean politics.

Next

Prosecutors can appeal to the Supreme Court.

Politics

The acquittal removes, for now, the threat to his post and to his eligibility to run, as the People Power Party looks for a candidate for the next presidential election.

INTERNATIONAL

Aung San Suu Kyi Speaks to Her Son for the First Time Since the 2021 Coup

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Kim Aris, the younger son of Myanmar's detained democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, said on Thursday that he had been able to speak to his mother for the first time in more than five years.

Aris, who lives in London, wrote on Facebook that hearing her voice again meant more than he could put into words. The content and the timing of the call were not disclosed.

The photograph

Myanmar's embassy in Britain, which represents the military government, released a photograph of Aris on the telephone.

Detention

Suu Kyi, now 81, remains under house arrest. She was detained when the military seized power in a coup in February 2021, when she was state counsellor and foreign minister, and was later sentenced to long prison terms on charges her supporters say were politically motivated.

His campaign

Aris has campaigned for his mother's release and had said he did not know whether she was in good health.

The military

Myanmar's military held elections from late 2025 that its critics called neither free nor fair.

No explanation

The military government did not explain why the call had been allowed.

INTERNATIONAL

Israel Votes on Tuesday, With Netanyahu Seeking Another Term After Two Years of War

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

Israelis go to the polls on Tuesday, October 27, in a general election in which the central question is whether Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will be returned to power, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

The vote follows years of war in Gaza and conflict with Iran and its allies, and the outcome will shape Israel's approach to the region.

The system

Israel's 120-seat Knesset is elected by nationwide proportional representation, and no party has ever won a majority on its own, so the prime minister is the leader who can assemble a coalition.

Netanyahu

Netanyahu is Israel's longest-serving prime minister and has led governments for most of the period since 2009. He is on trial on corruption charges, which he denies.

His critics

His opponents have blamed him for the security failures that preceded the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023, which he has said will be examined after the wars end.

Iran

The New York Times reported this week that the American and Israeli militaries had drawn up plans to resume strikes on Iran after the American midterm elections, which will follow the Israeli vote by a week.

Coalitions

Coalition talks after Israeli elections often take weeks, and the result may not be clear for some time after the vote.

INTERNATIONAL



Riot police and protesters in a haze of tear gas on a Paris street, in a file image. President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday that demonstrations not organised by labour unions would be restricted for several days, a week after the riots began. (File image: WPM Productions)

INTERNATIONAL

Macron Restricts Demonstrations for Several Days as France's Riots Enter a Second Week, but Lets Union Marches in Paris Go Ahead

Prefects will ban rallies not organised by unions where they see no legitimate grounds; Paris will deploy about 20 per cent more officers than on the night the riots began, with armoured vehicles and soldiers at public buildings
By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday that demonstrations in France would be restricted for the next few days, as the government tried to show it was restoring order after a week of riots that have accompanied protests across the country.

Speaking after a meeting with the intelligence services at the Elysee Palace in Paris, Macron said that demonstrations and rallies not organised by labour unions would be banned as far as possible. Prefects, the state's representatives in each department, would refuse applications from people they judged to have no legitimate grounds for demonstrating.

Protecting city centres

Macron said the aim was to protect city centres, and especially shops and public buildings. Applications from labour unions would be examined case by case by the prefects.

Saturday

Demonstrations had been called across France for Saturday, October 24, which marks one week since the riots began. Left-wing activists objected to the restrictions.

In Paris, the police prefecture approved Saturday's march organised by the General Confederation of Labour, the CGT, and other groups. According to French media, the authorities were deploying about

INTERNATIONAL

Houthis Say They Struck Saudi Arabia's Defence Ministry, Two Airports and an Aramco Site; Japan Advises Against Travel to Riyadh

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Yemen's Houthi movement, which is aligned with Iran, said on Thursday that it had struck targets across Saudi Arabia with ballistic missiles and drones over the previous 48 hours, including the defence ministry building in the capital, Riyadh.

The Houthis said they also hit airports in Dammam, in the east of the kingdom, and Abha, in the south-west, and facilities linked to the state oil company Saudi Aramco in Yanbu, on the Red Sea coast.

Claims and damage

The group said its attacks on the defence ministry and Abha airport hit their targets, and that a fire broke out at an Aramco-related facility in Yanbu. The extent of the damage was not known.

Casualties

According to the Saudi authorities, Dammam airport was attacked on Wednesday, killing two people and injuring others. The Yomiuri Shimbun put the death toll from the latest attacks at four.

The conflict

Saudi Arabia has been attacking the Houthis in coordination with Yemen's internationally recognised interim government, and the Houthis have responded with repeated attacks on Saudi airports and oil facilities.

Travel advice

Japan's foreign ministry advised against all travel to Riyadh, citing the continuing attacks. On Tuesday the

20 per cent more officers than on October 17, when the riots broke out, along with armoured vehicles and anti-terrorism military units at public facilities.

Limoges

Among the worst damage of the week was the burning of the city hall in Limoges, a symbol of the city in central France, by rioters, the Asahi Shimbun reported.

Distrust

Public distrust of the security response has grown during the week, and the restrictions are intended to show that the state is in control. Macron, speaking in Qatar earlier in the week, had said that any further violence would be stopped.

The markets

The unrest has added to pressure on France's finances. The yield on the government's 10-year bonds rose above 5 per cent this week for the first time since 2002, and long-term interest rates in Japan, the United States and Europe have risen to historically high levels, with the attacks on Iran and the French riots among the reasons cited by analysts.

U.S. State Department ordered some embassy staff and their families to leave Saudi Arabia.

Football

The organisers of the AFC Asian Cup, which Saudi Arabia is due to host in January and February, said on Thursday that the tournament remained on schedule, though a one-year postponement is being discussed.

Oil

Attacks on Saudi oil facilities add to concerns about supplies from the Middle East, which New York oil prices reflected this week.

INTERNATIONAL

European Parliament Awards the Sakharov Prize to the International Criminal Court, Led by Tomoko Akane, as It Faces U.S. Sanctions

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The European Parliament said on Thursday that it would award this year's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to the International Criminal Court and its staff, as the court, led by its Japanese president, Tomoko Akane, faces a threat to its survival from American sanctions.

The prize honours people and groups who defend human rights and the rule of law. The parliament's president, Roberta Metsola, said the award recognised the court's important work in upholding international law and justice, and that the European Union respected multilateralism and international organisations.

Akane's thanks

In a statement, Akane thanked the parliament for the award, noting that it came while the court faced unprecedented difficulties.

The ceremony

The prize will be presented in mid-December at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

The other finalists

The court was shortlisted with Tundu Lissu, an opposition leader in Tanzania, and the twin sisters Taraneh and Romina Rahimi, who were sentenced to death, among other penalties, after taking part in anti-government protests in Iran.

The prize

The prize is named after Andrei Sakharov, the Soviet physicist and dissident. Its first laureates, in 1988, included Nelson Mandela, then imprisoned for opposing apartheid in South Africa.

The sanctions

The United States has imposed sanctions on judges and officials of the court over its investigations, and the EU has said it will keep working with Japan to have them lifted.

The president

Akane, a former Japanese prosecutor, joined the court as a judge in 2018 and became its president in March 2024. Japan is the court's largest financial contributor.

INTERNATIONAL

World in Brief

By the International Desk

BEIJING: China's anti-corruption agencies said on Thursday they were investigating Xia Linmao, a vice-mayor of Beijing and former party chief of the city's Miyun and Dongcheng districts, on suspicion of serious violations of discipline and the law, wording that usually indicates corruption.

LONG MARCH: President Xi Jinping spoke at a ceremony in the Great Hall of the People on Thursday marking 90 years since the Long March, attended by all seven members of the Communist Party's top leadership, as Beijing stresses party unity before next year's congress.

UKRAINE: Russian forces carried out a large-scale attack on Ukraine, killing two people and injuring more than 30, NHK reported.

PERSUASION STUDY: The journal Science corrected a 2024 paper showing that conversations with an AI reduced belief in conspiracy theories; the authors said the main findings stood, with the reduction now about 22 per cent among 2,044 participants.

BARCLAYS: The British bank said it would cut about 5,000 jobs, about 5 per cent of its workforce, this year, citing efficiency gains from artificial intelligence; about 1,000 have already gone.

EUROPEAN CARS: New car registrations in the European Union rose 9.3 per cent in September to 971,048, with battery electric cars up 72.9 per cent; Toyota sold 67,912 cars, BYD's sales doubled and Tesla's rose 78.6 per cent.

PRIMORYE: President Vladimir Putin appointed Shestakov as acting governor of Primorsky Krai, the Far Eastern region that includes Vladivostok.

WEST BANK: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the area around a shooting in the southern West Bank, in which five people were injured on Friday, to be sealed off, and told the military to prepare to close the whole territory, Israeli media reported.

RUSSIAN DIESEL: A Maltese-flagged tanker carrying Russian diesel is sailing from Russia to New York, Reuters reported. The American and Russian leaders agreed this month that Russia would supply diesel to the United States and international markets.

OIL: New York crude rose back into the 99-dollar range on Thursday as concerns grew about exports from the Middle East.

WALL STREET: The Nasdaq Composite fell 694.00 points to 26,008.86 on Thursday as investors sold AI shares, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average edged up 11.89 points, supported by consumer stocks such as Procter & Gamble and Home Depot.

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INTERNATIONAL

South Korea Proposes Military Talks With the North on the Demarcation Line, as Kim Yo Jong Puts Troops on 'Standby'

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

South Korea's defence ministry said on Friday that it would propose talks between the military authorities of the two Koreas to confirm the location of the military demarcation line and to discuss ways of preventing accidental clashes.

The proposal comes as tension rises along the border. On Thursday Kim Yo Jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and a senior official of the ruling Workers' Party, said North Korea's new measures near the demarcation line would enter a "mission standby posture", according to the Korean Central News Agency.

Loudspeakers

North Korea is preparing to resume propaganda broadcasts from loudspeakers this month, which it describes as part of psychological warfare against the South.

A landmine

A landmine exploded near the demarcation line, injuring South Korean soldiers. The South Korean military has blamed North Korea, which denies involvement.

Insults

A South Korean ruling party lawmaker who advises the presidential office on defence called Kim Yo Jong a brazen thief and demanded an apology. She replied that he should stop talking nonsense and shut his mouth.

The line

The demarcation line, set in the 1953 armistice, is marked on the ground by signs, many of which have been lost over the decades, and soldiers on both sides have crossed it by mistake in recent years.

Talks

The two Koreas' militaries have not held general-level talks since 2018, and it is not clear whether the North will respond to the proposal.

INTERNATIONAL

France Confirms the World's First Human Infection With Shamonda Virus, a Cattle Disease Carried by Biting Midges

The patient, who had a weakened immune system, died in early October; officials say there is no risk to the public

By the International Desk

France's health and agriculture ministries announced on Thursday that a person in France had been infected with Shamonda virus, the first confirmed human case of the virus anywhere in the world.

The virus normally infects cattle and is carried to animals mainly by tiny biting midges, known in Japanese as nukaka.

The patient

The patient, who had a weakened immune system and was being treated for a serious illness at a hospital in Lyon, died in early October after developing complications in the brain. Officials said these were very likely linked to the infection.

Where

The patient may have been bitten by infected midges in eastern France, where infections in animals were confirmed between spring and summer this year.

No public risk

The ministries said human infection had never been confirmed before, described the case as exceptional and said no risk to public health had been identified.

The virus

Shamonda virus was first identified in Nigeria in the 1960s. Infections in cattle have been recorded in parts of Africa and in Japan, and the virus was detected in Europe, including France, for the first time this summer.

Its relatives

Shamonda virus belongs to the same group of viruses as Akabane virus, which causes abnormal births in cattle and is well known to livestock farmers in Japan.

INTERNATIONAL



A SpaceX Dragon spacecraft in orbit above the Earth. SpaceX, led by Elon Musk, also runs the Starlink satellite network, whose service for Ukraine's forces President Donald Trump said on Thursday had been restored. (Photo: NASA)

INTERNATIONAL

Trump Says Musk Has Restored Starlink for Ukraine's Forces After a Speed Limit Left Some Interceptors Unable to Respond

The Wall Street Journal reported that the president phoned Musk to ask for the restriction to be lifted; service was close to normal on Thursday

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

President Donald Trump said on Thursday that Elon Musk, who leads SpaceX, had restored service on its Starlink satellite network after restricting its use. Ukraine's forces rely on Starlink in their fight against Russia.

Trump told reporters at the White House that Musk had reversed the restriction. Asked whether he had spoken to Musk, he avoided answering.

The phone call

The Wall Street Journal reported that Trump had telephoned Musk to ask for the restriction to be lifted. According to the newspaper, Trump complained to Musk on Wednesday that drones and other vehicles carrying Starlink terminals were capped at a speed of about 160 km/h.

Interceptors

The restriction prevented some of Ukraine's interceptor equipment from responding to Russian attacks, according to the report. As of Thursday, communications had not fully recovered but were said to be close to normal.

Earlier reports

The Journal had reported on Tuesday that Musk ordered the restriction. Trump had reportedly told aides and allies earlier in the week that he wanted it lifted.

INTERNATIONAL

Magnitude 7.0 Earthquake in Tibet Kills 16 and Injures 46 in Nagqu

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

An earthquake of magnitude 7.0 struck Nagqu, in China's Tibet Autonomous Region, at 10:33 p.m. local time on Thursday, 11:33 p.m. in Japan, killing 16 people and injuring 46, China Central Television reported on Friday.

The quake was about 10 kilometres deep, according to the state news agency Xinhua, which reported that buildings had collapsed.

Rescue

China's Ministry of Emergency Management decided on Thursday night to send personnel to the area. Photographs released by Xinhua on Friday showed rescue teams searching collapsed buildings in Nagqu. The Asahi Shimbun said posts on social media showed residents searching for people trapped in collapsed houses.

The region

Nagqu lies on the high plateau of northern Tibet, at an altitude of more than 4,000 metres, where cold weather complicates rescue work at this time of year.

Earthquake country

The Tibetan Plateau is pushed upward by the collision of the Indian and Eurasian plates, and large earthquakes are frequent. In January 2025 a magnitude 7.1 earthquake near Shigatse, in the south of the region, killed more than 120 people.

Aftershocks

Large earthquakes in the region are often followed by strong aftershocks for days, adding to the danger for

Why Starlink matters

Starlink provides internet connections through thousands of satellites in low orbit, and its terminals have become essential to Ukraine's military communications, including the control of drones, since the Russian invasion in 2022.

SpaceX

SpaceX, which also builds the Falcon rockets and the Dragon spacecraft that carry astronauts and cargo to the International Space Station, is the world's dominant launch company. Its first profit since its stock market listing was reported earlier this week.

The talks

The episode came as Russia, the United States and Ukraine prepare to resume talks on ending the war, which President Vladimir Putin says Russia is ready to hold in mid-November.

Musk's role

Musk's personal control over a system on which an army depends has been a concern for Ukraine's allies since early in the war.

people searching damaged buildings and for those left without shelter in the cold.

The toll

Chinese state media showed rescue teams still searching collapsed buildings on Friday.

INTERNATIONAL

This Summer's Heat Killed an Estimated 50,000 People in Europe's Cities, a Record, British Researchers Say

By the International Desk

Heatwaves in European cities this summer killed an estimated 50,000 people, the highest number on record, Imperial College London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine said on Thursday.

The previous worst years since the study period began in 2000 were 2003 and 2022, each with just under 30,000 deaths, and this summer's estimate is far higher.

The cause

The researchers attributed the rising toll to global warming caused by burning fossil fuels such as oil and coal.

The study

The study estimated deaths in the summers, June to August, of 2000 to 2026 in 854 urban areas in 30 countries: the 27 members of the European Union, Britain, Norway and Switzerland. The areas covered are home to about 40 per cent of the population of those countries.

How it is done

Studies of this kind compare the number of deaths during hot periods with the number that would normally be expected, and attribute the excess to heat.

Japan

Japan also had a hot summer, and Tokyo and Osaka recorded their latest days of 30 degrees or more on record on Wednesday.

Who is at risk

Older people and those with chronic illnesses are the most vulnerable to extreme heat, and cities are hotter than the countryside because buildings and roads absorb and hold heat.

INTERNATIONAL

Indonesia's Forest Fires Have Burned an Area the Size of Shikoku, and the Smoke Has Reached Singapore and Malaysia

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Forest fires across Indonesia have burned an area about the size of Japan's Shikoku since January, and the smoke has spread to neighbouring countries.

Nusantara Atlas, an independent monitoring website, estimated from satellite images that about 19,000 square kilometres had burned between January and September. That is faster than in 2019, the worst year since its records began, when about 26,000 square kilometres burned over the whole year.

Where

The fires have broken out mainly on Borneo, in Kalimantan, and on Sumatra.

Why

Clearing land by burning is cheaper than clearing it by logging, and such burning repeatedly spreads into wildfires. The El Nino phenomenon has delayed the rainy season, and the government fears the damage will grow. On October 17 the forestry minister said 99 per cent of land fires were caused by people and urged that burning stop.

Health

Air pollution has worsened respiratory illnesses in Indonesia.

Singapore and Malaysia

According to Singapore media, the city's pollutant standards index has been at "unhealthy" or "very unhealthy" levels for more than 10 consecutive days this month, and the government has handed out masks to elderly residents. Some schools have closed in parts of Malaysia.

El Nino

The United Nations warned this week that El Nino could push tens of millions of people deeper into hunger.

INTERNATIONAL

At Least 91 Per Cent of the World's Coral Reefs Face Collapse, and Waters South of Japan Are Among the Most Threatened

By the International Desk

At least 91 per cent of the world's coral reef habitats are at risk of collapse, and almost all could collapse within 50 years if global warming continues, the International Union for Conservation of Nature said on Thursday in its first assessment of the risk to reefs worldwide.

The IUCN examined 127 coral reef habitats covering about 190,000 square kilometres in more than 80 countries and regions, and analysed the 122 that had sufficient data. Of those, 116 were at risk.

Japan

Thirty were placed in the highest of the IUCN's three threat categories, including the waters south of Japan's main islands and around the Ogasawara Islands. The waters including Okinawa Prefecture were placed in the second-highest category.

The threat

Heat stress from climate change is the greatest danger. Rising sea temperatures and marine heatwaves cause frequent bleaching, in which corals expel the algae that live in them and can die over wide areas.

The projection

If temperatures rise 2.7 degrees above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century, all 122 sites would fall into the highest category within 50 years, the IUCN warned.

Why reefs matter

Reefs cover a tiny fraction of the ocean floor but support a large share of marine species, protect coasts from waves and sustain fishing and tourism.

Okinawa

Okinawa's reefs suffered severe bleaching in 1998 and again in later hot years, and their recovery has been closely watched by scientists.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump Rallies Farmers in Iowa, Where Diesel Prices Driven Up by the Iran Conflict Threaten a Republican Senate Seat

By the International Desk

President Donald Trump held a rally in Sioux City, Iowa, on Thursday, trying to shore up support among farmers ahead of the midterm elections on November 3 in a state where his party is facing an unexpectedly close Senate race.

Iowa is a major farming state, and diesel prices have risen sharply because of the prolonged American military operation against Iran, hitting farmers directly.

The race

The Senate contest is between Ashley Hinson, a Republican member of the House of Representatives, and Josh Turek, a Democratic state lawmaker. Polls show the two almost level. Democrats last won a Senate seat in the state in 2008.

The speech

Trump accused Turek of pretending to be a moderate to deceive voters and claimed that, if elected, he would side with the radical left in the Democratic Party. He told the crowd to treat the election as if he himself were on the ballot.

Return visit

Trump plans to return to Iowa on November 1, two days before the election, to mobilise voters.

The national picture

Republicans have been struggling in some states they normally hold comfortably, and some candidates in close races have begun to distance themselves from the president, the Asahi Shimbun reported.

LeBron James

The same day Trump posted a video of the basketball star LeBron James warming up during the national anthem, accused him of insulting the country and demanded that he apologise to members of the military. James has clashed with Trump since his first term.

INTERNATIONAL

Australians Sue Meta Over Social Media Addiction, Saying Facebook and Instagram Were Designed to Hook Them as Children

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Australian users have filed a class action in the Federal Court of Australia against Meta, the company that runs Facebook and Instagram, seeking damages for harm they say they suffered from harmful content and dependence on the platforms, The Australian Financial Review reported on Thursday.

The eight lead plaintiffs say both services were designed to increase dependence, and that they used them while under 18 and were harmed.

Secrecy

To protect the plaintiffs' privacy, the court has restricted publication of their identities and of the details of the claim. The damages sought have not been disclosed.

Meta's response

Meta said in a statement that it would contest the case firmly.

In America

In August Meta agreed to pay up to 18 billion dollars, about 2.8 trillion yen, to settle a lawsuit brought by 52 American states and territories over children's addiction to social media.

INTERNATIONAL

Australia's law

Australia enacted a law last year, ahead of other countries, banning people under 16 from using social media.

Elsewhere

Several European governments have discussed similar age limits for social media since Australia's law was passed.

INTERNATIONAL

New York Bans Central Park's Horse-Drawn Carriages, Ending a Tradition of More Than 150 Years

By the International Desk

The New York City Council passed a bill on Thursday banning the horse-drawn carriages that carry tourists through Central Park in Manhattan, one of the city's best-known sights.

The city will issue no operating permits after June 2028, ending more than 150 years of the carriages in the park.

The accident

The ban followed an accident in June in which a carriage horse bolted in the park and threw out a male tourist from India, who hit his head and died. His family called for the carriages to be abolished, as animal welfare activists had long done.

Opposition

Carriage owners and drivers oppose the ban, which they say takes away their livelihoods, and a legal battle is expected.

Trump

President Donald Trump criticised the council on social media, saying he was very sad about the decision, that cars have accidents but are not barred from the park, and that a part of history had disappeared.

Help

According to local media and the bill, the city will provide compensation and help the roughly 200 owners and drivers find new jobs. The bill also prohibits the slaughter of the horses.

The park today

Pedicabs, bicycle taxis, have recently become more common in the park than the carriages.

INTERNATIONAL

Eisenhower's Globe Was Cracked When Hegseth's Staff Dropped It on the Way to His Office, The Washington Post Reports

By the International Desk

A globe believed to have been used by Dwight D. Eisenhower was damaged in February when members of Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's staff dropped it while carrying it into his office, The Washington Post reported on Thursday.

Historic objects are normally moved under the supervision of specialists, but because of a partial shutdown of the federal government the staff could not reach them and moved the globe themselves, the newspaper said.

The globe

The globe is about 30 inches, or 76 centimetres, in diameter and is believed to have been used around 1942, during the Second World War, when Eisenhower was a senior officer on the Army's general staff.

The damage

When it was dropped it struck its stand, leaving a crack several inches wide near Antarctica. The Pentagon said it was being repaired.

Hegseth

According to the Post, Hegseth was drawn to the globe's historical value; it is not clear whether he personally ordered it brought to his office.

A comment

A former military official told the newspaper that Hegseth admired Eisenhower's achievements, adding that owning a globe did not confer humility, intelligence or good judgement.

Eisenhower

Eisenhower went on to command the Allied invasion of Normandy in 1944 and served two terms as president from 1953.

INTERNATIONAL

Canada and Turkey Raise Their Ties to a Strategic Partnership as Carney Looks Beyond the United States

By the International Desk

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney met President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey in Ankara on Thursday, the first time a Canadian prime minister has visited Turkey for bilateral talks.

At a joint news conference, Erdogan said the two countries would raise their relationship to a strategic partnership and expand cooperation in the defence industry, energy and trade.

Both in NATO

Both countries are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Canada's motive

Trade friction with the United States has intensified and Canada's relations with the Trump administration have worsened, making it a priority for Ottawa to reduce its dependence on its neighbour.

Turkey's motive

Erdogan's government is promoting its defence industry and wants to attract investment into the sector.

Europe

Canada and the European Union are also planning a framework for closer ties, to be discussed at a summit in Montreal at the end of the month.

The pattern

Carney has sought new trade and security partners in Europe and Asia since taking office in 2025.

INTERNATIONAL

China Tightens Oversight of Its Companies' Investments Abroad, Citing Discriminatory Treatment and Demands for Technology

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

China's National Development and Reform Commission issued new rules on Thursday for managing outbound investment, saying they were meant in part to protect the rights of Chinese companies investing overseas. The rules take effect on December 1, the state news agency Xinhua reported.

The move follows regulations announced by the State Council in June to strengthen supervision of investment abroad.

The complaint

The rules say some countries have adopted discriminatory measures and demanded that Chinese companies hand over technology, data and other assets, harming China's interests.

Reporting

The rules expand the system for reporting cases in which Chinese investors suffer significant disadvantages, and create a system for reporting large investments that involve China's diplomatic relations.

Political risk

The commission said some countries were unstable, with rising political and security risks.

The context

Western governments have tightened their screening of Chinese investment, particularly in technology and critical minerals, and Beijing has responded with its own controls.

INTERNATIONAL

Germany Arrests a Ukrainian Man on Suspicion of Spying for Russia on Military Sites and NATO Suppliers

By the International Desk

German prosecutors arrested a Ukrainian national in Brandenburg, in eastern Germany, on Thursday on suspicion of working for Russia's intelligence services.

He is suspected of gathering information on military bases and on industries that support the defence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Contact

According to prosecutors, he had been in contact with Russian intelligence through intermediaries since July last year.

Lithuania

German media reported that he had also gathered information on a German army brigade stationed in Lithuania.

The pattern

The German army raised its assessment of the threat of Russian sabotage to "serious" this week after explosives were found, and European governments say Russia is waging a hybrid campaign of drones, sabotage and disinformation against them.

Recruitment

Investigators across Europe say Russian services increasingly recruit people online for small payments to carry out surveillance or sabotage, making them harder to detect.

Brandenburg

Brandenburg, the state that surrounds Berlin, is home to military sites and defence suppliers, and Germany has become a hub for supplying Ukraine.

INTERNATIONAL

Starbucks Asks Customers at 8,000 Stores in China to Buy Something Before Taking a Seat

By Rachel Kim | Asia Correspondent

Starbucks has begun asking customers at more than 8,000 stores in China to make a purchase before using the seating, a change from its long-standing practice of keeping its cafes open to people who buy nothing.

The move appears aimed at improving results, as the American chain struggles against cheap competition from fast-growing Chinese rivals.

The notices

A Kyodo News reporter who visited a Starbucks in Guangzhou on Thursday found notices on every table asking customers to buy something before sitting down. Similar notices were seen in Beijing on Friday.

A request

A store employee said the notice was a request, not a rule, and that staff would not pressure people who came in briefly, for example to shelter from the rain.

The market

China's coffee market is growing quickly. Xinhua reported this month that the number of coffee shops had risen by more than 100,000 in three years to more than 250,000.

Price war

The Chinese chain Cotti Coffee sells some drinks for 9.9 yuan, about 230 yen, intensifying price competition.

History

Starbucks opened its first store in China, in Beijing, in 1999.

INTERNATIONAL

Doctors and Nurses Plead Not Guilty as the Trial Over Maradona's Death Ends; Verdict Due December 22

By the International Desk

The trial of the medical staff accused of failing to give Diego Maradona proper care before his death ended on Thursday in Argentina, with the defence arguing that the defendants were not guilty. The verdict is due on December 22, according to local media.

The defendants face charges including homicide over the death of the former Argentina captain.

His death

Maradona died in 2020 at a house on the outskirts of Buenos Aires.

The prosecution

Prosecutors said Maradona had been advised to go into a medical facility but that the doctor responsible did not arrange it. They sought 12 years in prison for the lead doctor and sentences of four to 10 years for five others, including nurses and a psychiatrist.

The defence

The defence argued that the deterioration in Maradona's condition could not have been foreseen.

The fans

Fans gathered outside the courthouse in Buenos Aires during the hearings.

The legend

Maradona led Argentina to the World Cup in 1986, scoring the "Hand of God" goal and a celebrated solo goal against England in the quarter-final in Mexico City.

INTERNATIONAL

Tom Skerritt, the Flight Instructor of 'Top Gun' and Captain of the Nostromo in 'Alien', Dies at 93

By the International Desk

Tom Skerritt, the American actor known for playing the flight school commander in "Top Gun", died on Wednesday at the age of 93, American media reported. He died of natural causes; the place of death was not disclosed.

Top Gun

In the 1986 film starring Tom Cruise, Skerritt played the commander of the Navy's elite fighter pilot school.

Alien

In Ridley Scott's "Alien" in 1979 he played Dallas, the captain of the spaceship Nostromo.

Television

He was also a familiar face on television and won an Emmy award for lead actor in a drama series in 1993 for his role as a small-town sheriff in "Picket Fences".

His life

Skerritt was born in 1933 in Detroit, Michigan, and served in the U.S. Air Force before turning to acting.

Other films

His other films included "M*A*S*H", "A River Runs Through It" and "Steel Magnolias".

A long career

His career spanned more than six decades, from small parts in the 1960s to character roles in film and television well into his eighties.

ECONOMY

Fed Expected to Hold Rates a Week Before the Midterms, With U.S. Inflation at 3.7 Per Cent

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The U.S. Federal Reserve will hold its policy meeting on October 27 and 28, about a week before the midterm elections, which are widely seen as a referendum on the Trump administration. Financial markets widely expect it to leave its policy rate unchanged.

Concerns about inflation have not eased. The consumer price index for September, released on October 14, rose 3.7 per cent from a year earlier, with the rate of increase widening because of higher petrol prices. Producer prices rose 6.3 per cent.

Warsh says little

The Fed's chairman, Kevin Warsh, has not signalled the outlook before the meeting. At an event in Bangkok in mid-October he declined to say how the meeting would go or to discuss the near-term outlook.

The pressure

President Donald Trump has repeatedly called for lower interest rates, and a decision to hold would come just before voters go to the polls.

Oil

The conflict with Iran and attacks on Saudi oil facilities have pushed up energy prices, feeding into inflation.

Japan

The Fed's decision will be followed by the Bank of Japan's meeting on October 29 and 30. A narrowing of the interest rate gap between the two countries tends to strengthen the yen, which was trading in the 156 range on Friday.

Bonds

Investors bought Treasury bonds on Thursday as technology shares fell, pushing yields down sharply.

What to watch

Markets will look for any hint from Warsh about whether the Fed sees inflation or slowing growth as the greater risk.

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ECONOMY



The Tokyo Stock Exchange at Kabutocho. The Nikkei average fell more than 1,400 yen on Friday morning before ending 214.68 yen lower at 62,693.16, after losing 1,713.40 yen on Thursday. (Photo: TG2 (CC))

ECONOMY

Nikkei Falls More Than 1,400 Yen and Below 62,000 Before Clawing Back Most of the Loss, Ending Down 214 After Thursday's 1,713-Yen Plunge

Doubts about whether companies will earn a return on their huge AI investments hit chip shares again after a 694-point drop in the Nasdaq; the yen strengthens to the 156 range as U.S. yields fall
By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

Tokyo stocks fell for a second day on Friday as doubts about the profitability of artificial intelligence businesses kept selling pressure on semiconductor shares, but the market recovered most of a steep morning loss to end only modestly lower.

The Nikkei Stock Average of 225 issues closed at 62,693.16, down 214.68 yen. In the morning it had fallen by more than 1,400 yen, trading in the 61,500 range and dropping below 62,000 for the first time in about three months, according to the Yomiuri Shimbun.

The broader Topix index closed 31.69 points lower at 3,965.81. About 2.88 billion shares changed hands on the prime market.

Thursday's plunge

Friday's fall followed one of the sharpest drops of the year. On Thursday the Nikkei lost 1,713.40 yen to close at 62,907.84, as semiconductor-related shares were sold after earnings from overseas companies. The Topix fell 46.23 points to 3,997.50, with about 2.19 billion shares traded. A day earlier the index had risen 545.82 yen to 64,621.24.

The morning

Selling dominated from the opening bell on Friday. The Nikkei was down 963 yen at 9:15 a.m. and 1,209.04 yen at 11 a.m., at 61,698.80, and ended the morning session 1,082.58 yen lower at 61,825.26. Advantest, SoftBank Group and Tokyo Electron were among the stocks that pulled the average down most, while lower interest rates drew some buying of property and housebuilding shares.

Wall Street

The selling started in New York. On Thursday the technology-heavy Nasdaq Composite fell 694.00 points to 26,008.86 as investors sold shares linked to artificial intelligence. Earnings from information technology companies revived concerns about whether they can earn returns that justify their enormous investments in AI. NHK reported that the index had been down 2.9 per cent at one point.

ECONOMY

Markets at a Glance

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

NIKKEI 225 (FRI): 62,693.16, down 214.68.
TOPIX (FRI): 3,965.81, down 31.69.
NIKKEI 225 (THU): 62,907.84, down 1,713.40.
TOPIX (THU): 3,997.50, down 46.23.
FRIDAY MORNING CLOSE: Nikkei 61,825.26, down 1,082.58; Topix 3,924.70, down 72.80.
FRIDAY LOW: More than 1,400 yen down, in the 61,500 range.
VOLUME: About 2.88 billion shares on Friday; about 2.19 billion on Thursday.
DOW (THU): 52,867.98, up 11.89.
NASDAQ (THU): 26,008.86, down 694.00.
DOLLAR: 156.71-81 yen, 5 p.m. Thursday in New York; 156.46-47 yen, 10 a.m. Friday in Tokyo.
EURO: 175.55-56 yen, 10 a.m. Friday in Tokyo.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average edged up 11.89 points to 52,867.98, its third straight gain, supported by buying in retailers and restaurant chains. Procter & Gamble and Home Depot rose, while Amazon.com fell.

Bonds and the yen

Investors bought U.S. Treasury bonds as a relatively safe asset, pushing long-term yields down sharply. That narrowed the expected gap between American and Japanese interest rates, and the dollar was sold for yen. At 5 p.m. in New York on Thursday the dollar stood at 156.71-81 yen, 1.40 yen weaker than a day earlier.

In Tokyo on Friday morning the dollar was at 156.46-47 yen at 10 a.m., and the euro at 175.55-56 yen. A market participant said attention was turning to the Bank of Japan's policy meeting next week.

Long-term rates

Long-term interest rates in Japan, the United States and Europe have risen to historically high levels this month, with the attacks on Iran and the riots in France among the reasons cited.

Oil

New York crude rebounded on Thursday to close in the 99-dollar range as concerns about exports from the Middle East grew.

What next

Investors will watch the Bank of Japan's meeting on October 29 and 30, at which it is expected to judge whether its 2 per cent inflation target has been achieved, and the Federal Reserve's meeting on October 27 and 28. Consumer prices, excluding fresh food, rose 2.1 per cent in September, the first rise above 2 per cent in nine months.

CRUDE: New York crude in the 99-dollar range on Thursday.
NEXT: Federal Reserve, October 27-28; Bank of Japan, October 29-30.

ECONOMY

Core Consumer Prices Rise 2.1 Per Cent in September, Back Above the Bank of Japan's Target for the First Time in Nine Months

Rice prices fall a record 20.6 per cent as stocks pile up, but food excluding fresh produce is 2.9 per cent dearer
By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Japan's core consumer prices, which exclude volatile fresh food, rose 2.1 per cent in September from a year earlier, the internal affairs ministry said on Friday, the first time in nine months that inflation has exceeded the Bank of Japan's 2 per cent target. The index stood at 102.3 against a base of 100 for 2025. The rate of increase picked up from 1.7 per cent in August.

Food

Food prices excluding fresh food rose 2.9 per cent. Higher prices for food and water are squeezing household budgets, Kyodo News reported.

Rice

Rice prices fell 20.6 per cent, the largest drop since comparable records began in 1971, as inventories piled up. Prices had soared in 2024 and 2025 during a shortage, prompting the government to release its stockpiles.

The Bank of Japan

The figures come a week before the Bank of Japan's policy meeting on October 29 and 30, at which it is expected to judge whether the 2 per cent price target it has pursued for more than a decade has been achieved in a stable and sustainable way.

Wages

The bank has said it wants to see inflation supported by rising wages rather than by import costs. Rengo, the largest union federation, said this week it would seek pay rises of "6 per cent or so, at least 5 per cent" in next spring's wage talks.

Energy

Government subsidies for petrol and other fuels have held down energy prices. The national average price of regular petrol rose to 170.20 yen a litre this week, its first increase in three weeks.

Real wages

Real wages turned positive this year, according to Rengo, but many households say they have not felt an improvement because prices have stayed high for so long.

The tax cut

The government's planned cut in the consumption tax on food, now before the Diet, would lower measured inflation once it takes effect.

ECONOMY

Megabanks Stop Accepting Licence Photos Online

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Japan's three megabanks have stopped letting customers who open accounts online prove who they are by photographing a driver's licence, Kyodo News reported on Friday.

The banks acted after cyberattacks repeatedly leaked personal information, including images of licences.

Who stopped when

Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation ended the practice on Friday for accounts opened without a face-to-face meeting, such as through a smartphone. Mizuho Bank stopped on October 19, and MUFG Bank in May.

The chip

The banks are switching to checks that read the IC chip in My Number cards. Customers who want to use a driver's licence will be asked to visit a branch.

Park24

On Friday Park24 confirmed that about 1.46 million images of driver's licences and other identity documents had leaked.

The law

A change in the law will make reading IC chips mandatory for online identity checks from the spring of 2027.

ECONOMY

Financial Services Agency Considers Raising the Life Insurance Safety Net to About 1 Trillion Yen

Rising interest rates have swelled unrealised losses on insurers' bonds, and misconduct at Prudential Life has shaken confidence
By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The Financial Services Agency is considering raising the money that life insurers must set aside to protect policyholders if one of them fails, from about 860 billion yen now to about 1 trillion yen, Kyodo News reported on Friday.

The industry faces several pressures. Rising interest rates have increased unrealised losses on the government bonds that insurers hold, and there has been a series of cases of misconduct, including the fraud by employees at Prudential Life Insurance.

The aim

The goal is to limit the impact on policyholders if the unexpected happens.

The process

A working group of the Financial System Council, which advises the prime minister, is to meet soon to discuss how the burden should be shared between insurers and the government. The agency plans to reflect its conclusions in an amendment to the Insurance Business Act and aims to submit a bill to the Diet as early as next year.

How it works

If a life insurer fails, the Life Insurance Policyholders Protection Corporation, whose members are the life insurance companies, provides money to the insurer that takes over its policies. The money comes from contributions by the insurers.

Public money

The funds are used for purposes such as paying benefits when policyholders die. If they are not enough, the government can provide public money through the corporation, but because that burdens taxpayers the aim is to cover as much as possible with contributions from the industry.

History

Several Japanese life insurers failed in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when low interest rates left them unable to pay the returns they had promised, and policyholders lost part of their benefits.

Bonds

Insurers hold large amounts of long-term government bonds, whose prices fall when yields rise, and yields in Japan have risen to their highest levels in many years.

ECONOMY

Rengo Sets Its Sights on Pay Rises of '6 Per Cent or So, at Least 5 Per Cent' in Next Spring's Wage Talks

The union federation says three years of gains have not made people feel better off, and wants smaller firms to raise pay by 6 per cent or more
By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Rengo, Japan's largest federation of labour unions, with about 7 million members, set out on Thursday its basic plan for the 2027 spring wage negotiations, aiming for pay rises of "6 per cent or so, and at least 5 per cent", combining increases in base pay and regular seniority raises.

The federation has met its target of at least 5 per cent for three consecutive years, through this year's talks, and real wages have turned positive. But it said few people felt their lives had improved. Because prices have stayed high for a long time, it judged that further gains were needed and added the new benchmark of around 6 per cent.

Smaller companies

As this year, unions at small and medium-sized companies have a separate target of 6 per cent or more, to narrow the gap with large companies.

The chairwoman

Rengo's chairwoman, Tomoko Yoshino, told a news conference in Tokyo that including "6 per cent or so" in the overall demand was meant to set a higher target, which she described as key to reaching the goal of at least 5 per cent.

The economy

The plan says workers are not confident that wages will keep rising and that personal consumption is sluggish. It argues that spreading wage increases to small and medium-sized companies would improve real wages over time and support a virtuous cycle in the economy.

The challenge

Large companies with healthy profits have led the recent rises, while many smaller firms, squeezed by higher costs and a shortage of workers, find it harder to keep up, raising concern about a widening gap.

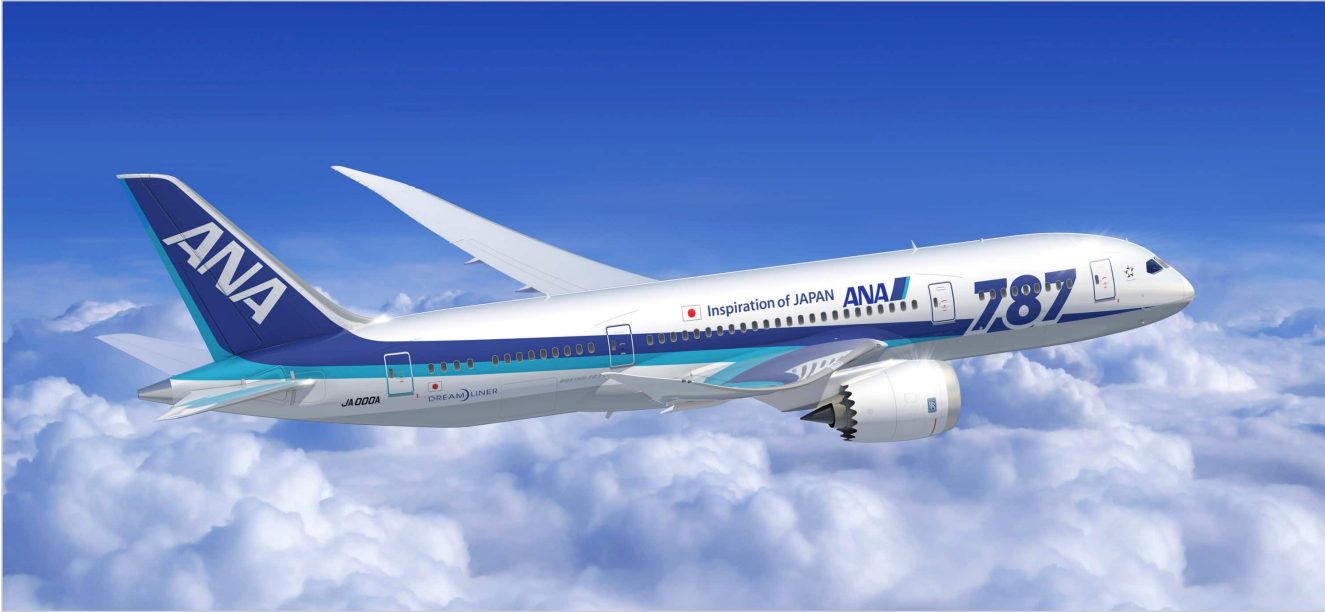
Next

The federation will finalise its plan later in the year, and its member unions will follow it in their negotiations next spring.

The pay record

The health ministry reported this week that the average monthly pay rise at companies this year reached a record 13,926 yen.

ECONOMY



An ANA Boeing 787 in flight, in a file image. ANA Holdings is considering investing more in Regional Plus Wings, the holding company of AIRDO and Solaseed Air, possibly making it a subsidiary. (File image: WPM Productions)

ECONOMY

ANA Considers Investing More in AIRDO and Solaseed Air's Holding Company, Possibly Making It a Subsidiary

The move follows the government's decision in May to scrap rules that discouraged the big carriers from investing in mid-sized airlines, as domestic routes struggle

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

ANA Holdings said on Thursday that it is considering strengthening its ties with the mid-sized airlines AIRDO and Solaseed Air, including by investing more in the holding company that owns them and possibly making it a consolidated subsidiary.

The holding company, Regional Plus Wings, based in Tokyo, was formed by AIRDO of Sapporo and Solaseed Air of Miyazaki. ANA Holdings held a 15.32 per cent stake in it at the end of March. The Asahi Shimbun and the Yomiuri Shimbun reported that the aim was to cut costs and attract more customers.

The rules that changed

In May the government effectively abolished restrictions that had limited investment by ANA Holdings and Japan Airlines in other airlines, to help carriers cooperate as domestic routes struggle.

The transport ministry had given mid-sized airlines priority in the allocation of take-off and landing slots at Haneda Airport, which are highly profitable, to encourage new routes. Until May, if a major airline invested 20 per cent or more in a mid-sized carrier, all the slots allocated to that carrier on a priority basis would have been taken back. That rule was scrapped.

The new threshold

A government panel of experts recommended in May that only up to 10 per cent of a mid-sized carrier's

Haneda slots should be recovered in such cases, lowering the barrier to investment by the major airlines.

The carriers

AIRDO, founded in Hokkaido in the 1990s as a low-fare challenger to the major airlines, flies mainly between Hokkaido and Tokyo. Solaseed Air, based in Miyazaki, serves Kyushu and Okinawa. Both already work closely with ANA, including through code-sharing.

Why now

Domestic air travel has been squeezed by rising costs, a shortage of pilots and mechanics, and competition from the Shinkansen, and the carriers have been looking for ways to share costs.

The rankings

ANA rose one place to fourth in the 2026 World Airline Rankings published this week by the British research firm Skytrax, and was named the world's best airline for airport services for the seventh straight year. Japan Airlines held ninth place. Singapore Airlines was ranked first.

Singapore

Singapore Airlines, whose home is also the destination of Princess Aiko's official visit next month, has topped the ranking several times before.

ECONOMY

Rice Falls for a 10th Straight Week, to 2,821 Yen for 5 Kilograms, as the New Crop Fills Supermarket Shelves

Blended and own-brand rice drops 73 yen in a week as stores also cut the price of last year's crop

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The average price of rice in supermarkets fell for the 10th consecutive week, to 2,821 yen for 5 kilograms, the agriculture ministry said on Friday.

The average, for sales from October 12 to 18 at about 1,000 supermarkets across Japan, was 16 yen lower than a week earlier.

Brands and blends

Rice sold under a single brand averaged 2,872 yen, down 6 yen.

Blended rice and supermarkets' own-brand products averaged 2,609 yen, down 73 yen, the steepest weekly fall of the two.

Why prices are falling

Large quantities of cheaper rice from this year's harvest are now reaching the shelves, and stores are also selling rice from the 2025 crop at lower prices, keeping prices on a downward path, Kyodo News reported.

In the price index

The consumer price index for September, released on Friday, showed rice 20.6 per cent cheaper than a year earlier. Core consumer prices, which exclude fresh food, rose 2.1 per cent.

The surge

Rice prices climbed steeply from the summer of 2024 and passed 4,000 yen for 5 kilograms in 2025, leading the government to release rice from its emergency stockpile.

The central bank

Cheaper rice is one of the forces pulling against inflation as the Bank of Japan prepares for its meeting on October 29 and 30, at which it is expected to judge whether its 2 per cent price target has been achieved.

ECONOMY

From November, Visitors Will Pay Consumption Tax at the Till and Get It Back When They Leave, to Stop Resellers

Passports are scanned at airport terminals; bags may be checked against purchase records

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

Japan's tax-free shopping system for foreign visitors will change on November 1, when visitors will pay prices including consumption tax and receive a refund of the tax when they leave the country, in a move to stop people reselling goods bought tax-free.

Under the current system, visitors buy souvenirs at prices excluding the tax, and purchases are checked at airports and other points of departure. Some buyers have resold goods before leaving Japan to make a profit, and such abuse has occurred repeatedly.

The rates

Visitors will pay the 10 per cent consumption tax, or 8 per cent on food and drink, at the till. Under the current rules, purchases of 5,000 yen or more before tax at a single shop in a day qualify for the exemption.

The refund method

Under the new refund method, visitors will hold their passports over dedicated terminals at airports and ports, which display their purchase records. If there are no problems, the tax is refunded in cash or to a credit card.

Checks

If anything looks suspicious, officials will compare the purchase records with the goods in the visitor's hand luggage.

Smartphones

To reduce congestion, large airports will also allow the procedure to be completed on a smartphone.

The demonstration

Terminals for the new procedure were shown to the press at Haneda Airport on Thursday.

Why it matters

Tax-free shopping is a major draw for visitors, who spent a record amount in Japan in the first nine months of the year, so the smoothness of the new procedure at airports will matter to shops and department stores.

The resellers

The authorities have found cases in which large quantities of goods such as luxury items were bought tax-free and resold in Japan, costing the Treasury tax revenue.

ECONOMY

Used Condominium Prices in Tokyo's 23 Wards Fall for a Fourth Month, While the Suburbs Keep Rising

A 70-square-metre flat averaged 126.29 million yen in September; in the central six wards, 177.86 million

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Average prices of second-hand condominiums in Tokyo's 23 wards fell for a fourth consecutive month in September, while prices in the wider metropolitan area kept rising, the property research firm Tokyo Kantei said on Thursday.

The average price for a 70-square-metre unit in the 23 wards fell 0.4 per cent from August to 126.29 million yen. Prices there had set records for 25 consecutive months until May.

Sellers cutting prices

Prices have risen so far that some sellers cannot find buyers, and price cuts are appearing, the firm said.

The centre

In the six central wards, including Chiyoda, the average fell 1.6 per cent to 177.86 million yen, a fifth

straight monthly decline.

The suburbs

Across the Tokyo metropolitan area, which includes the three neighbouring prefectures, the average rose 2.2 per cent from August, and 29.2 per cent from a year earlier, to 77.73 million yen. Prices in the cities of Yokohama, Chiba and Saitama rose for a fifth month.

Speculation and homes

The firm said the surge in central Tokyo had been driven largely by speculative investment, while rises in the surrounding areas reflected demand from people buying homes to live in, and had not reversed.

Polarisation

A representative of the firm predicted that the market would polarise, with prices falling in the 23 wards and rising outside them. The Asahi Shimbun noted that the declines were not limited to the city centre.

Osaka

In the six central wards of Osaka, the average fell 1.5 per cent to 93.27 million yen, a third consecutive decline.

New flats

Prices of newly built flats have climbed even faster. The average price of a new condominium in the 23 wards passed 100 million yen for the first time in 2023, according to the Real Estate Economic Institute.

BUSINESS

PayPay Will Stop Accepting Photos of ID Cards and Verify Identities Only by Reading Their IC Chips

Banks are also dropping photographed driver's licences for online accounts after a series of leaks

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

PayPay, the largest smartphone payment service, said on Friday that by early November it would stop verifying users' identities by having them photograph and submit documents such as driver's licences and My Number cards.

It will use only the method that reads the IC chip built into identity documents.

The leaks

The change follows incidents in which images of driver's licences were leaked through cyberattacks.

The law

A change in the law will make reading IC chips mandatory from the spring of 2027, and photographing identity documents will in principle be abolished. PayPay is strengthening its security ahead of that.

After verification

Once their identity has been verified, users can use services such as topping up their PayPay balance from a bank account.

Banks

All three of Japan's megabanks have now stopped accepting photographs of driver's licences from customers opening accounts online.

Park24

On Friday Park24, which runs the Times Car sharing service, said about 1.46 million images of identity documents had leaked through unauthorised access, and that it would pay 3,000 yen to each customer whose image was confirmed to have leaked.

Why chips are safer

An IC chip stores the holder's details in a form that is checked electronically, which makes it harder to use a copied or altered image to impersonate someone.

What to do

Anyone whose licence image may have leaked should watch for suspicious contracts or accounts opened in their name.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

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BUSINESS



The TV Asahi logo on the broadcaster's building in Tokyo, in a file photo. Investors linked to the former Murakami Fund hold about 5 per cent of TV Asahi Holdings and have proposed measures including a delisting, the Asahi Shimbun reported. (File photo: WPM Productions)

BUSINESS

Investors Linked to the Former Murakami Fund Take About 5 Per Cent of TV Asahi Holdings and Propose a Delisting

The group, which built a large stake in Fuji Media Holdings last year, is turning its attention to another of Japan's commercial broadcasters

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

Investors linked to the former Murakami Fund, together with an associated investor, have acquired about 5 per cent of TV Asahi Holdings and have made proposals to the company including taking it private, the Asahi Shimbun reported on Friday.

The Asahi Shimbun Company, which publishes the newspaper, is TV Asahi Holdings' largest shareholder.

The proposals

According to the report, the investors have proposed measures including a delisting of the shares. Under Japanese rules, holders of more than 5 per cent of a listed company must file a report disclosing the stake and the purpose of holding it.

The group

The former Murakami Fund was founded by the activist investor Yoshiaki Murakami. Companies and individuals connected with him have become large shareholders in a series of Japanese companies in recent years, often pressing for share buybacks or other changes to raise shareholder returns.

BUSINESS

Mitsubishi Motors Will Supply Its Triton Pickup to Honda for Southeast Asia From 2028, Their First Joint Product

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

Honda and Mitsubishi Motors announced on Thursday that Mitsubishi will supply its Triton pickup truck to Honda, which plans to sell a version in Southeast Asia from 2028.

It is the first product of the cooperation the two companies have been studying.

The Triton

The Triton is one of Mitsubishi Motors' main models and is known for its sturdy ladder-frame body. It is built at Mitsubishi's factory in Thailand.

Honda's gap

Honda has no comparable model for Southeast Asia, where pickups are popular for work and family use. It will develop a vehicle based on the Triton to fill the gap in its line-up.

Mitsubishi's gain

The arrangement will help Mitsubishi Motors raise the utilisation rate of its Thai plant.

The background

Honda and Nissan, Mitsubishi Motors' largest shareholder, called off merger talks in 2025 but agreed to keep studying cooperation, and Mitsubishi Motors has joined discussions on sharing vehicles and technology.

Supply deals

Supplying vehicles to be sold under another maker's brand is common in the industry, allowing companies to fill gaps in their ranges without the cost of developing new models.

Fuji Media

Last year the group built a large stake in Fuji Media Holdings, the parent of Fuji Television, which was then dealing with the fallout of a scandal over its handling of sexual misconduct by a celebrity. In February Fuji Media bought back its own shares worth 235 billion yen.

Broadcasters

Japan's commercial broadcasters own valuable property and stakes in other companies, and investors have argued that their shares are undervalued compared with those assets.

TV Asahi

TV Asahi is one of the five main commercial television networks based in Tokyo, and its holding company also runs businesses in content and events.

What to watch

A delisting would require a buyer willing to acquire all the shares, and the views of the Asahi Shimbun Company and other large shareholders would be decisive.

The market

Japanese makers have long dominated Southeast Asia's car markets, but Chinese companies, especially in electric vehicles, have been gaining ground.

BUSINESS

ValueAct, Now Takara Holdings' Largest Shareholder, Calls an Extraordinary Meeting to Remove Three Outside Directors

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

ValueAct Capital, the American activist fund, has asked Takara Holdings, the maker of shochu and other drinks and the parent of the biotechnology company Takara Bio, to convene an extraordinary shareholders' meeting to vote on removing three outside directors, it was announced on Friday.

ValueAct cited poor business performance and inadequate oversight of management.

The stake

According to a filing with the Kanto Local Finance Bureau on Thursday, ValueAct raised its stake from 19.01 per cent to 20.01 per cent, making it the largest shareholder.

No dialogue

Since the summer, ValueAct has asked the company to review its business strategy under the leadership of its outside directors, but according to the report, no dialogue took place.

Outside directors

Outside directors are meant to oversee management on behalf of shareholders, and activist investors increasingly target them when they believe they have failed to do so.

The fund

ValueAct, based in San Francisco, has invested in several large Japanese companies in recent years, including Seven & i Holdings and Olympus, pressing for changes to strategy and governance.

The company

Takara Holdings, based in Kyoto, is known for its shochu, mirin and sake brands.

Next

Under the Companies Act, shareholders holding at least 3 per cent of voting rights can demand an extraordinary meeting, and can ask a court for permission to convene it themselves if the board does not act.

BUSINESS

Toyota Tsusho Aims to Triple Its African Sales by Fiscal 2035, Betting on Renewable Energy and Health Care

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

Toyota Tsusho, the trading company of the Toyota group, aims to increase sales from its business in Africa to about three times the fiscal 2025 level by fiscal 2035, its president, Toshimitsu Imai, told reporters in Tokyo on Thursday.

The company's sales in Africa were about 1.9 trillion yen in fiscal 2025.

Growth areas

Imai said he expected renewable energy and health care to drive the growth.

Recycling

Pointing to waste problems in Africa, he spoke of the potential of recycling businesses, saying the company wanted to recover valuable resources by recycling vehicles.

Art

Toyota Tsusho has created an art award to promote African culture, and an exhibition related to the award opens in Tokyo on Friday. Imai said building Africa's future required cultural strength as well as business.

The history

Toyota Tsusho became one of the largest Japanese companies in Africa after acquiring the French trading house CFAO in 2012, giving it operations across much of the continent.

Japan and Africa

Japan has sought to deepen its economic ties with Africa through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which met in Yokohama last year.

Competition

Chinese companies have a large presence in African infrastructure and trade, and Japanese companies have looked for areas such as health care and renewable energy where they can compete.

BUSINESS

BYD Takes Its Japanese-Style Electric Kei Car, the RACCO, to Sri Lanka and Macau

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

China's BYD has begun selling its RACCO, a battery electric kei car it developed for the Japanese market, outside Japan, starting in Macau and Sri Lanka, where it expects demand for a compact body.

The company intends to keep expanding the countries and regions where the car is sold.

Kei cars

Kei cars, the smallest class of passenger vehicles with limits on size and engine power, are a category unique to Japan. BYD wants to gauge demand for small cars in Asia, including markets where vehicles drive on the right.

The president

Liu Xueliang, president of BYD's Japanese unit, said at a ceremony this month that the company wanted more people to experience the RACCO and to increase its sales further.

Japanese rivals

Among Japanese makers of kei cars, Suzuki sells the Alto and the Every in Brunei and Pakistan.

Europe

BYD's sales in the European Union more than doubled in September from a year earlier, to 28,309 vehicles, according to the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association.

Japan's market

Kei cars account for more than a third of new car sales in Japan, and BYD's entry into the segment challenged the Japanese makers that dominate it.

The name

Racco means sea otter in Japanese.

BUSINESS

Fair Trade Commission Says an Oji Subsidiary Made 140 Suppliers Store 9,610 Printing Plates and Moulds for Free

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

The Japan Fair Trade Commission found on Thursday that Oji Container, a Tokyo-based cardboard maker and consolidated subsidiary of the paper group Oji Holdings, had violated the Subcontract Act by making suppliers store manufacturing tools free of charge, and recommended that it pay the storage costs.

The violation

From June 2024 to November 2025, Oji Container had suppliers keep printing plates used to print company logos on cardboard, as well as cutting dies and metal moulds, without paying for the storage, even though it had placed no orders for long periods.

The numbers

A total of 9,610 items were stored by 140 suppliers. By July this year the company had paid about 3.41 million yen to 127 of them, covering part of the costs, and the commission asked it to calculate and pay the rest promptly.

The law

Because the violation occurred before the law was revised and renamed in January this year, the commission applied the former Subcontract Act.

The company

Oji Container said it took the recommendation seriously and would strengthen compliance and prevent a recurrence.

A pattern

It is the commission's second recommendation over the free storage of printing plates, a practice it has identified as a common way for large companies to push costs onto smaller suppliers.

Why it matters

The government has been pressing large companies to treat their suppliers fairly so that small businesses can afford to raise wages.

BUSINESS

Sapporo Opens a Hidden Bar for Black Label Fans and a Yebisu Beer Hall in Ginza

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

Sapporo Breweries is opening two drinking spots in Ginza, Tokyo, on October 27 to promote its main beer brands, and showed them to the media on Friday.

The first is a hidden bar for members, called Black Label BEER AJITO, where customers can drink Sapporo's flagship Black Label beer. The dimly lit, calm room has 31 seats, and customers must register on the Black Label fan website to enter.

Yebisu

The second, YEBISU BEER HALL TOKYO, is a beer hall under the Yebisu brand with about 90 seats and a premium feel, bright and lively in contrast to the bar.

The building

Both are on the fourth floor of the Ginza Lion Building, owned by the Sapporo group.

The aim

The company hopes to increase its contact with customers through the experience of drinking in its own venues and to raise the profile of both brands.

The market

Japan's beer market has been shrinking for years as the population ages and younger people drink less, and brewers are trying to build loyalty to their leading brands.

Tax

Beer makers have also been adjusting to the unification of alcohol taxes on beer and beer-like drinks, completed this month.

BUSINESS

Ginza Lion

The Ginza Lion beer hall in the same building, opened in 1934, is one of Japan's oldest surviving beer halls.

BUSINESS

Volvo Cars Will Cut About 2,500 Jobs, Blaming Weak Sales in China and Higher U.S. Tariffs

By Ethan Cole | Business & Markets Editor

Volvo Cars, the Swedish carmaker, said on Friday that it would cut about 2,500 jobs worldwide to make its business more competitive, as weak sales in China and higher tariffs in the United States weigh on its results.

About 2,000 of the jobs are in Sweden, where the company plans to make the cuts by hiring fewer people than leave and by offering support for voluntary retirement, Kyodo News reported from Brussels.

'Extremely harsh'

Chief Executive Hakan Samuelsson said the company faced challenges including deglobalisation, excessive competition and climate change, and described the business environment as extremely harsh.

He said the cuts would strengthen the foundations of the business.

Chinese owner

Volvo Cars has been controlled by China's Geely since 2010, and China has been one of its most important markets.

Earlier cuts

The company announced about 3,000 job cuts in May last year, most of them in office roles, as it reduced costs.

The industry

Carmakers in Europe face competition from Chinese makers of electric vehicles and the cost of American tariffs on imported cars.

BUSINESS

Yano Research Institute Launches an AI Agent That Writes Reports From Its Market Research

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Yano Research Institute, a Tokyo market research company, began offering a service on Thursday in which artificial intelligence uses its research reports to answer questions and draft documents.

The service, YDB Agent, lets companies search for the data they need and compile it into documents, which the company says greatly shortens the time required.

The library

The AI draws on more than 1,000 reports from the past five years, and about 250 new reports are added each year.

Sources

Answers show their sources, and documents can be produced in formats such as Excel spreadsheets.

Partners

The service was developed with JAPAN AI, an AI company also based in Tokyo.

Price

Fees vary with factors such as the number of users and require a contract.

The trend

Research firms and publishers are racing to turn their archives into AI services, betting that reliable, sourced data will be worth more as general-purpose AI tools spread.

The caution

Showing sources lets users check the AI's answers against the original reports, an important safeguard because AI systems can produce confident but wrong answers.

BUSINESS

Business in Brief

By the Business Desk

MANGA ABROAD: The finance ministry has proposed a "domestic common platform" to help manga reach overseas readers, making translation more efficient and helping publishers win foreign markets, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

KYUSHU INVESTMENT: The Bank of Japan's Fukuoka branch raised its assessment of capital investment in its October report for the first time in 34 months, the Nishinippon Shimbun reported.

PARK24: The car-sharing and parking company will book a special loss of 5.5 billion yen in its business year ending in October to cover payments of 3,000 yen to customers whose identity document images leaked.

LIFE INSURANCE: The Financial Services Agency is considering raising the industry's fund for protecting policyholders to about 1 trillion yen.

NIPPON STEEL: The steelmaker will invest about 470 billion yen in an American steelworks to raise production, Kyodo News reported.

BARCLAYS: The British bank will cut about 5,000 jobs this year, citing efficiency gains from AI.

STARBUCKS: The coffee chain has asked customers at more than 8,000 stores in China to buy something before taking a seat.

EUROPEAN SALES: Mazda's new car registrations in the European Union rose 47.4 per cent in September and Honda's 15.2 per cent, while Nissan's fell 10.9 per cent.

TAX-FREE SHOPPING: Visitors will pay consumption tax and claim it back on departure from November 1.

MOS FOOD SERVICES: The operator of the Mos Burger chain said data on more than 1.13 million prepaid cards had leaked through unauthorised access, and that it had changed the PINs of about 570,000 cards already issued.

TECHNOLOGY

Disaster Alert Firm Arcadia Apologises After Intruders Sent 1.42 Million Suspicious Emails Through Its Service

Up to 3.13 million residents' email addresses may have leaked from SpeeCAN RAIDEN, used by local governments to send disaster information

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The president of Arcadia, a company in Minoh, Osaka Prefecture, that distributes disaster information for local governments, apologised on Friday after unauthorised access to its system was used to send about 1.42 million suspicious emails.

Speaking at a news conference in Meguro, Tokyo, the president said the company deeply regretted having damaged its social responsibility and the trust placed in it.

The service

The intrusion was found in SpeeCAN RAIDEN, a service that sends disaster information to residents all at once. Arcadia partially suspended the service on October 13 and restored its servers on October 15.

The impact

The attack disrupted the distribution of disaster emails by local governments, and up to about 3.13 million residents' email addresses may have leaked.

The police

The same system was involved in the leak of data on police officers and staff and on residents registered for crime-alert emails from prefectural police forces, reported this week by the National Police Agency.

Continuing attacks

The president said the cyberattacks were continuing, Kyodo News reported.

Why it matters

Local governments increasingly rely on private companies to run their emergency messaging, so an attack on one supplier can affect many municipalities at once, and at the worst possible moment.

Timing

The disclosure came on the day SoftBank suspended its emergency alert mail because of the PHP flaws, and as a typhoon passed the Sakishima Islands.

Advice

Residents who receive unexpected emails that appear to come from a disaster information service should not open attachments or tap links, and should check information on their municipality's official website or other channels.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Imperial law in force, Page 21.

Welfare cuts illegal again, Page 22.

TECHNOLOGY

Digital Agency Says Data From About 13,000 Website Inquiries May Have Leaked Through a Contractor

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The Digital Agency said on Friday that personal information entered into the inquiry forms on its website, including names and email addresses, may have leaked in about 13,000 cases, after a company that provided services for the site was accessed without authorisation.

The inquiries were submitted between May 2021 and March 2023 and included opinions and requests, recruitment inquiries and questions about the app for COVID-19 vaccination certificates.

The contractor

Studio, a web production company in Tokyo, announced the unauthorised access on October 16.

No misuse yet

No secondary harm from misuse of the information had been confirmed.

Supply chains

The case is another example of a breach at a supplier exposing the data of a large organisation's users, a pattern seen repeatedly in Japan this year.

The agency

The Digital Agency was set up in 2021 to lead the digitalisation of government, and its own security is closely watched as it promotes services such as the My Number card.

Advice

People who contacted the agency through its website in that period should be wary of messages that use their details.

TECHNOLOGY

1906: Santos-Dumont Flies the 14-bis at Bagatelle, the First Powered Flight in Europe Seen by Official Witnesses

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 23, 1906, the Brazilian aviator Alberto Santos-Dumont flew his aeroplane, the 14-bis, about 60 metres at a height of two to three metres at the Bagatelle field in the Bois de Boulogne, Paris.

The flight won the Archdeacon Prize, offered for the first flight of more than 25 metres, and was watched by officials of the Aero-Club de France.

The machine

The 14-bis was an odd-looking machine, with its wings at the back and a box-kite structure at the front that served for steering. The pilot stood in a basket.

A wealthy enthusiast

Santos-Dumont, the son of a rich coffee grower, had already become famous in Paris for flying airships around the city, including one around the Eiffel Tower in 1901.

November

On November 12, 1906, he flew 220 metres in about 21 seconds, setting the first records recognised by the body that would become the international federation for aeronautics.

The Wright brothers

The Wright brothers had flown at Kitty Hawk in 1903, but they had worked largely in secret, and few people in Europe had seen their aircraft. To many Parisians, Santos-Dumont was the first man to fly.

Brazil

In Brazil he is still regarded as the father of aviation, and the dispute over who flew first remains a matter of national pride.

The watch

His friend Louis Cartier is said to have designed a wristwatch for him so that he could check the time without taking his hands off the controls, one of the first wristwatches made for men.

Legacy

He refused to patent his designs, believing aviation should benefit everyone.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

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Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 19.

TECHNOLOGY

GMO Says Intruders Planted Programs on a Cloud Service Used for Automated Currency Trading; Up to 26,739 Servers Affected

A customer reported unauthorised trades; the Asahi Shimbun said one user lost 4 million yen in two seconds

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

GMO Internet Group said on Thursday that its foreign exchange margin trading service had been accessed without authorisation and that authentication information, including trading account passwords, may have leaked.

A customer reported that a third party had made unauthorised trades on the customer's account. GMO urged customers to check their trading history and balances at once and to change their passwords.

The service

The service involved, Onamae.com Desktop Cloud, provides virtual servers that customers use to run automated trading tools for currency trading. Up to 26,739 servers may be affected.

Discovery

GMO confirmed on October 20 that unauthorised programs had been planted on some of the servers.

Two seconds

The Asahi Shimbun reported that one user of a GMO-affiliated service had lost 4 million yen in two seconds through trades the user did not make.

Why it is dangerous

Automated trading tools can place orders in a fraction of a second, so an intruder who controls the server they run on can move large sums before a customer notices.

The industry

Online securities and currency trading accounts have been a frequent target this year, after a wave of account takeovers at Japanese brokers in 2025.

Advice

Customers should change passwords, check whether automated tools have made trades they did not authorise and contact the company if they find any.

TECHNOLOGY

2019: Google Claims 'Quantum Supremacy' With a 53-Qubit Processor

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 23, 2019, the journal Nature published a paper by Google researchers claiming that their quantum processor, Sycamore, had performed a calculation in about 200 seconds that would take the world's fastest supercomputer about 10,000 years.

The claim was described as the first demonstration of quantum supremacy, the point at which a quantum computer does something that is practically impossible for an ordinary computer.

The task

The calculation was a specially chosen problem, sampling the output of random quantum circuits, with no practical use. Its purpose was to show what the machine could do.

The chip

Sycamore had 53 working qubits, the quantum equivalent of bits, which can represent combinations of zero and one at the same time.

The challenge

IBM argued that a classical supercomputer could do the task in about two and a half days with better methods, and later research narrowed the gap further.

Why it mattered

Despite the dispute, the experiment showed that a quantum processor could be controlled precisely enough to outperform classical machines on at least one task.

Since then

Companies and governments, including Japan's, have invested heavily in quantum computers, which could eventually break some of the encryption that protects the internet.

Today

That prospect is one reason security agencies are urging a move to new forms of encryption, at a time when AI is already making it easier to find flaws in software.

TECHNOLOGY



A Capcom building with the company's name on its roof, in a file photo. The game maker said on Thursday that about 11.77 million CAPCOM ID email addresses had leaked. (File photo: WPM Productions)

TECHNOLOGY

Capcom Says 11.77 Million CAPCOM ID Email Addresses Leaked and 196 Passwords Were Changed by Intruders

The game maker found signs of unauthorised access on October 19 and has reset the affected accounts; it warns users not to open attachments in suspicious emails

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Capcom, the Osaka video game maker behind the Resident Evil and Monster Hunter series, said on Thursday that its online membership service, CAPCOM ID, had been accessed without authorisation and that about 11.77 million email addresses used as account IDs had leaked, from users in Japan and abroad.

In 196 cases, the passwords needed to log in were changed without the account holders' permission. In 43 cases, other personal information, including dates of birth and gender, leaked.

What Capcom has done

The company reset the passwords it found had been changed. It said it had not confirmed that passwords themselves had leaked.

The timeline

Capcom found signs of possible unauthorised access on October 19 and confirmed the leak of personal information the next day.

The warning

The company asked users not to open attachments in suspicious emails. Leaked email addresses are commonly used to send phishing messages that pretend to come from the company concerned, asking recipients to log in or to download a file.

Not PHP

There is no indication that the breach is connected with the PHP flaws disclosed this week: Capcom found the first signs of intrusion on October 19, two

days before the flaws were announced.

The scale

The figure makes the Capcom breach one of the largest disclosed in Japan this year, though it is dwarfed by the up to 53.23 million records that Sagawa Express said on Friday may have leaked from its parcel tracking service.

The company

Capcom was hit by a ransomware attack in 2020 in which personal information of customers, business partners and employees was stolen, an episode that led it to strengthen its security.

What users should do

Users should change their CAPCOM ID password, and any other account that uses the same password, and turn on two-step verification where it is available.

The industry

Game accounts are an attractive target because they are often linked to payment details and to items that can be resold, and publishers around the world have been hit by account takeovers.

should check deliveries through the company's official app or website.

The company

Sagawa Express, part of SG Holdings, handles more than a billion parcels a year and is one of the three largest delivery companies in Japan with Yamato Transport and Japan Post.

A run of leaks

The announcement adds to a series of large breaches disclosed in recent days, including those at Capcom, Park24 and Arcadia, the company whose disaster information service was used to send 1.42 million suspicious emails.

The authorities

Companies that suffer leaks of personal information that could harm the people concerned must report them to the Personal Information Protection Commission.

Next

Customers should watch for messages that use their name and address to appear genuine.

TECHNOLOGY

Park24 Confirms 1.46 Million ID Images Leaked and Will Pay 3,000 Yen Each

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Park24, which runs the Times Car sharing service and Times car parks, said on Friday that about 1.46 million images of identity documents, including driver's licences, had leaked through unauthorised

access.

The company said it would pay customers whose images were confirmed to have leaked the equivalent of 3,000 yen each, in cash or gift vouchers.

The cost

Park24 will book a special loss of 5.5 billion yen in its business year ending in October to cover the payments and other costs.

Why licences matter

Car-sharing services must check that members hold a valid driver's licence, and many companies have collected photographs of the licences for that purpose. An image of a licence shows the holder's name, address, date of birth and photograph, which can be misused to open accounts or sign contracts in someone else's name.

The response

The leaks have prompted companies to stop collecting photographs of identity documents. PayPay said on Friday it would verify identities only by reading IC chips, and major banks are dropping photographed licences for online account opening.

The law

A change in the law will make reading the IC chip mandatory for online identity checks from the spring of 2027.

Advice

Customers whose licence images may have leaked should watch for suspicious contracts, accounts or loans in their name.

Compensation

Payments of a few thousand yen have become a common gesture by Japanese companies after large leaks of personal information.

A lawsuit

A lawyer who has been calling for a class action said on Friday that a suit would be filed against Park24, telling Kyodo News that the payment was "not enough as compensation."

TECHNOLOGY

The Week's Breach Disclosures

By the Technology Desk

SAGAWA EXPRESS (FRI.): Up to 53.23 million items of personal data, including names and addresses, may have leaked from its parcel tracking service.

CAPCOM (THU.): About 11.77 million CAPCOM ID email addresses leaked; 196 passwords changed by intruders; 43 cases of other personal data.

PARK24 (FRI.): About 1.46 million images of ID documents leaked; 3,000 yen to each customer affected; 5.5 billion yen special loss.

ARCADIA (FRI.): About 1.42 million suspicious emails sent from its disaster information service; up to 3.13 million residents' email addresses may have leaked.

DIGITAL AGENCY (FRI.): About 13,000 inquiries made through its website forms from May 2021 to March 2023 may have leaked through a web production company.

GMO (THU.): Up to 26,739 servers of a cloud service used for automated currency trading may be affected; trading passwords may have leaked.

NAGOYA IT FIRM (FRI.): Names, departments and email addresses of about 3,000 staff of two local governments may have leaked from a staff safety confirmation system.

TREASURE FACTORY (FRI.): About 750,000 customer email addresses leaked from the systems for its home-visit buying and moving services; the company said a flaw in database access, not PHP, was exploited.

MOS FOOD SERVICES (FRI.): Data on more than 1.13 million Mos Burger prepaid cards leaked; the PINs of about 570,000 cards already issued have been changed.

COMIC CMOA (EARLIER): Up to about 4.2 million records; the e-book service run by NTT Solmare remains suspended.

POLICE DATA (WED.): Details of officers and staff of 20 prefectural police forces, and the email addresses of residents registered for crime alerts with four forces, may have leaked through the same Arcadia system, the National Police Agency said.

WHAT TO DO: Change reused passwords, turn on

two-step verification and do not open links or attachments in unexpected messages.

TECHNOLOGY

Meta Launches Muse, Its Autonomous AI Assistant, in Japan, With Links to Mercari and Money Forward Coming Soon

It is the first market outside North America; the basic service is free

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Meta began offering Muse, a personal artificial intelligence assistant that carries out tasks on its own, in Japan on Friday, the first time the service has been available outside North America.

The AI carries out instructions such as sending emails and booking travel. Users talk to it by text or voice through a dedicated smartphone app, and the basic service is free.

Japanese partners

In Japan, the service will soon connect with the flea market app Mercari and the household accounts app Money Forward.

Google

If users link it to Google's email and calendar apps, the AI can summarise unread emails and arrange schedules.

Agents

Muse is an example of what the industry calls an AI agent, software that acts for its user rather than simply answering questions. Large technology companies are racing to offer such agents, which need access to users' accounts and data to work.

The trade-off

The more an agent can do, the more access it needs, which raises questions about privacy and security, particularly in a week when Japanese companies have disclosed a series of data breaches.

Meta's results

Meta reported a jump in quarterly profit this week, while spending heavily on AI.

Competition

OpenAI, Google and others offer similar agents, and Japanese companies including LINE Yahoo are adding AI functions to their own services.

TECHNOLOGY

Apple's First Folding iPhone, the Duo, Goes on Sale in Japan From 364,800 Yen

Opened, its screen is 7.6 inches; folded, 5.4. Whether it can revive weak demand for folding phones is the question

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Apple put its first folding iPhone, the Duo, on sale on Friday, with prices in its own stores starting at 364,800 yen.

Opened, the phone's screen measures 7.6 inches, which Kyodo News said was 50 per cent larger than that of the iPhone 18 Pro Max, released in September. Folded, it shows 5.4 inches.

Inside

It uses the same chip as the iPhone 18 series. Apple says that on a single charge it can play video for up to 31 hours when open and up to 44 hours when folded.

The market

Demand for folding smartphones has been weak so far, and attention is on whether the Duo will change that.

The rivals

Samsung, Google and Chinese makers have sold folding phones for years, but they have remained a small share of the market, held back by high prices and concerns about durability.

The price

At more than 360,000 yen, the Duo is far more expensive than ordinary iPhones, and the weak yen has pushed up Japanese prices for imported devices.

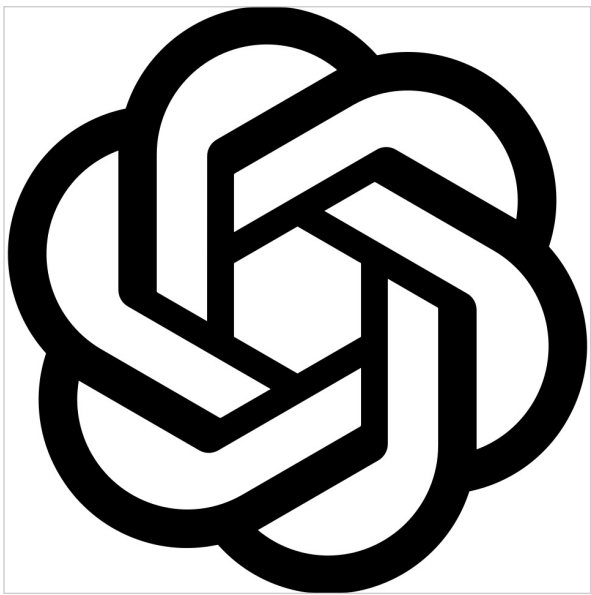
Japan

The iPhone has a larger share of the smartphone market in Japan than in most countries, which makes Japan an important test for the new model.

Twenty-five years

The launch falls on the 25th anniversary of the iPod, which Apple introduced on October 23, 2001.

TECHNOLOGY



The OpenAI logo. The company said security firms had used generative AI, including its GPT-5.6 model, to find the PHP flaws, and predicted that similar discoveries would surge. (File image: WPM Productions)

TECHNOLOGY

AI Found the PHP Flaws, and Attackers Are Using It Too: OpenAI Expects a Surge of Discoveries as Microsoft Details an AI-Driven Chinese Campaign

Security firms used OpenAI's GPT-5.6 and Google's Gemini to find the bugs; a state-linked group used an open AI tool to take over cloud accounts in under three hours. Defenders say the old rhythm of monthly patching will not survive

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The two critical flaws in PHP that have sent organisations around the world scrambling this week were found with the help of artificial intelligence, and the company behind ChatGPT says many more such discoveries are coming.

OpenAI said on Wednesday that several cybersecurity companies had used generative AI to find the vulnerabilities, and predicted that similar discoveries would surge in the coming months.

The models

The firms used OpenAI's GPT-5.6, announced in June, including its top-tier version, Sol, which OpenAI says can carry out programming and security tasks autonomously and reason through complex problems. The security company that analysed the issue also used Google's Gemini. The PHP Foundation's advisory credited researchers at the security firms Calif and Wiz, among others.

A flood of reports

A body involved in PHP's development said reports of vulnerabilities had been arriving one after another since August, and that because of advances in AI, defenders and attackers alike could now find flaws faster than ever.

The other side

Microsoft said on Wednesday that a hacker group it believes has ties to the Chinese government, which it calls Storm-0940, had used AI to run largely automated attacks on hundreds of organisations worldwide. In some cases less than three hours passed between the choice of a target and the seizure of administrator privileges in the cloud.

Since September at the latest, the group has exploited ARTEX, an openly available framework for AI-assisted penetration testing, to carry out reconnaissance, unauthorised logins and data theft with little human involvement, Microsoft said. It based its findings on records of logins to its own services. Targets included the automotive, chemical, financial, government, media and military sectors.

Japan

Kyodo News reported that the same tool was used in a large-scale attack that damaged Japanese companies. AI is also used in defence, but attackers are considered to have an overwhelming advantage, and companies, government agencies and individuals have no quick fix, it said in an analysis that warned of a feared "bugmageddon", a flood of flaws found faster than they can be fixed.

TECHNOLOGY

Ministry Begins Work on Defending Telecom Carriers' Data From AI-Powered Attacks, With a Report Due in the Summer of 2027

The panel will look at preparation before an attack, which current law does not fully cover, and whether the Telecommunications Business Act should change

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The internal affairs ministry began studying on Thursday how to strengthen the defence of data handled by telecommunications carriers against cyberattacks that are becoming more dangerous as artificial intelligence advances.

The ministry held the first meeting of an expert panel and presented the issues it will examine. The review

Before and after

Amazon said it had found signs that attackers tried to exploit the PHP flaws before they were made public. Matthew Prince, the chief executive of Cloudflare, said attempts to exploit them rose sharply once they were disclosed.

Tokyo's worry

The Yomiuri Shimbun reported that officials fear that if attackers using AI find vulnerabilities first, damage could spread across Japan overnight. The government is considering how to secure access to advanced AI for defence and how to help small and medium-sized companies, which often lack security staff.

Faster patching

For defenders, the practical consequence is that the time between the discovery of a flaw and attacks on it is shrinking. Security specialists have long recommended applying critical fixes within days; this week many organisations had hours.

Using AI to defend

The internal affairs ministry's new expert panel on telecommunications security, which met for the first time on Thursday, plans to encourage carriers to use AI to find weaknesses in their own systems and to apply fixes quickly.

A team of white hats

Industry Minister Ryosei Akazawa said on Friday the government would form a team of white-hat hackers to help prevent unauthorised access. The Liberal Democrats have also proposed making use of such specialists, the Yomiuri Shimbun and the Asahi Shimbun reported.

What it means

The lesson of the week is not that AI has made software unsafe, but that it has made old weaknesses easier to find. Systems that are kept up to date, monitored and designed so that one failure does not bring everything down will cope; those that rely on being overlooked will not.

focuses on preparations before an attack, an area that existing laws do not adequately cover, and on the series of recent cases of unauthorised access.

The timetable

A general direction for measures that should be taken immediately is to be set early next year. A report due in the summer of 2027 will cover whether the Telecommunications Business Act, which regulates carriers, needs to be revised.

The premise

The panel is working on the premise that attacks using advanced AI will increase. Its planned responses include using AI on the defending side to detect vulnerabilities, applying software fixes quickly, and supporting carriers so that they carry out these measures reliably.

Shutting down

The panel is expected to confirm the importance of carriers actively shutting systems down when necessary to repair them, a question brought into sharp focus by this week's preventive suspensions over the PHP flaws.

The chairman

The panel is chaired by Professor George Shishido of the University of Tokyo's graduate school, a specialist in constitutional and information law. He said that for carriers to keep improving their defences over time, systems that give businesses incentives would be important.

Why carriers

Telecommunications carriers hold vast amounts of data about their customers' communications and locations, and their networks carry services, such as emergency alerts, on which public safety depends.

The week's example

On Friday SoftBank suspended its emergency alert mail until Monday because of the PHP flaws.

Past incidents

A large outage at KDDI in 2022, which disrupted calls for millions of customers for days, led to new rules on reporting accidents and on cooperation between carriers.

TECHNOLOGY

Government Will Compile AI and Digital Reform Principles by Year-End, Reviewing Rules Across Society and Considering Changes to the AI Act

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

The government said on Thursday that it would compile by the end of the year a set of AI and Digital Reform Principles, a guideline for reviewing national systems, including regulations, so that artificial intelligence can be used actively across society.

It will draw up rules for using AI in various fields, and to strengthen safety measures against cyberattacks it will also consider revising the AI Act and related laws.

The council

The AI and Digital Reform Promotion Council, made up of experts and the relevant ministers, met for the first time at the Prime Minister's Office on Thursday afternoon and confirmed the policy direction.

Its role

The council evolved from the former Digital Administrative and Fiscal Reform Council. It will present the overall picture of policy and act as a control tower.

Other bodies

Reviews of individual systems will continue in existing bodies, including the AI Strategy Headquarters and the Regulatory Reform Promotion Council.

The AI Act

Japan's AI Act, passed in 2025, is a framework law that promotes research and use of AI and allows the government to investigate serious cases of misuse, but it imposes few direct obligations on companies, unlike the European Union's AI Act.

The question of suspension

The Asahi Shimbun reported that the discussion would include whether the kind of preventive service suspensions seen this week over the PHP flaws should become an established practice.

The balance

The government wants to encourage the use of AI to raise productivity in an ageing society while managing the risks, including its use in cyberattacks, a balance that the events of this week have made more pressing.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology in Brief

By the Technology Desk

CAR NAVIGATION: Car navigation systems across Kyushu simultaneously displayed an erroneous warning message, the Asahi Shimbun reported; the operator said it was not caused by unauthorised access, but drivers were confused.

COMIC CMOA: The e-book service operated by NTT Solmare, from which up to about 4.2 million

records leaked, remains suspended, according to Internet Watch.

LINE: LINE Yahoo has started LINE AI Reservation, in which AI takes telephone bookings for restaurants, from 10,000 yen a month, according to Impress Watch.

YAHOO FLEA MARKET: Yahoo Flea Market and Yahoo Auctions are using AI to strengthen measures against resellers, Impress Watch reported.

KDDI AND BROADCOM: The two companies are working together on technology that connects chips with light, Impress Watch reported.

SAS: The analytics company has begun offering SAS AI Navigator, a service for AI governance, on the Microsoft Marketplace, the Nikkei reported.

SCIENCE: The journal Science corrected a 2024 paper on AI conversations that reduced belief in conspiracy theories; the main result was unchanged.

YDB AGENT: Yano Research Institute launched an AI service that drafts reports from its market research.

MUSE: Meta's autonomous AI assistant launched in Japan, its first market outside North America.

PAYPAY: The payment service will verify identities only by reading the IC chips in documents from early November.

TECHNOLOGY

1911: An Italian Captain Flies the First Military Reconnaissance Mission by Aeroplane, Over Turkish Lines in Libya

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 23, 1911, Captain Carlo Piazza of the Italian army took off in a Bleriot XI monoplane near Tripoli and flew over Turkish positions to observe them, the first time an aeroplane had been used in war.

Italy had gone to war with the Ottoman Empire the previous month to seize its provinces in what is now Libya.

A small force

Italy had sent a handful of aircraft and pilots with its expeditionary force, an experiment at a time when many generals doubted that flying machines had any military value.

Bombs

Little more than a week later, on November 1, another Italian pilot, Giulio Gavotti, dropped small bombs by hand on Turkish troops, the first aerial bombing.

Photographs

Italian airmen also took the first reconnaissance photographs from the air during the war.

The lesson

Three years later, at the start of the First World War, aircraft were used mainly for reconnaissance, and by its end fighters and bombers had changed warfare.

The Bleriot

The Bleriot XI was the type in which Louis Bleriot had crossed the English Channel in 1909, and it was widely built and copied.

A century on

Today drones carry out the same task of watching the enemy from above, and the war in Ukraine has made them central to the battlefield.

TECHNOLOGY

1970: Gary Gabelich Drives the Rocket-Powered Blue Flame to 622 Miles an Hour, the First Car Past 1,000 km/h

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 23, 1970, the American driver Gary Gabelich set a world land speed record of 622.407 miles an hour, about 1,001.667 km/h, in the Blue Flame at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah.

He was the first person to drive a car faster than 1,000 km/h over the official measured distance.

The car

The Blue Flame was powered not by a jet engine but by a rocket, burning liquefied natural gas and hydrogen peroxide.

TECHNOLOGY

The rules

A land speed record is the average of two runs in opposite directions over a measured mile or kilometre, made within an hour, to cancel out the effect of wind.

The salt

The Bonneville Salt Flats, a dry lake bed of hard, flat salt, have been the setting for speed records since the early 20th century.

How long it stood

Gabelich's record lasted for 13 years, until the British driver Richard Noble went faster in the jet-powered Thrust2 in 1983.

The driver

Gabelich had worked as a test driver and on the American space programme before his record attempt. He died in a motorcycle accident in 1984.

Today

The record now stands at more than 1,200 km/h, set in 1997 by Thrust SSC, the first car to break the sound barrier.

TECHNOLOGY

1999: Apple Releases Mac OS 9, the Last Major Version of the Classic Macintosh System

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 23, 1999, Apple released Mac OS 9, which it promoted as the best internet operating system ever.

It was the last major version of the classic Mac OS, the system that had run Macintosh computers since 1984.

What was new

Mac OS 9 introduced Sherlock 2, a search tool that could look through the internet as well as the computer, a keychain that stored passwords, support for several users on one machine, and automatic software updates over the internet.

Voice

It also offered a voice password, letting users log in by speaking a phrase.

The successor

Apple was already working on Mac OS X, built on the Unix-based system developed at NeXT, the company founded by Steve Jobs that Apple had bought in 1997. Mac OS X arrived in 2001, and for several years it could run older programs in a Classic environment that used Mac OS 9.

A funeral

At its developers' conference in 2002, Jobs held a mock funeral for Mac OS 9, complete with a coffin, to tell programmers that the future lay with the new system.

Apple's revival

Mac OS 9 arrived as Apple was recovering under Jobs, with the colourful iMac selling well, and two years before the iPod changed the company's fortunes.

Legacy

Some features introduced in Mac OS 9, such as the keychain, survive in Apple's systems today.

TECHNOLOGY

2001: Apple Introduces the iPod: '1,000 Songs in Your Pocket'

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 23, 2001, Steve Jobs introduced the iPod at Apple's headquarters in Cupertino, California, a portable music player with a 5-gigabyte hard drive that he said could hold 1,000 songs in your pocket.

It cost 399 dollars, worked only with Macintosh computers and connected to them with FireWire, which could transfer an entire CD in seconds.

The wheel

Its scroll wheel let users move quickly through long lists of songs, a feature that made it far easier to use than rival players.

The drive

The iPod used a tiny 1.8-inch hard drive made by Toshiba, which made it possible to carry a large music collection in a small device.

iTunes

The player worked with iTunes, Apple's music software, and in 2003 Apple opened the iTunes

Music Store, selling songs for 99 cents each and transforming how music was bought.

The sceptics

At launch, critics doubted that people would pay so much for a music player, and the first model sold modestly.

The success

Versions for Windows followed in 2002, and the iPod became one of the best-selling devices of its time, with more than 400 million sold before Apple stopped making it in 2022.

The iPhone

The iPod's success gave Apple the confidence, and the experience, to make the iPhone, introduced in 2007.

Japan

The iPod was a challenge to Sony, whose Walkman had defined portable music for two decades.

TECHNOLOGY

2004: The Chuetsu Earthquake Derails a Shinkansen in Service for the First Time, Yet No One on Board Is Hurt

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

At 5:56 p.m. on October 23, 2004, a magnitude 6.8 earthquake struck the Chuetsu region of Niigata Prefecture, registering the maximum intensity of 7 on the Japanese scale in the town of Kawaguchi.

It was the first time a seismometer had recorded intensity 7 since the agency began measuring intensity with instruments.

The toll

The earthquake and its aftershocks killed 68 people and injured more than 4,000, many of them in the mountain villages around Nagaoka. The entire village of Yamakoshi was evacuated after landslides cut it off.

The derailment

A Toki train on the Joetsu Shinkansen derailed near Nagaoka while travelling at about 200 km/h, the first derailment of a Shinkansen in passenger service. None of the people on board was seriously injured.

Why no one died

The train stayed close to the track, and investigators found that parts of the carriages had caught on the rails, keeping it upright.

Lessons

JR East and other operators installed guides on their trains and rails to stop derailed carriages from moving away from the track, and strengthened viaducts.

Warning systems

The disaster also accelerated work on systems that detect earthquakes and stop trains automatically, and on the earthquake early warnings that now reach mobile phones.

Today

That is why the suspension of emergency alert mail by SoftBank this week, until Monday, has drawn so much attention.

TECHNOLOGY

2012: Apple Unveils the iPad Mini, Shrinking Its Tablet to a 7.9-Inch Screen

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 23, 2012, Apple unveiled the iPad mini at an event in San Jose, California, a smaller tablet with a 7.9-inch screen.

Steve Jobs, who died the previous year, had dismissed seven-inch tablets as too small to be useful, but competition from smaller, cheaper devices from Google and Amazon led Apple to change course.

The device

The first iPad mini had the same number of pixels as the original iPad, so existing apps ran without change, and it was light enough to hold in one hand.

The price

It started at 329 dollars, more than its main rivals, and went on sale in early November.

The reception

Reviewers praised its design and weight, and it sold strongly, though some criticised its lower-resolution

screen.

The line

Apple has continued to update the iPad mini, which is popular with readers, pilots and others who want a tablet that fits in a coat pocket.

Phones grow

As smartphone screens grew larger in the following years, the gap between a big phone and a small tablet narrowed.

Today

Apple's new folding iPhone, the Duo, which went on sale on Friday, has a 7.6-inch screen when opened, close to the size of the original iPad mini.

TECHNOLOGY

2020: The iPhone 12 Goes on Sale, Apple's First 5G Phones, Without a Charger in the Box

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 23, 2020, the iPhone 12 and iPhone 12 Pro went on sale, Apple's first phones able to use 5G mobile networks.

They were launched during the coronavirus pandemic, after an online event on October 13.

The design

The phones returned to the flat-edged design of the iPhone 4 and 5, and all models had OLED screens.

MagSafe

Apple introduced MagSafe for the iPhone, a ring of magnets on the back for attaching chargers and accessories.

No charger

Apple stopped including a charger and earphones in the box, saying it would reduce waste. Critics said it was also a way to cut costs.

5G in Japan

Japan's carriers had begun 5G service in March 2020, and the iPhone, which has a large share of the Japanese market, helped bring the technology to many users.

The models

The line-up also included the iPhone 12 mini and iPhone 12 Pro Max, which went on sale in November.

Today

Six years later Apple's iPhone 18 series is on sale, and its first folding model, the Duo, went on sale on Friday.

TECHNOLOGY

October 23 in Science and Technology

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1906: Alberto Santos-Dumont flies the 14-bis about 60 metres at Bagatelle, Paris, winning the Archdeacon Prize.

1911: Captain Carlo Piazza makes the first military reconnaissance flight by aeroplane, over Turkish lines in Libya.

1946: The United Nations General Assembly meets in New York for the first time.

1970: Gary Gabelich drives the Blue Flame to 622.407 mph, about 1,002 km/h, at Bonneville.

1999: Apple releases Mac OS 9.

2001: Apple introduces the iPod.

2004: The Chuetsu earthquake, magnitude 6.8, derails a Joetsu Shinkansen train; no one on board is seriously hurt.

2012: Apple unveils the iPad mini.

2019: Nature publishes Google's claim of quantum supremacy with the Sycamore processor.

2020: The iPhone 12, Apple's first 5G phone, goes on sale.

2026: Apple's first folding iPhone, the Duo, goes on sale.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Champi's track, Page 3.

Komeito and the 31-seat cut, Page 5.

Land near bases, Page 6.

France curbs protests, Page 9.

Nikkei's two-day slide, Page 12.

AI found the PHP flaws, Page 17.

SOCIETY

Wear or Damage Found in About 40% of Tall Concrete Chimneys, After the Collapse That Killed Nine at a Yatsushiro Paper Mill

The transport ministry checked reinforced concrete chimneys taller than 60 metres across Japan; 180 showed problems

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

About 40 per cent of the reinforced concrete chimneys taller than 60 metres in Japan, 180 in all, have deteriorated or been damaged, the transport ministry said on Friday after a nationwide survey.

The survey followed the collapse of an 80-metre chimney at Nippon Paper Industries' mill in Yatsushiro, Kumamoto Prefecture, in the earthquake that struck the prefecture on July 28.

Nine killed

The chimney broke in the middle and fell onto a two-storey office building where employees were working, killing nine people.

It had been reinforced after the Kumamoto earthquakes of 2016.

The order

Transport Minister Yasushi Kaneko announced on August 18 that the ministry would check the safety of similar chimneys across the country.

The company

Nippon Paper's president offered his condolences at a news conference at Yatsushiro city hall on August 5. "Precious lives have been lost. It is sad and regrettable," he said. The company has said an investigative committee will establish the cause.

The earthquake

The July 28 earthquake registered the maximum intensity of 7 on the Japanese scale in Hikawa, which borders Yatsushiro. Areas including Hinagu, in Yatsushiro, are still recovering.

Where they stand

Chimneys of this height are found at factories, power stations and waste incineration plants, often close to buildings where people work.

The mill

The Yatsushiro mill has five chimneys, the Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun reported after the earthquake.

SOCIETY

Fire Destroys a Warehouse of Cameras and Lights at the Kurosawa Film Studio in Yokohama; No One Is Hurt

A caller said a battery was burning; equipment brought back from a shoot was being charged

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

A fire destroyed a warehouse of about 1,500 square metres used by the Kurosawa Film Studio, which is associated with the late director Akira Kurosawa, in Seya Ward, Yokohama, early on Friday. No one was hurt.

A caller to the emergency number 119 reported at about 12:40 a.m. that a battery was burning.

The contents

According to the Seya police station of the Kanagawa prefectural police, the warehouse in Gokanmecho stored cameras and lighting equipment.

Charging

On Thursday, equipment brought back from a filming location was being charged in the warehouse, and staff had left the building.

The director

Kurosawa, who died in 1998, directed "Rashomon", "Seven Samurai" and "Ikiru", and is regarded as one of the greatest film-makers of the 20th century.

Batteries

Fires caused by lithium-ion batteries have become a growing concern in Japan, from mobile batteries on trains to equipment left charging unattended.

The investigation

Police and firefighters are investigating the cause.

Advice

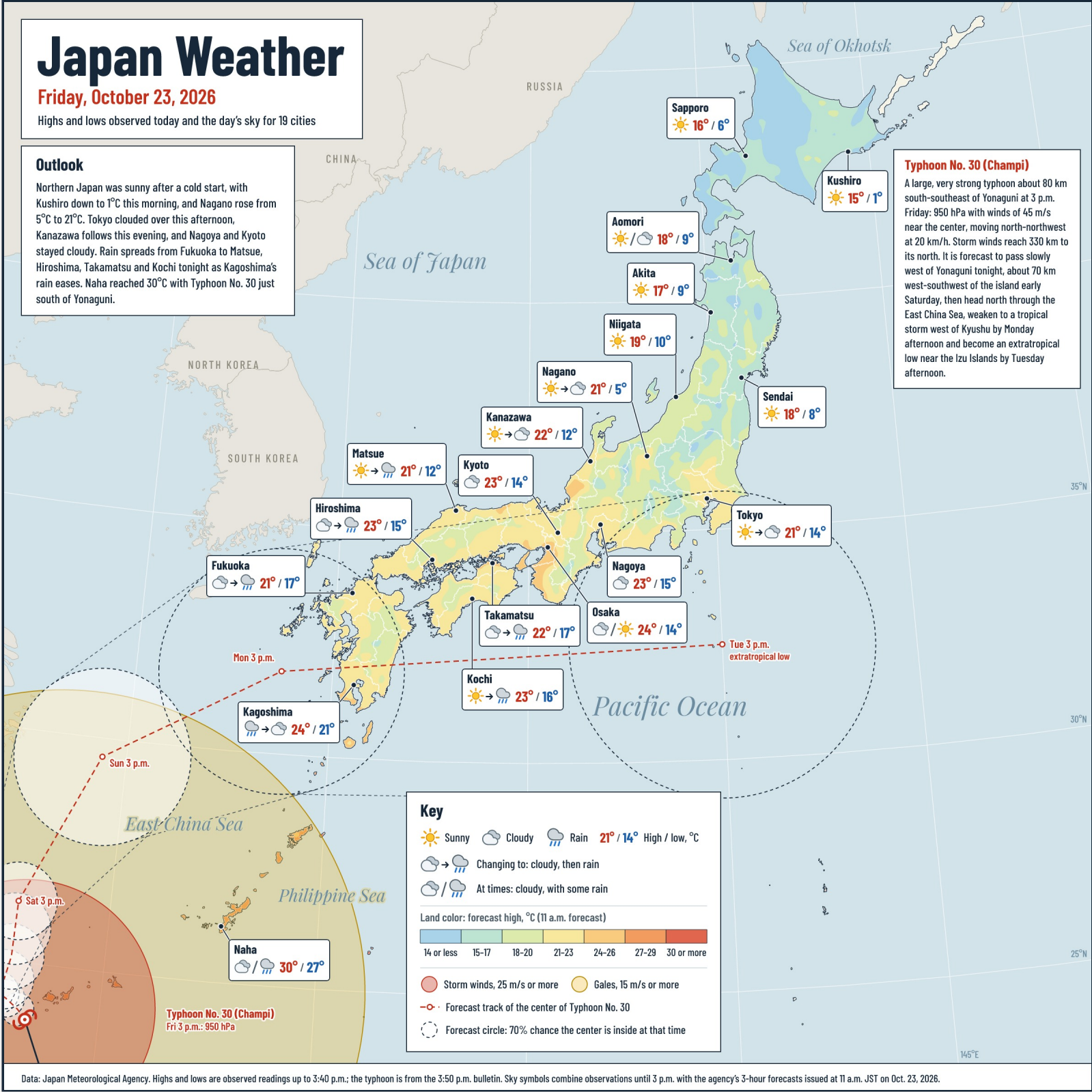
Fire officials advise against leaving batteries charging unattended or near flammable materials, and against using damaged batteries.

WEATHER & SOCIETY



21°C

Low 14°C this morning · Sunny, then cloudy · Rain tonight in the west · Champi at 950 hPa



TODAY'S HIGHS AND LOWS — 19 CITIES				
Highs and lows observed today, from today's weather map, °C, north to south. An arrow: the sky changed. A stroke: at times.				
☀️	Sapporo	6°	16°	
☀️	Kushiro	1°	15°	
☀️ / ☁️	Aomori	9°	18°	
☀️	Akita	9°	17°	
☀️	Sendai	8°	18°	
☀️	Niigata	10°	19°	
☀️ → ☁️	Nagano	5°	21°	
☀️ → ☁️	Kanazawa	12°	22°	
☀️ → ☁️	Tokyo	14°	21°	
☁️	Nagoya	15°	23°	
☁️	Kyoto	14°	23°	
☁️ / ☀️	Osaka	14°	24°	
☀️ → ☔	Matsue	12°	21°	
☁️ → ☔	Hiroshima	15°	23°	
☁️ → ☔	Takamatsu	17°	22°	
☀️ → ☔	Kochi	16°	23°	
☁️ → ☔	Fukuoka	17°	21°	
☔	Kagoshima	21°	24°	
☁️ / ☔	Naha	27°	30°	

TODAY'S WEATHER

Northern Japan was sunny after a cold start, with Kushiro down to 1 degree this morning, and Nagano rose from 5 degrees to 21. Tokyo clouded over this afternoon, Kanazawa follows this evening, and Nagoya and Kyoto stayed cloudy. Rain spreads from Fukuoka to Matsue, Hiroshima, Takamatsu and Kochi tonight as Kagoshima's rain eases. Naha reached 30 degrees with Typhoon No. 30, Champi, just south of Yonaguni, according to the map's outlook.

HOW TODAY COMPARES

The north was warmer than on Thursday's map and the south-west cooler. Sapporo and Aomori were 6 degrees warmer, at 16 and 18; Nagano 4 degrees warmer at 21; and Kanazawa 3 degrees warmer at 22. Tokyo was 4 degrees cooler at 21, and Takamatsu, Kochi and Kagoshima 3 degrees cooler. Naha was 2 degrees warmer at 30, the highest on the map.

A COLD MORNING

Clear skies let the north cool sharply overnight. Kushiro's low of 1 degree was 8 degrees below Thursday's, Nagano fell to 5, Sapporo to 6 and Sendai to 8, and Tokyo started at 14, 7 degrees cooler than on Thursday. Nagano's rise from 5 to 21, a swing of 16 degrees, was the largest on the map; Kagoshima and Naha varied by only 3. Weathernews reported a low of minus 5.9 degrees in Rikubetsu, in eastern Hokkaido, the coldest of the season so far.

REGIONAL SUMMARY

Hokkaido: Sapporo sunny, 16/6; Kushiro sunny, 15/1, the coldest morning on the map. Tohoku: Aomori sunny with some cloud, 18/9; Akita sunny, 17/9; Sendai sunny, 18/8. Niigata and Hokuriku: Niigata sunny, 19/10; Kanazawa sunny, then cloudy, 22/12. Inland: Nagano sunny, then cloudy, 21/5. Kanto: Tokyo sunny, then cloudy, 21/14. Tokai: Nagoya cloudy, 23/15. Kansai: Kyoto cloudy, 23/14; Osaka cloudy with some sun, 24/14. Chugoku: Matsue sunny, then rain, 21/12; Hiroshima cloudy, then rain, 23/15. Shikoku: Takamatsu cloudy, then rain, 22/17; Kochi sunny, then rain, 23/16. Kyushu: Fukuoka cloudy, then rain, 21/17; Kagoshima rain, then cloudy, 24/21. Okinawa: Naha cloudy with some rain, 30/27, the warmest city on the map.

THE LAND COLOURS

The colours on the map show the highs from the forecast made at 11 a.m. today. Blue, for 14 degrees

or less, covers most of Hokkaido, with greens of 15 to 17 along its coasts and across northern Tohoku. Yellow-greens of 18 to 20 spread over southern Tohoku, the central mountains and parts of Kanto, and yellows of 21 to 23 cover most of western Japan, from Kansai and Chugoku to Shikoku and Kyushu, with patches of light orange, 24 to 26, around Osaka and in southern Kyushu.

THE TYPHOON

At 3 p.m. Typhoon No. 30, Champi, was a large, very strong typhoon about 80 km south-south-east of Yonaguni, at 950 hPa with winds of 45 metres a second near the centre, moving north-north-west at 20 km/h, with storm winds reaching 330 km to its north. The map's panel says it is forecast to pass slowly west of Yonaguni tonight, about 70 km west-south-west of the island early on Saturday, then head north through the East China Sea, weaken to a tropical storm west of Kyushu by Monday afternoon and become an extratropical low near the Izu Islands by Tuesday afternoon. Storm winds of 25 metres a second or more are shown in red on the map and gales of 15 metres a second or more in yellow.

SEA AND COAST

The weather agency has warned of waves of up to 11 metres around the Sakishima Islands on Friday and Saturday, and of high waves and swells in the Amami region. Linear rainbands could form over Miyako and Yaeyama until early Saturday. Emergencies at sea: coast guard, 118.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET

Tokyo: sunrise 5:54 a.m., sunset 4:57 p.m.; Osaka: sunrise 6:09 a.m., sunset 5:15 p.m.; Sapporo: sunrise 5:56 a.m., sunset 4:41 p.m.; Fukuoka: sunrise 6:29 a.m., sunset 5:37 p.m.; Naha: sunrise 6:32 a.m., sunset 5:55 p.m.; all times calculated for today and rounded to the minute.

ABOUT THE MAP

The map cites the Japan Meteorological Agency: the highs and lows are observed readings up to 3:40 p.m., and the typhoon is from the 3:50 p.m. bulletin. Its sky symbols combine observations until 3 p.m. with the agency's three-hourly forecasts issued at 11 a.m. today. A single symbol means one sky all day, as in Sapporo, sunny, and Nagoya, cloudy. Two symbols joined by an arrow mean the sky changed during the day, as in Tokyo, sunny then cloudy, and Kagoshima, rain then cloudy. Two symbols divided by a stroke

mean one sky with the other at times, as in Aomori, sunny with some cloud, Osaka, cloudy with some sun, and Naha, cloudy with some rain.

SOCIETY

A Cold Start in the North, With Kushiro at 1 Degree, Gives Way to Sunshine; Rain Spreads Across Western Japan Tonight and Naha Reaches 30

Nagano rose 16 degrees from its morning low; Tokyo clouded over in the afternoon
By the Weather Desk

Northern Japan was sunny on Friday after a cold start, while clouds and then rain spread across western Japan, according to the weather map for 19 cities, which gives the highs and lows observed during the day.

Kushiro, in eastern Hokkaido, fell to 1 degree this morning, the lowest reading on the map, before rising to 15 in the sunshine. Sapporo reached 16 after a low of 6, and Akita and Niigata had sunshine all day, with highs of 17 and 19.

The widest swing

Nagano rose from 5 degrees this morning to 21, a swing of 16 degrees, the largest on the map. It was sunny before clouding over, as was Kanazawa, where the clouds arrive this evening after a high of 22. Sendai was sunny at 18 after a low of 8, and Aomori had sunshine with some cloud and reached 18.

Tokyo

Tokyo was sunny in the morning and clouded over in the afternoon, with a high of 21 and a low of 14. That is 4 degrees cooler than Thursday's forecast high of 25, and the morning was 7 degrees cooler than Thursday's warm start of 21.

Central and western Japan

Nagoya and Kyoto stayed cloudy, both reaching 23, and Osaka was cloudy with some sun at 24. Rain spreads tonight from Fukuoka, where the high was 21, to Matsue, Hiroshima, Takamatsu and Kochi, while Kagoshima's rain eases after a high of 24.

Okinawa

Naha reached 30 degrees, the highest on the map, with a low of 27, as Typhoon No. 30, Champi, passed just south of Yonaguni. It was cloudy with some rain.

Frost

The weather service Weathernews reported that Rikubetsu, in eastern Hokkaido, fell to minus 5.9 degrees, the lowest of the season so far, and that frost and ice were seen in several places. On Thursday the first snow of the season fell in the lowlands of Hokkaido, in Wakkanai and Asahikawa, three days later than normal.

The colours

The colours on the map show the highs forecast at 11 a.m.: blue, for 14 degrees or less, over most of Hokkaido; greens of 15 to 17 in northern Tohoku and yellow-greens of 18 to 20 further south and in the central mountains; and yellows of 21 to 23 over most of western Japan, with patches of light orange, 24 to 26, around Osaka and in southern Kyushu.

The weekend

Rain is forecast to linger in western Japan as the typhoon heads north through the East China Sea, and forecasters warned of heavy rain from Kyushu to Hokuriku even before the storm arrives.

SOCIETY

Today's Weather in Numbers

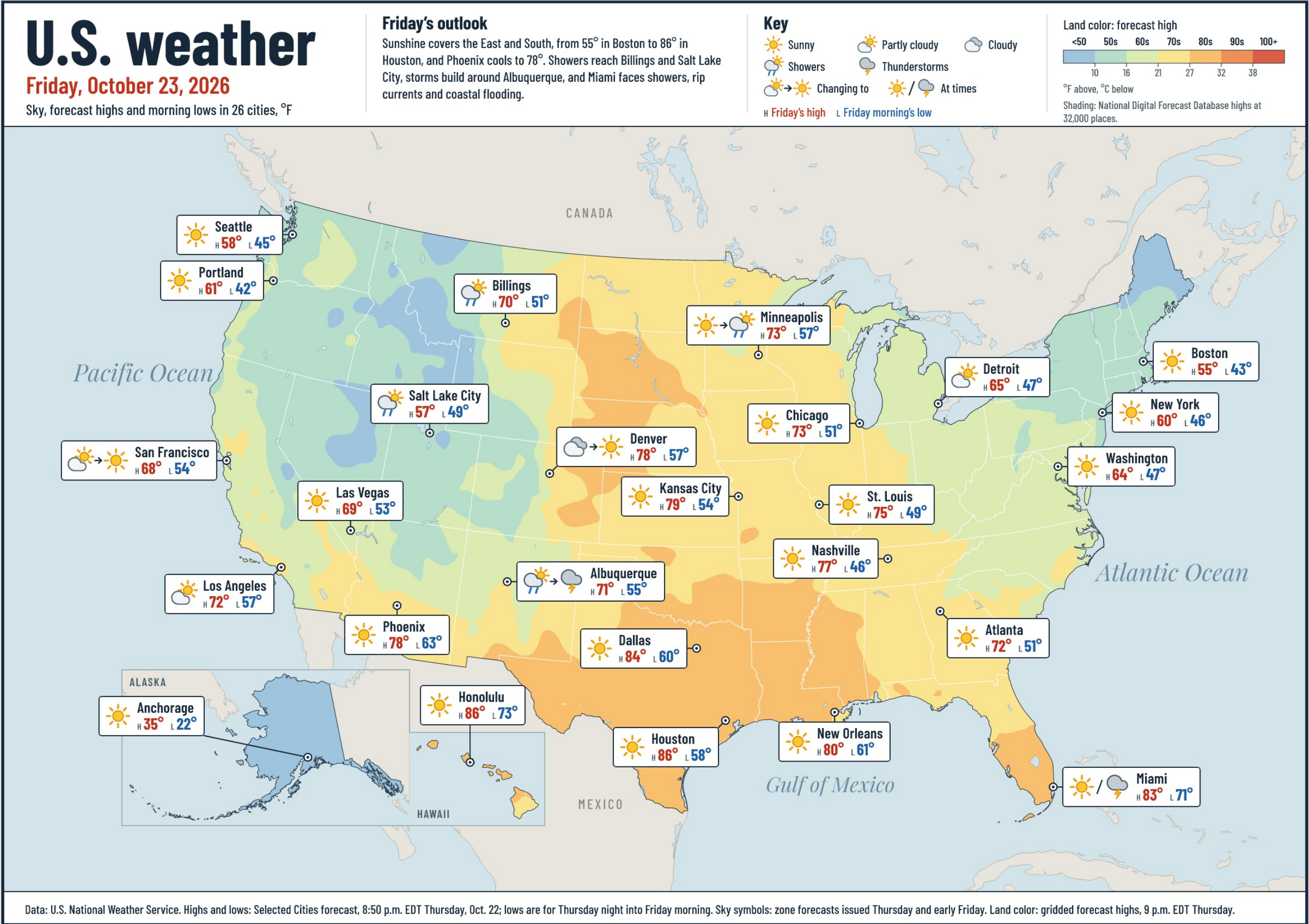
By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

WARMEST: Naha, 30.
COOLEST HIGH: Kushiro, 15.
COLDEST MORNING: Kushiro, 1.
WARMEST MORNING: Naha, 27; Kagoshima, 21.
WIDEST DAILY RANGE: Nagano, 5 to 21.
NARROWEST: Kagoshima, 21 to 24, and Naha, 27 to 30.
BIGGEST RISE FROM THURSDAY'S MAP: Sapporo and Aomori, up 6.
BIGGEST FALL: Tokyo, down 4 to 21.
TOKYO: 21, sunny then cloudy; low 14.
OSAKA: 24, cloudy with some sun; low 14.
RAIN TONIGHT: Fukuoka, Matsue, Hiroshima, Takamatsu and Kochi.
THE SEASON'S LOW: Minus 5.9 in Rikubetsu, Hokkaido, according to Weathernews.
THE TYPHOON: Champi, 950 hPa at 3 p.m.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

AI found the PHP flaws, Page 17.

WEATHER ABROAD



SOCIETY

Sunshine Covers the East and South of the United States, While Salt Lake City Falls 16 Degrees and Storms Build Around Albuquerque

Houston reaches 86 and Boston only 55; Miami faces showers, rip currents and coastal flooding
By the Weather Desk

Sunshine covers the East and South of the United States on Friday, with highs ranging from 55 degrees Fahrenheit in Boston to 86 in Houston, according to the map supplied for this edition.

Showers reach Billings, in Montana, and Salt Lake City, storms build around Albuquerque, and Miami faces showers, rip currents and coastal flooding.

The West

Salt Lake City has showers and a high of 57, 16 degrees lower than on Thursday's map, the biggest drop of any city. Billings also has showers, at 70. Albuquerque has showers giving way to thunderstorms, with a high of 71. Denver starts cloudy and turns sunny, reaching 78.

The desert and California

Phoenix cools to 78 in the sunshine, 4 degrees lower than on Thursday, with a low of 63. Las Vegas is sunny at 69, Los Angeles partly cloudy at 72 and San Francisco partly cloudy turning sunny at 68.

The Northwest

Seattle and Portland are sunny, with highs of 58 and 61 and morning lows of 45 and 42.

The Plains and Midwest

Kansas City is sunny at 79 and St Louis at 75. Chicago is sunny at 73, and Minneapolis, also 73, has sunshine giving way to showers. Detroit is partly cloudy at 65.

The South

Houston reaches 86 and Dallas 84, New Orleans 80, Nashville 77 and Atlanta 72, all in sunshine. Miami is sunny with thunderstorms at times and a high of 83.

The Northeast

Boston is sunny but cool at 55, 5 degrees lower than on Thursday, New York sunny at 60 and Washington sunny at 64.

Alaska and Hawaii

Anchorage is sunny and cold, with a high of 35 and a low of 22, the coldest on the map. Honolulu is sunny at 86, level with Houston as the warmest.

The colours

The land colours show the 80s, light orange, across Texas, the southern Plains, the lower Mississippi valley and southern Florida, and over the northern High Plains; the 70s across much of the Midwest, the Southeast and the desert; the 60s and 50s in the Northeast and along the Pacific coast; and below 50 in the high country of the northern Rockies and northern Maine.

SOCIETY

The U.S. Map at a Glance

By the Weather Desk

- HOTTEST: Honolulu and Houston, 86.
- COLDEST: Anchorage, 35, with a low of 22.
- WARMEST NIGHT: Honolulu, 73; Miami, 71.
- BIGGEST FALL FROM THURSDAY'S MAP: Salt Lake City, down 16 to 57.
- ALSO COOLER: Billings, down 6; Boston, down 5; Phoenix, New York, Portland, Las Vegas and Albuquerque, down 4.
- WARMER: Kansas City, Los Angeles and Anchorage, up 3.
- SHOWERS: Billings, Salt Lake City; Minneapolis later.
- STORMS: Albuquerque, showers then thunderstorms; Miami, thunderstorms at times.
- THE COAST: Rip currents and coastal flooding in Miami.
- WIDEST RANGE: Nashville, 46 to 77.
- NEW YORK: 60, sunny.

WASHINGTON: 64, sunny.

SOCIETY

The U.S. Map in Celsius

Friday's highs and lows, converted and rounded to the nearest degree
By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

- NEW YORK: 16 / 8.
- WASHINGTON: 18 / 8.
- BOSTON: 13 / 6.
- CHICAGO: 23 / 11.
- LOS ANGELES: 22 / 14.
- SAN FRANCISCO: 20 / 12.
- SEATTLE: 14 / 7.
- SALT LAKE CITY: 14 / 9.
- PHOENIX: 26 / 17.
- DALLAS AND HOUSTON: 29 / 16 and 30 / 14.
- MIAMI: 28 / 22.
- HONOLULU: 30 / 23.
- ANCHORAGE: 2 / -6.

SOCIETY

Most Sites Keeping the Memory of the 2011 Disaster Alive Cannot Cover Their Costs, a Survey Finds

Nearly half of the facilities in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima say income covers none of their costs
By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

Most of the facilities and groups in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures that pass on the lessons of the Great East Japan Earthquake cannot cover their costs from income such as admission fees, according to a private survey reported by Kyodo News on Friday. None of the facilities said its income covered more than half of the costs it needed, and nearly half said their income covered none of them.

Among the groups, which include storytellers who guide visitors around the areas struck by the tsunami, 37 per cent said their income covered more than half of their costs.

Filling the gap

Asked how they made up the shortfall, 64 per cent of the facilities cited budgets from the national or local governments, the most common answer.

The survey

The survey was carried out in July and August by the 3.11 Memorial Network, a public interest incorporated association based in Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture.

It covered 32 organisations that run memorial facilities in the three prefectures and 30 groups, including storytellers, and answers were collected until October.

Fifteen years on

The earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011, killed more than 15,000 people, and about 2,500 are still listed as missing. March this year marked the 15th anniversary.

What they do

The facilities preserve buildings damaged by the tsunami and display records of the disaster, while storytellers describe to visitors what happened and explain how to evacuate.

Public money

The results show how far the work depends on public funds: not one of the facilities pays for even half of its costs from its own income.

SOCIETY



Princess Aiko, in a file photo. The Cabinet approved on Friday her official visit to Singapore from November 17 to 21, her second official trip abroad, marking 60 years of diplomatic relations. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SOCIETY

Princess Aiko Will Make an Official Visit to Singapore From November 17 to 21, Her Second Trip Abroad on Official Duties

The Cabinet approved the visit, at the invitation of President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, to mark 60 years of diplomatic relations
By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Princess Aiko, the only child of the Emperor and Empress, will make an official visit to Singapore from November 17 to 21, after the Cabinet approved the trip at its meeting on Friday.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Singapore, and the visit is at the invitation of President Tharman Shanmugaratnam.

Her second

It will be the princess's second official visit abroad. Her first was to Laos in November last year.

The schedule

According to the Imperial Household Agency, she will leave Haneda Airport on a commercial flight on the morning of November 17 and arrive in Singapore that afternoon. During her stay she will pay a courtesy call on the president and attend a dinner he hosts.

Friendship

The agency said the visit is intended to promote friendship and goodwill between the two countries.

SOCIETY

Revised Imperial House Law Takes Effect on Saturday: Women Will Keep Their Status After Marriage, and Male Descendants of Former Branch Families Can Be Adopted

The Imperial Household Agency is considering a ceremony, modelled on the imperial wedding rite, to mark the completion of an adoption
By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The revised Imperial House Law takes effect on Saturday, bringing what Kyodo News called a major change to the imperial system, intended to secure the number of members of the imperial family.

Under the revision, women of the imperial family will keep their status after marriage. It also allows adoption between current members of the imperial family and male-line male descendants of the 11 former branch houses that left the imperial family in 1947.

A ceremony for adoption

On Thursday the Imperial Household Agency explained how it is preparing to put the system into practice. It is considering holding a ceremony when an adoption is completed, to show that the adoptee has become a member of the imperial family.

The revised law does not state clearly when an adoption takes effect, and the agency said it understood that an adoption would be completed by holding a ceremony. The ceremony would draw on the wedding rite used when a male member of the imperial family marries a woman from outside it.

Living arrangements

Adopted members will not be required to live with their adoptive parents, but the agency said that given the purpose of the system it would be preferable for them to learn how to conduct themselves from their adoptive parents or other members of the family.

Expo

In May last year the princess visited the Singapore pavilion at the Osaka-Kansai Expo.

Her role

Princess Aiko, who turns 25 in December, graduated from Gakushuin University in 2024 and works at the Japanese Red Cross Society while carrying out official duties, which have increased steadily since her graduation.

The law

The visit was approved on the eve of the revised Imperial House Law taking effect on Saturday. Under the revision, women of the imperial family will keep their status after marriage, a change of direct relevance to the princess.

Singapore and Japan

Singapore, one of Japan's closest partners in Southeast Asia, established diplomatic relations with Japan in 1966, the year after it became independent.

Marriage ceremonies

For women who keep their status after marriage, the agency will reconsider how the marriage ceremony is conducted.

The wishes of the family

The agency will prepare for implementation while taking the wishes of members of the imperial family into account.

Succession

The government has made clear that it will maintain succession to the throne through the male line, though opinion polls show that many people in Japan would accept a reigning empress. A supplementary resolution attached to the bill in the Diet says the question of stable succession will continue to be considered.

Why it was needed

The imperial family has shrunk as women who married commoners left it. Prince Hisahito, the son of Crown Prince Akishino, is the only member of his generation eligible to succeed to the throne.

Explanation

Kyodo News said that putting the changes into practice would require sufficient explanation to win the public's understanding.

SOCIETY

The Imperial House Law: What Changes on Saturday

By the Society Desk

TAKES EFFECT: Saturday, October 24.

THE AIM: To secure the number of members of the imperial family.

WOMEN: Women of the imperial family keep their status after marriage.

ADOPTION: Male-line male descendants of the 11 former branch houses, which left the imperial family

in 1947, can be adopted by current members.

THE CEREMONY: The Imperial Household Agency is considering a rite, modelled on the imperial wedding ceremony, to complete an adoption.

LIVING: Adopted members need not live with their adoptive parents.

SUCCESSION: The government says it will keep male-line succession; the Diet's supplementary resolution says stable succession will continue to be considered.

THE FAMILY'S WISHES: The agency says it will take them into account.

PRINCESS AIKO: Official visit to Singapore, November 17-21.

THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS: Visit to Osaka, November 14-15.

SOCIETY

Three Months After the Kumamoto Earthquake, Hinagu Loses Its Only Supermarket and a 190-Year-Old Cultural Property Collapses

A national survey finds damage or deterioration in about 40 per cent of tall concrete chimneys after one fell in Yatsushiro
By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Nearly three months after the earthquake that struck Kumamoto Prefecture at the end of July, residents of the Hinagu district of Yatsushiro, one of the hardest-hit areas, have lost the only supermarket in their district, Kyodo News reported.

The Marushoku Hinagu store closed permanently without reopening after the earthquake. People aged 65 and over make up about 60 per cent of the district's population, and many cannot drive, leaving them struggling to buy food and daily necessities. City officials say the closure affects more than 6,000 people in the district and surrounding areas.

Life in a shelter

An 83-year-old woman living in an evacuation centre asked whether anyone could keep living on ready-made pouch meals for three months. Shelters mainly provide food that keeps, such as bread, retort pouches and tinned food, and residents say they cannot even buy eggs or natto.

The van

The city runs a free van linking shelters with supermarkets outside the district and with hospitals. The trip to a supermarket takes about 40 minutes, and because the van makes other stops, the return trip takes about an hour and a half.

A lost building

In the town of Hikawa, where the earthquake registered the maximum intensity of 7 in July, a building more than 190 years old that is registered as a national tangible cultural property collapsed on October 16. It had been judged totally destroyed and was left standing at a tilt while the town discussed what to do.

Chimneys

The transport ministry said on Friday that about 40 per cent of the reinforced concrete chimneys taller than 60 metres across Japan, 180 in all, showed deterioration or damage. The survey followed the collapse of a chimney at Nippon Paper Industries' Yatsushiro mill in the earthquake.

Trains

The JR companies said this week that their winter plans for the Kyushu Shinkansen had not been decided because of the earthquake's continuing effects.

Support

Donations to the prefecture for victims of the earthquake had reached about 4.3 billion yen by early August, and lottery proceeds of about 4 billion yen will support reconstruction in areas hit by the earthquakes.

Ten years on

The region was also struck by the Kumamoto earthquakes of April 2016, so parts of the prefecture are rebuilding for the second time in a decade.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Komeito and the 31-seat cut, Page 5.

Land near bases, Page 6.

France curbs protests, Page 9.

Nikkei's two-day slide, Page 12.

AI found the PHP flaws, Page 17.

SOCIETY

DNA Tests by Japan and South Korea Fail to Identify Remains Recovered From the Sunken Chosei Coal Mine

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The Japanese and South Korean governments each carried out DNA tests on human remains recovered from the Chosei coal mine, under the sea off Ube, Yamaguchi Prefecture, but neither was able to identify them, the foreign ministry said on Friday.

The bones were recovered in August last year and in February this year.

The disaster

In 1942 the undersea mine flooded, killing 183 people, many of them Koreans.

The search

A local civic group that has searched for and studied the remains recovered the bones, and the group and bereaved families asked for DNA matching to identify them.

The response

The ministry said Japan would continue to work closely with South Korea, with the aim of developing relations in a stable, forward-looking way. The civic group said it was disappointed that the remains could not be identified.

The divers

The group's volunteer divers have explored the mine through its ventilation shaft, known as the Piya, which still stands in the sea.

History

Many Koreans worked in Japanese mines during the period of colonial rule, and the fate of those who died has been a sensitive issue between the two countries.

Next

The two governments have cooperated on the tests as part of efforts to improve relations.

SOCIETY

Court Orders Tests on the Original 'Seal Paper' From the Wine Bottle in the Nabari Poisoning Case, 65 Years Later

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The Nagoya High Court has decided to have the actual paper seal that was wrapped around the mouth of the wine bottle in the 1961 Nabari poisoned wine case examined, analysing the glue that remains on it, sources said on Friday.

The test is part of the 11th request for a retrial in the case.

The case

Five people died after drinking poisoned wine at a gathering at a community hall in Nabari, Mie Prefecture, in 1961.

The defendant

Masaru Okunishi was sentenced to death and died in prison at the age of 89, still protesting his innocence. His sister has continued to seek a retrial.

The prosecution's case

The final judgments concluded that Okunishi added the poison when the seal tore. They said the bottle's seal was found in the room at the hall where the poison was added, and that he alone had the opportunity to be there by himself.

The defence

The defence argues that the real culprit opened the bottle somewhere else, added the poison and glued the seal back on, and that an analysis of the glue could show it was reapplied.

Why it matters

Tests on original evidence have been decisive in other retrials, including the case of Iwao Hakamada, who was acquitted in 2024 after nearly half a century in detention and under sentence of death.

Other cases

The Ministry of Justice and the National Police Agency said eight cases, including the Iizuka case, in which convictions relied on the same type of DNA test used in the Ashikaga case, did not need to be re-examined, the Sankei Shimbun reported.

SOCIETY



A Nozomi train on the Tokaido Shinkansen, which will run an average of 390 trains a day this winter and as many as 449 over the New Year holidays. (Photo: Akihiko Maeda)

SOCIETY

Tokaido Shinkansen Will Run an Average of 390 Trains a Day This Winter, Up to 449 Over the New Year Holidays

New Hakutaka services from Tsuruga, a luxury train from Sapporo to Abashiri and, on the Kyushu Shinkansen, plans still on hold after the Kumamoto earthquake

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The Tokaido Shinkansen will run an average of 390 trains a day this winter, including regular services that continue on to the Sanyo Shinkansen, and as many as 449 a day over the year-end and New Year holidays from December 25 to January 5, the JR companies said on Thursday as they announced their extra trains for December to February.

Other lines

Extra trains will also run on the Hokkaido, Tohoku, Akita, Yamagata, Joetsu, Hokuriku and Nishi-Kyushu Shinkansen lines.

Tsuruga connections

On the Hokuriku Shinkansen, temporary Hakutaka trains will run between Tsuruga and Nagano and between Tokyo and Tsuruga, connecting at Tsuruga with limited express trains from the Kansai region. The operators say the connections will cut travel times between Kansai and stations on the Hokuriku and Shinetsu routes by up to about 30 minutes.

Kyushu

Plans for the Kyushu Shinkansen have not yet been decided because of the continuing effects of the

Kumamoto earthquake in July, and will be announced later.

A new train

JR Hokkaido will begin running Akai Hoshi, a new luxury sightseeing train, between Sapporo and Abashiri.

Booking

Seats on the Tokaido, Sanyo and Kyushu Shinkansen can be reserved a month in advance, and the year-end and New Year trains are usually the first to sell out.

SMART EX

JR Central carried out maintenance this week on SMART EX, its online booking service for the Tokaido Shinkansen, because of the PHP flaws; bookings could still be made through the app.

Shizuoka

Shizuoka's governor, Yasutomo Suzuki, who took office in 2024, has taken a more cooperative approach to the project than his predecessor.

SOCIETY

JR Uchibo Line Will Reopen Fully on November 9, Well Ahead of Schedule; a Storm-Hit Stretch of the Kururi Line Will Not Be Restored

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

JR East's Chiba branch office said on Friday that the Uchibo Line, which runs along the Boso Peninsula in Chiba Prefecture, will resume services on its whole route from the first train on November 9.

Landslides caused by Typhoon No. 25 in September had halted services on some sections, and those suspensions were still in effect.

Faster than expected

JR had said that restoring service would take at least three months, so the line will reopen much sooner than estimated.

The line

The Uchibo Line runs from Soga, near Chiba city, down the western coast of the peninsula towards Awa-Kamogawa, serving commuters and holidaymakers.

The rain

The heavy rain in Chiba in August was among the disasters cited by the transport ministry on Thursday when it called for drainage that can cope with 100 mm of rain an hour.

Tourism

The Boso Peninsula's coast is a popular destination in winter, when flower fields along the line attract visitors.

The Kururi Line

JR East's Chiba office also said on Friday that it had given up on restoring the section of the Kururi Line between Kururi and Kazusa-Kameyama, where Typhoon No. 25 caused the ground beneath the tracks to collapse. Repairs would take about six months, and the section was already due to be closed on April 1 next year because of falling passenger numbers.

SOCIETY

Sagano's Sightseeing Trolley Gets Glass Walls Up to the Roof for Its Ride Through the Hozu Gorge From March

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The Sagano Scenic Railway, which runs a sightseeing trolley train from Arashiyama in Kyoto through the Hozu Gorge, showed the press a new train in Osaka on Friday with glass running from the sides of the carriages up into the roof.

The new cars make the scenery feel more immersive than the current ones. Services are to begin on March 1, 2027.

The train

The new train has five cars: four passenger cars pulled or pushed by a hybrid electric-diesel locomotive. It keeps the red and black colours of the current trains.

Comfort

Seats are more widely spaced and the aisles wider, and the cars have screens showing station names, which the current trains lack.

The veranda

Part of the train is a special room with seats modelled on engawa, the wooden verandas of traditional Japanese houses, so passengers can enjoy the view from them.

The line

The trolley line follows a disused section of the old San-in Line along the Hozu River and is one of the most popular attractions in Arashiyama, especially in the autumn leaf season.

The season

The autumn colours in the gorge usually peak in November.

Crowds

Arashiyama is one of Kyoto's busiest tourist areas, and the city has been trying to spread visitors more evenly.

SOCIETY

Ministry Will Ask Cities to Build Drains and Storage That Can Handle Downpours of 100 mm an Hour in the Most Dangerous Places

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The transport ministry told an expert panel on Thursday that it would ask local governments to strengthen drainage and water storage to reduce urban flooding caused by rain that cannot drain away.

In dangerous places, such as low-lying residential areas and underground shopping centres, facilities should be able to cope with the heaviest downpours, of about 100 mm an hour.

Why

Climate change has brought heavier rain than expected, the ministry said, citing damage including the heavy rain in Chiba in August.

The current standard

Under existing guidelines, drainage in general areas that need flood measures is expected to handle about 50 mm an hour, and in areas where urban functions are concentrated, about 60 to 70 mm.

The timetable

The ministry aims to compile its policy by the end of the year and present it to local governments.

Underground

Tokyo and other cities have built huge underground channels and tanks to hold storm water, such as the metropolitan outer floodway in Saitama Prefecture.

Typhoon

The announcement came as Typhoon Champi approached the Sakishima Islands with the risk of linear rainbands.

SOCIETY

Supreme Court Again Rules the Government's Welfare Cuts Were Illegal, Overturning Four High Court Defeats for Recipients

The court says the 'deflation adjustment' was based on prices alone without expert review, an abuse of the health ministry's discretion

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The Supreme Court ruled on Friday that the government's reductions in public assistance payments were illegal, overturning four high court rulings that had gone against recipients and cancelling the decisions to cut their benefits.

The Third Petty Bench, presided over by Justice Michiharu Hayashi, followed a Supreme Court ruling of June 2025 that had found similar reductions illegal.

The cases

The four lawsuits were filed by recipients in the Akita, Kobe, Saga and Kumamoto district courts, seeking the cancellation of municipalities' decisions to reduce their benefits.

The reasoning

The court said the use of the rate of change in prices as the sole indicator for the cuts had not been examined by the expert panel that advises the government, so there was no recognised expert basis for its rationality.

The health ministry had justified the reductions with what it called a "deflation adjustment", reflecting falling prices. The court found that this exceeded and abused the ministry's discretion.

The cuts

The government reduced living assistance, the part of the benefit that covers daily expenses, in stages from 2013 to 2015, lowering payments to most recipient households. Recipients across the country filed about 30 lawsuits.

The first ruling

In June 2025 the Supreme Court ruled for the first time that the reductions were illegal, and the government has since been considering how to deal with the consequences, including whether to make additional payments to recipients.

Relief

Lawyers for recipients have argued that the government should compensate everyone affected by the cuts, not only the plaintiffs.

Car ownership

On the same day, the Asahi Shimbun reported that the health ministry was considering letting welfare households with children who have not started school, including single-parent families, keep a car.

Recipients

About 2 million people receive public assistance in Japan, and more than half of recipient households are elderly households.

SOCIETY

Kanagawa Police Took Old Driver's Licences Handed In at Renewal to Collect Photos of People Under Watch, Possibly for 30 Years

The National Police Agency calls it a violation of the privacy law and starts a nationwide check; the case came to light when an officer lost a backpack after drinking

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

Security police in Kanagawa Prefecture took old driver's licences collected from people renewing them and used them to gather facial photographs of people under surveillance, possibly for about 30 years, the National Police Agency said on Thursday.

The agency said the practice may have occurred at the security divisions of several police stations and described it as an inappropriate operation that violated the Personal Information Protection Act. It has begun a nationwide survey of prefectural police forces.

How it came to light

In August an officer of the Hodogaya police station drank in Yokohama and then lost a backpack at a station in Zushi. The bag was handed in as lost property, and the Kanagawa prefectural police found 31 old licences belonging to ordinary citizens inside.

SOCIETY

The targets

The licences were allegedly used to collect photographs of people under watch by the security police, such as members of radical left-wing and far-right groups.

Kohoku station

The officer's previous posting was at the Kohoku police station, and the licences belonged to residents under that station's jurisdiction. The station's traffic division had handed all the old licences it collected to its security division.

Not returned

The Kanagawa police generally did not return old licences to their holders unless they asked for them.

Since the early 1990s

Several officers of security divisions said the practice had already been going on in the early years of the Heisei era, which began in 1989.

The commissioner

Yoshinobu Kusu, the commissioner-general of the National Police Agency, said on Thursday that it was something that must never happen and that the agency took it very seriously. He said it would quickly establish the facts and work on preventing a recurrence.

Criticism

Kyodo News said in a commentary that the security police's rules had been flouted under cover of secrecy, and that reform was urgent.

SOCIETY

Former University of Tokyo Professor Gets a Suspended Sentence for Taking Bribes in the Form of Nights Out

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The Tokyo District Court on Thursday sentenced Shinichi Sato, 63, a former professor at the University of Tokyo's Graduate School of Medicine, to two years in prison, suspended for three years, for accepting bribes, and ordered him to forfeit about 1.83 million yen.

The sentence matched what prosecutors had sought.

The case

Between March 2023 and August 2024, Sato received entertainment 28 times at a sex-industry establishment and expensive clubs in Tokyo, worth about 1.83 million yen in total, from a former representative director of the Japan Cosmetics Association, a general incorporated association.

In return

The entertainment was in return for favours in setting up a joint research course with the association, studying the effects of ingredients derived from cannabis on skin disorders.

The others

The former representative director, 53, has been convicted of bribery, and that verdict is final. A former project associate professor at the same school, 47, was sentenced to one year, suspended for two years, and ordered to forfeit about 1.96 million yen.

National university staff

Employees of national universities are treated as public officials under bribery law, which is why the professor could be charged.

Joint research

Joint research courses funded by companies have become an important source of money for Japanese universities, which makes the rules on how they are set up and supervised all the more important.

The sentence

A suspended sentence means Sato will not go to prison unless he commits another offence during the three-year period.

SOCIETY

Four Dead Fawns With Parts of Their Bodies Missing Found at Kofukuji and Todaiji; Nara Asks Police to Investigate

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Nara Prefecture said on Friday that four dead fawns, each missing part of its body, had been found in the grounds of Kofukuji and Todaiji temples in the city of Nara between late August and early October.

A specialist organisation consulted by the prefecture said it was unlikely that wild animals had eaten them, so the prefecture told the prefectural police that people might have harmed them.

The governor

Governor Makoto Yamashita told a news conference that there was no information clearly showing a crime, but that the situation gave a very unnatural impression. He said the prefecture would gather information from witnesses and raise awareness.

Where and when

Two were found near the northern approach to Kofukuji, on August 21 and October 1, and two near the Great Buddha Hall of Todaiji, on August 27 and September 17. All appeared to be less than a month old.

Protected

The deer of Nara are designated a natural monument under the Cultural Properties Protection Act, and harming or killing them can be punished.

Patrols

The prefecture and the temples have stepped up patrols.

The deer

About 1,300 deer live in and around Nara Park and are a symbol of the city, famous for bowing to visitors who offer them crackers.

Visitors

Incidents of tourists kicking or hitting deer have drawn attention in recent years.

SOCIETY

Court Orders an Oita Karate Dojo to Pay About 54 Million Yen to a Boy Left With Brain Injuries in a 2019 Tournament

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The Oita District Court ordered a karate dojo in Oita Prefecture on Friday to pay about 54 million yen in damages to a former pupil who was left with higher brain dysfunction after being injured in a competition in 2019, when he was in his first year of junior high school.

The ruling came in a retrial ordered by a higher court.

The finding

The court found that the dojo had breached its duty of care in relation to teaching defensive techniques, which the pupil was still learning.

Higher brain dysfunction

The condition, caused by brain injury, can affect memory, attention, planning and emotional control, and can make it hard to study or work even when a person appears to have recovered physically.

The case

The pupil and his family sued the dojo for damages. The case was sent back to the district court for a new trial after an appeal.

Sports safety

The ruling adds to court decisions holding sports clubs and schools responsible for injuries suffered by children in their care.

Head injuries

Combat sports and contact sports have introduced rules to reduce blows to the head for children, and doctors say young athletes should stop at once if a head injury is suspected.

Next

The dojo can appeal against the ruling.

SOCIETY

Kushima in Miyazaki Emerges as a Possible Candidate for a Nuclear Waste Survey; the Mayor Says the City Only Listened

The governor says the prefecture was told nothing in advance; it would be the sixth municipality to take part

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Officials of the industry ministry explained the survey of documents that is the first step in choosing a disposal site for high-level radioactive waste from nuclear power stations to the city of Kushima, in Miyazaki Prefecture, on Friday.

Kushima is reportedly emerging as a candidate for the survey. If the ministry formally requests it and the survey goes ahead, Kushima would be the sixth

municipality in Japan to take part, and the second in Kyushu after Genkai in Saga Prefecture.

The mayor

Mayor Koichi Takeda told reporters that the ministry had come as part of a nationwide round of explanations, that the city had not actively accepted the survey and that it had only received an explanation. He said that if the national government made a formal request, the city would consult its assembly.

The governor

Miyazaki Governor Shunji Kono told a news conference that the prefecture had received no prior explanation and was surprised.

The survey

The literature survey is the first of three stages in choosing a site. It examines documents for conditions such as active faults. Municipalities that accept it can receive up to 2 billion yen in subsidies from the national government.

Others

Surveys have been carried out in Suttsu and Kamoenai in Hokkaido, Genkai in Saga Prefecture and Minamitorishima in Tokyo's Ogasawara village, and one is under way in Hitachiomiya, Ibaraki Prefecture.

Finland

On Thursday Finland licensed the world's first final repository for spent fuel, Onkalo, 430 metres under an island.

The debate

Supporters say the subsidies help struggling towns, while opponents fear the survey will lead step by step to a repository.

SOCIETY

Hokkaido University Hospital Gives Akuugo, a Cell Therapy for Brain Injury, for the First Time in Japan

A man in his 50s, paralysed on one side since a traffic accident in his 20s, can move his left hand slightly after surgery

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Hokkaido University Hospital said it has given the cell therapy Akuugo to a patient with chronic motor paralysis caused by a traumatic brain injury, the first such treatment in Japan, and that his paralysis is improving.

The patient

The patient, a man in his 50s, was injured in a traffic accident in his 20s and was left with paralysis of the left side of his body, barely able to move his arm or leg.

The surgery

A lecturer in the hospital's neurosurgery department said surgeons injected the drug into the damaged area of the brain on October 2. After the operation the patient was able to move his left hand slightly.

The drug

Akuugo was developed by SanBio, a regenerative medicine company in Tokyo. It is made from mesenchymal stem cells taken from the bone marrow of healthy donors, which are cultured and processed to strengthen their ability to help nerves regenerate.

Approval

The drug received conditional, time-limited approval in Japan for chronic motor paralysis caused by traumatic brain injury, under a system that allows regenerative medicines to reach patients early while evidence of their effectiveness is gathered.

Why it matters

There are few treatments for paralysis that persists years after a brain injury, and the results in patients treated in clinical settings will be closely watched.

Caution

One patient's improvement does not show how well the treatment works overall, and doctors will continue to assess the results.

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SOCIETY

Panel Backs Publicly Funded Antibody Shots Against RS Virus for Babies, Possibly From Fiscal 2027

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

A health ministry subcommittee on vaccines said on Thursday that it was scientifically valid to use antibody drugs to prevent infection with respiratory syncytial virus, known as RS virus, in children, and backed giving them under the routine immunisation system.

If the opinion is approved by a higher committee, the drugs could be paid for with public money from fiscal 2027.

The drugs

The two drugs are Beyfortus, made by Sanofi, and Enflonsia, made by MSD. Both are artificial antibodies that suppress the virus and are injected into newborns and infants to reduce the risk of illness and of severe cases.

Not vaccines

Vaccines work by introducing the virus or parts of it so that the body produces its own antibodies. The antibody drugs supply ready-made antibodies instead.

The virus

RS virus causes symptoms like a cold, and in infants it can cause bronchiolitis and pneumonia. Almost all children are infected by the age of two.

The season

Outbreaks in Japan have tended to begin in summer and autumn, and hospitals see many infants with breathing difficulties.

Mothers

A vaccine given to pregnant women, which passes protection to the baby, is also available.

Next

The higher committee will consider the subcommittee's opinion.

SOCIETY

Blood Tests That Claim to Detect Many Cancers Cannot Replace Ordinary Screening, Cancer Society Warns

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Japan Society of Clinical Oncology said on Thursday that multi-cancer early detection tests, which are spreading through clinics that charge patients the full cost, are not a substitute for existing screening for specific organs and should be used only as a supplement.

What they are

The tests estimate from a single sample of blood, urine or saliva whether several types of cancer may be present and where the first cancer may have started. They are aimed mainly at healthy adults with no symptoms, and some companies advertise that they can screen for more than 50 types of cancer.

The limits

The society urged people to understand the tests' limits: their ability to detect cancer correctly varies with the type of cancer, how far it has progressed and the size of the tumour.

Self-pay

The tests are offered in self-pay medical care, which is not covered by health insurance.

Screening

Japan's established cancer screenings, such as those for stomach, lung, colorectal, breast and cervical cancer, have been shown to reduce deaths when people take them regularly.

The risk

Doctors worry that people who receive a negative result may skip their regular screenings, and that false positives may lead to unnecessary tests and anxiety.

Advice

The society's message is to keep taking the screenings recommended for your age and sex.

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SOCIETY

31.2 Per Cent of University Graduates Leave Their First Job Within Three Years, the Second Annual Decline

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Of the university graduates who started work in March 2023, 31.2 per cent left their jobs within three years, 2.6 percentage points fewer than the previous year and the second consecutive decline, the health ministry said on Friday.

A ministry official said the decline partly reflected employers raising pay and improving working conditions because of the labour shortage.

By industry

Turnover was highest in accommodation and restaurants, at 49.9 per cent, down 5.5 points, followed by lifestyle services and entertainment at 49.8 per cent, down 4.9 points, and education and learning support at 42.3 per cent, down 1.9 points.

By company size

The rate was 24.2 per cent at companies with 1,000 or more employees, 50.6 per cent at companies with five to 29 employees and 58.2 per cent at those with fewer than five.

The rule of three

For decades about three in 10 university graduates have left their first job within three years, a pattern long described in Japan as "seven, five, three" for middle school, high school and university graduates.

Changing jobs

Changing employers has become more accepted among younger workers, and companies have responded with higher starting salaries.

Small firms

The gap between large and small companies reflects differences in pay, working hours and career prospects.

SOCIETY

One in Five Truant Junior High Students Got No School Health Check, and Some Illnesses Were Found Late

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Many children who do not attend school are missing out on school health checks, and in some cases illnesses have been discovered late, the internal affairs ministry's administrative evaluation bureau said on Thursday.

In a sample survey of truant pupils at public elementary and junior high schools who were absent for 30 days or more in fiscal 2025, 5.7 per cent of elementary pupils and 19.9 per cent of junior high students had received no health checks at all.

Only some

Only 17.8 per cent of the elementary pupils and 12.2 per cent of the junior high students had taken all the required checks, which cover internal medicine, ear, nose and throat, eyes, teeth, urine tests, heart tests and body measurements.

Found late

Some junior high students who skipped checks had illnesses found late; one student, absent since the first year, was found to have an illness requiring surgery.

The recommendation

The bureau told the education ministry and others to make it easier for such children to have checks, for example by changing the timing or allowing checks at hospitals or other facilities.

The scale

The number of truant elementary and junior high students exceeded 350,000 in fiscal 2024, a record, according to the education ministry.

The survey

The survey ran from October 2025 to October 2026 and covered 30 municipalities and 52 public schools, with responses on 864 pupils.

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SOCIETY

Nagasaki's A-Bombed Mary, Whose Head Alone Survived, Will Travel to New Mexico, Where the First Atomic Bomb Was Tested

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The head of a statue of the Virgin Mary that survived the atomic bombing of Nagasaki is to be taken to the United States, for the first time in 16 years, and organisers are arranging for it to visit New Mexico, where the world's first nuclear test was carried out, for the first time.

The statue, known as the A-bombed Mary, will be displayed in Santa Fe, the state capital, and organisers are considering taking it to Los Alamos, the centre of the atomic bomb's development.

A pilgrimage for peace

The statue will be carried by a pilgrimage group of Catholic clergy from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which includes some atomic bomb survivors. The purpose is to pray for peace with Japanese and American citizens, at a time when moves against nuclear disarmament have been seen around the world.

The UN

In November the group will go to United Nations headquarters in New York for the first review conference of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and is discussing whether the statue can be displayed there.

New Mexico and Seattle

The group is expected to arrive in New Mexico in December and take the statue to churches in Santa Fe. On December 7, the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, a Mass for peace is planned in Seattle.

Its story

The statue's head was found in the rubble of Urakami Cathedral, which was destroyed by the bomb. A priest who discovered it kept it for many years in Hokkaido before it was returned to the rebuilt cathedral, where it is now enshrined.

The test

The first atomic bomb was tested at Trinity, in the New Mexico desert, on July 16, 1945, three weeks before the bombing of Hiroshima.

The treaty

Japan has not joined the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, saying it relies on the American nuclear umbrella for its security.

SOCIETY

A 70-Centimetre Footprint From a Giant Jurassic Dinosaur, Among Japan's Largest, Is Found in Minamisoma

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

A research team including the Fukushima Prefectural Museum said on Thursday that it had found a dinosaur footprint about 70 centimetres long, among the largest found in Japan, in rock about 160 million years old in Minamisoma, Fukushima Prefecture.

The footprint dates from the Late Jurassic period and was most likely made by a large plant-eating sauropod, the group of long-necked dinosaurs.

Rare

Most dinosaur fossils found in Japan are from the Cretaceous period. Jurassic dinosaur fossils are rare and, outside Fukushima, have been found only in Nagano and Yamaguchi prefectures.

A first

The team said it was the first footprint of a large dinosaur from the period found in Japan, and expects it to shed light on how the animals lived.

The previous record

A footprint of about 30 centimetres excavated in Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi Prefecture, had been the largest Jurassic dinosaur footprint in Japan.

The curator

The museum's deputy chief curator showed a life-size panel of the footprint in Minamisoma on Thursday morning.

Sauropods

Sauropods were the largest animals ever to walk on land, some more than 20 metres long.

Fukushima

The coast of Fukushima Prefecture is known for fossils, including those of marine reptiles, and the museum has been studying its rocks for decades.

SOCIETY

Torches Light Up the Night in Kyoto's Kurama Fire Festival

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The Kurama Fire Festival, in which countless torches light up the autumn night, was held on Thursday around Yuki Shrine on Mount Kurama in Sakyo Ward, Kyoto.

Around 6 p.m., after sunset, bonfires were lit under the eaves along the street, and young men carrying torches walked back and forth calling out "saireiya, sairyo".

The climax

Around 8 p.m. they gathered on the stone steps in front of the shrine's gate and raised their burning torches to the sky. The flames and drifting sparks captivated spectators, and the crowd's clapping and calls rose as the excitement reached its peak.

Its origin

The festival is the annual festival of Yuki Shrine. It is said to have begun with a Heian-period ritual welcoming the shrine's deity, which was moved from the Imperial Palace in Kyoto to Kurama in 940, when villagers are said to have lit bonfires to greet the procession. Kyoto counts it among its three great unusual festivals.

Same day

It is held on October 22, the same day as Kyoto's Jidai Matsuri, the Festival of the Ages.

Kurama

Kurama, in the mountains north of the city, is also known for Kurama-dera temple and its legends of tengu, the long-nosed goblins of Japanese folklore.

Crowds

The narrow village draws large crowds for the festival, and access is restricted.

SOCIETY

Hokkaido Will Rethink Its Releases of Young Salmon After the Autumn Catch Falls to a Tenth of Its Peak

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The Hokkaido government received on Thursday the recommendations of a study group of fishery operators and experts on restoring salmon stocks, and will review the scale of its releases of hatchery-raised young fish and strengthen measures to secure parent fish.

The decline

Hokkaido's autumn salmon catch in 2025 was about 5.616 million fish, about 64.1 per cent less than the previous year and about a tenth of the level at its peak in 2003.

The causes

The study group pointed to rising sea temperatures and a decline in plankton, the young salmon's food, as making it harder for them to grow. The prefecture will research the marine environment and the causes of the decline.

Anglers

A fishery operator said recreational anglers who fish for salmon at river mouths also needed to be regulated.

Region by region

Specific measures will be considered for each region.

Hatcheries

Japan has relied for more than a century on releasing hatchery-raised young salmon into rivers, but the returns have fallen as the ocean has changed.

Prices

The poor catches have pushed up prices of salmon and salmon roe, a staple of Japanese tables.

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SOCIETY

Board of Audit Finds 1.79 Billion Yen Overpaid in Tohoku Reconstruction Grants to 16 Municipalities

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The internal affairs ministry overpaid about 1.79 billion yen in special reconstruction grants to 16 municipalities in Iwate, Fukushima, Ibaraki and Chiba prefectures, the Board of Audit found.

The grant

The special reconstruction grant funds reconstruction projects after the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. It is calculated from factors such as municipalities' share of the costs of projects funded by the reconstruction subsidy.

What went wrong

Once a project's costs are finalised, the grant must be settled on the basis of the actual figures. In these cases the amounts were calculated from estimates, and the estimates were not corrected when the actual figures were confirmed.

Correction

The ministry has reduced future grant payments to offset the excess and asked the municipalities to check whether their settlements were handled properly.

Another count

The Yomiuri Shimbun put the number of municipalities at 14 and the total at 1.7 billion yen.

The money

Reconstruction after the 2011 disaster has cost the national government more than 30 trillion yen.

The board

The Board of Audit examines how public money is spent and reports to the Diet each autumn.

SOCIETY

A Kawasaki Racecourse Stablehand's Death Is Recognised as Work-Related After Abuse by His Trainer

His family says he was told he was 'lower than garbage' and worked 17 days in a row; the trainer denies harassment
By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

The death of a 43-year-old stablehand at Kawasaki Racecourse in 2024 has been recognised as work-related by the Kawasaki Minami Labour Standards Inspection Office, his family announced on Thursday. The recognition was made in June.

The family attributes the psychological strain that led to his death to power harassment and other conduct by the trainer of the stable where he worked.

What he endured

According to the family's lawyer, the trainer scolded him in front of colleagues in 2024 and repeatedly abused him, including shouting at him for long periods, telling him to die and saying that stablehands were lower than garbage.

His work

He died at his home on February 11, 2024. Just before his death he had worked 17 days in a row, and his overtime had increased sharply.

The family

The family says the employer failed to manage his working hours and that his working environment was poor. His 74-year-old mother told a news conference in Tokyo that she did not want her son's death to be in vain and called for better working conditions for stablehands.

The trainer

The trainer's lawyer said the trainer did not believe there had been conduct amounting to harassment, and declined to comment in detail while materials were reviewed.

Stablehands

Stablehands care for racehorses under a trainer, often working long and irregular hours.

Help

Anyone struggling with harassment or overwork can seek advice from labour bureaus and from free telephone and online counselling services.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Editorial: one language, Page 30.

SOCIETY

SOCIETY

Traffic Fines Could Be Paid by Card or Smartphone From Next July, the National Police Agency Says

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The National Police Agency said on Thursday that it is considering letting people pay fines under the blue ticket system for traffic violations by credit card, at convenience stores and through code payment apps, as early as next July.

Under the system, drivers and cyclists who commit minor violations are told to pay a fine. At present, fines can in principle be paid only at the counters of financial institutions during weekday working hours, without a fee.

How it would work

A police officer who confirms a violation would hand over a blue ticket printed with a QR code. The violator would scan it with a smartphone and pay the fine plus a fee. Payment would be confirmed on a website and by email, and the service would be available 24 hours a day.

A fee

Cashless payments would carry a fee paid by the violator, and paying at a bank counter would remain available.

Cyclists

Blue tickets were extended to cyclists aged 16 and over in April this year, bringing many more people into the system.

The timetable

The plan depends on choosing payment processing companies.

Around the clock

At present, people who receive a blue ticket late in the week may have to wait until a bank opens to pay; the new system would let them pay at any time.

Around the Nation

By the Society Desk

TOKYO: A child under 5 has died of influenza encephalopathy, the Tokyo metropolitan government announced, according to the Yomiuri Shimbun. Doctors urge parents to seek care quickly if a child with influenza has seizures or behaves abnormally.

NEWSPAPERS: The share of households that subscribe to a newspaper has fallen below 50 per cent for the first time, The Japan Times Alpha reported.

TRAVEL: Japan was ranked first in an American travel magazine's list of the most attractive countries, The Japan Times Alpha reported.

NARA: About 2.4 million cosmos flowers are in full bloom at the ruins of the Fujiwara Palace in Kashihara, the Asahi Shimbun reported.

HIMEJI: A roof tile covered in gold leaf, the first found in Hyogo Prefecture, has been discovered near Himeji Castle and may date from Toyotomi Hideyoshi's time, the Sankei Shimbun reported.

BEARS: The environment ministry will compile data on the harvest of beech, oak and other trees whose nuts bears eat, so that people can take it into account, the Sankei Shimbun reported.

WAKAYAMA: Wakayama Prefecture and the city of Tanabe are making 3D models of idle public facilities so that buyers can inspect them by video, the Sankei Shimbun reported.

CULTURE ABROAD: The Agency for Cultural Affairs will give consistent support to creators of manga, music and other works expanding overseas, from planning and contracts to returning the profits to Japan, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

NOTO: Two Japanese crested ibis released on the Noto Peninsula on October 7 have died, Ishikawa Prefecture said on Friday. They are thought to have been taken by predators, but the damage to the birds makes the cause hard to establish.

NEPAL: Nepalese officials found two bodies on the western peak of Gangapurna on Friday morning and believe they may be those of two Japanese men who have been missing on the mountain since October 15, Kyodo News reported from Bangkok.

KOBE: Two zebras at a zoo in Kobe were appointed one-day traffic safety ambassadors in a road safety campaign.

ROKKO: A primary school on Mount Rokko lit its stove for the winter in an annual ceremony.

Scoreboard

By the Sports Desk

GYMNASTICS, WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, ROTTERDAM: Men's all-around: 1, Daiki Hashimoto (Japan) 85.998; 2, Yang Haonan (China) 84.199; 3, Joe Fraser (Britain). 8, Shinnosuke Oka (Japan) 82.165.

NBA (THURSDAY): 76ers 114, Cavaliers 106 (Maxey 32, Embiid 24, James 17; Mitchell 32 for Cleveland). Thunder 96, Nuggets 84 (Jalen Williams 21; Gordon 20 for Denver).

NBA (WEDNESDAY): Clippers 121, Kings 96 (Garland 30; Hachimura 10 points, 8 rebounds).

EUROPA LEAGUE: Hoffenheim 3, Lyon 0; Celje 2, Salzburg 2 (Kitano scored); Lillestrom 0, Real Sociedad 6; Besiktas 2, Crystal Palace 2.

CONFERENCE LEAGUE: Monaco 3, Freiburg 0.

GOLF, FORTINET PLAYERS CUP, DAY 2: 1, Yoshinori Fujimoto 134 (-8); 2=, Kazuki Yasumori, Shugo Imahira and Ryuichi Oiwa 135 (-7).

GOLF, MASTERS GC LADIES, DAY 2: 1, Kana Nagai 136 (-8); 2=, Shiho Kuwaki and five others 137 (-7).

LPGA, BMW LADIES CHAMPIONSHIP, DAY 1: Yuri Yoshida and Karis Davidson 66 (-6).

BASEBALL: Japan Series Game 1, Saturday, Yokohama Stadium; World Series Game 1, Saturday morning Japan time, Milwaukee.

RUGBY: Japan v Fiji, Saturday, Chichibunomiya.

Kitano Scores for Salzburg, Kubo's Real Sociedad Win 6-0 and Nakamura Plays the Full Match as Lyon Lose at Hoffenheim

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Sota Kitano scored his first goal of the competition for Salzburg in the ninth minute of a 2-2 draw away at Celje of Slovenia on the third matchday of the Europa League's league phase on Thursday. He was substituted in the 65th minute.

Takefusa Kubo played until the 58th minute as Real Sociedad won 6-0 away at Lillestrom of Norway. Real Sociedad and Salzburg each have one win, one draw and one defeat.

Lyon

Keito Nakamura played the full match for Lyon, who lost 3-0 at Hoffenheim, the club of Koki Machida, in Sinsheim. Machida came on in the 77th minute. It was Hoffenheim's first win after two defeats; Lyon have two wins and a defeat.

Crystal Palace

Daichi Kamada played the full match as Crystal Palace drew 2-2 away at Besiktas of Turkey.

Conference League

In the Conference League, Yuito Suzuki started for Freiburg but was replaced at half-time as they lost 3-0 at Monaco. Takumi Minamino did not play for Monaco, who have won both their matches.

The format

The league phase of the Europa League has 36 clubs, each playing eight matches against different opponents.

Clubs Greet Their First-Round Picks, and SoftBank's Suzuki Says He Wants to Help Win a Title in His First Season

Nippon-Ham's Komoda says meeting the club made the draft feel real; Hanshin's Sakakibara says the real contest starts now

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Professional baseball clubs paid courtesy calls on Friday to the players they chose in the first round of Thursday's draft.

Taisei Suzuki, the Aoyama Gakuin University pitcher whom SoftBank won in a lottery, met Kenji Jojima, the Hawks' chief baseball officer, in Tokyo, where Jojima placed a team cap on his head.

"My goal for my first year is to become a player who contributes quickly and helps the team win the championship," Suzuki said.

Two ways

Haruki Komoda, the Yamanashi Gakuin High School pitcher and infielder chosen by Nippon-Ham, was greeted by Hideki Kuriyama, the Fighters' chief baseball officer, who managed Shohei Ohtani as a two-way player at the club.

"Meeting in person made it feel real," Komoda said. "I want to take on the challenge as a two-way player."

Hanshin

Hanshin's manager, Kyuji Fujikawa, said he hoped the Meiji University outfielder Nanato Sakakibara would become part of the team's spine down the middle of the field.

"I'm full of the feeling that the real contest starts from here," Sakakibara said.

Lotte and DeNA

Lotte's first pick, the Kansai University pitcher Yonezawa, said he wanted to sharpen his fastball, his main weapon, and make an impact from his first year.

Sena Hoshino, the Osaka University of Commerce pitcher chosen by DeNA, said he wanted "to become someone the team cannot do without."

The Giants

The Giants, whose first pick was the Yokohama High School pitcher Shoki Oda, named Hideki Matsui as their new manager on the same day.

Next

The clubs will now negotiate contracts with the players they hold the rights to.

Ami Nakai Lands Two Triple Axels in Practice as the Grand Prix Season Opens in France

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Ami Nakai, the bronze medallist at the Milan Cortina Winter Olympics, landed two triple axels in official practice for the Grand Prix of France in Angers on Thursday, the first event of the Grand Prix series.

The competition opens on Friday local time, Saturday in Japan.

Good memories

Nakai won the French event last season on her Grand Prix debut. She said she had many good memories of it and that her main goal was to give everything.

Aoki

Yuna Aoki, the reigning Four Continents champion, showed graceful footwork and said she had skated freely and hoped to stay calm in the competition. Rion Sumiyoshi carefully checked her jumps.

The men

Kao Miura and Sota Yamamoto worked energetically on their quadruple jumps.

The season

The Grand Prix series has six events, with the top six skaters in each discipline qualifying for the final in December.

New rules

The International Skating Union has changed its rules this season to reduce the number of jumps and reward artistry, which skaters are testing for the first time in competition.

Japan's depth

Japan's women have been among the strongest in the world in recent seasons.

Fujimoto Takes Sole Lead on the Men's Tour; Kana Nagai Moves a Shot Clear in the Women's Masters; Yoshida Starts Strongly in Korea

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Yoshinori Fujimoto shot a three-under 68 on Friday to take sole possession of the lead at eight under par after the second round of the Fortinet Players Cup at Narita Hills Country Club in Chiba Prefecture.

Fujimoto, a three-time winner on the tour who shared the first-round lead, made five birdies and two bogeys for a total of 134. Kazuki Yasumori, Shugo Imahira and Ryuichi Oiwa were one shot behind.

Horikawa slips back

Mikumu Horikawa, a five-time winner who was also among the four first-round leaders, was tied for fifth at six under with two other players, among them Riki Kawamoto.

The Open champion

Yusaku Hosono, who won the Japan Open the previous week, was three under and tied for 17th. The defending champion, Taihei Sato, missed the cut. Sixty of the 95 starters, those at one over or better, go through to the weekend; the tournament has a purse of 150 million yen, with 30 million for the winner.

The women

In the women's Nobuta Group Masters GC Ladies at Masters Golf Club in Hyogo Prefecture, Kana Nagai shot a 68, with six birdies and two bogeys, to lead by a stroke at eight under on 136.

Chasing

Six players were tied for second, among them Shiho Kuwaki, who leads the points ranking. Fifty-one of the 107 starters, including seven amateurs, made the cut at even par or better; Yuna Nishimura missed it at two over.

South Korea

On the American women's tour, Yuri Yoshida shot a six-under 66 on Thursday to share the first-round lead with Karis Davidson of Australia at the BMW Ladies Championship at Pine Beach Links in Haenam, in south-western South Korea.

Other Japanese

Chisato Iwai shot 69 and was tied for eighth, and Nasa Hataoka, last year's runner-up, 70 for a share of 18th. Akane Iwai shot 71, Ayaka Furue 73 and Erika Hara 79. The tournament has no cut.

The weekend

All three tournaments finish on Sunday.

Takaichi Tells World Rugby That Japan Wants to Host the World Cup Again in 2035

The governing body will name its preferred candidates in May and choose the host in November next year

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told Brett Robinson, the chairman of World Rugby, on Friday that Japan wanted to host the Rugby World Cup in 2035.

Meeting Robinson at the Prime Minister's Office, Takaichi pointed to the success of the 2019 tournament in Japan. "I am convinced that if we can hold it again in 2035, we can make a further contribution to the rugby world," she said.

Robinson said he hoped Japan would continue to lead rugby in Asia and around the world.

The timetable

World Rugby plans to select its preferred candidates in May next year and to make a formal decision on the host in November.

Also present

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara and the education minister also attended the meeting.

2019

Japan hosted the 2019 World Cup, the first held in Asia. The Brave Blossoms beat Ireland and Scotland on the way to their first quarter-final, where they lost to South Africa, the eventual champions.

The next two

The 2027 World Cup will be played in Australia and the 2031 tournament in the United States. Dentsu has acquired the Japanese broadcasting rights to the 2027 event and plans to show all 52 matches.

Saturday

Japan play Fiji at Chichibunomiya Rugby Stadium in Tokyo on Saturday, with Warner Dearn and Naoto Saito as co-captains.

The venues

The 2019 tournament was played at 12 venues across the country, from Sapporo in the north to Kumamoto and Oita in Kyushu.

Hosts and champions

1987: Australia and New Zealand; won by New Zealand. 1991: England, with matches in the other Five Nations countries; Australia. 1995: South Africa; South Africa. 1999: Wales; Australia. 2003: Australia; England. 2007: France; South Africa. 2011: New Zealand; New Zealand. 2015: England; New Zealand. 2019: Japan; South Africa. 2023: France; South Africa. 2027: Australia. 2031: United States.

SPORTS



List of selected players for the Yomiuri Giants

New player selection meeting

1st place	Shoki Oda	Pitcher	Yokohama High School
2nd place	Reisho Hirata	Pitcher	Oita Commercial High School
3rd place	Seima Ikeda	Infielder	Yokohama High School
4th place	Mako Sugimoto	Pitcher	Chiben Gakuen High School
5th place	Ito Tsuto	Infielder	Chuo University
6th place	Matsudaira Kaisei	Pitcher	Kanagawa University

The Yomiuri Giants' list of players chosen in Thursday's draft, headed by the Yokohama High School pitcher Shoki Oda, in an English-language image supplied for this edition; some readings of names in the image may differ from the official ones. The club named Hideki Matsui as its manager on Friday. (Image: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

Hideki Matsui Returns to the Giants as Manager, Wearing No. 90 on a Three-Year Contract: 'I Want to Start a New Golden Age'

The slugger who hit 507 home runs in Japan and the major leagues says it feels like coming home; he inherits a club that finished second and a draft class headed by a pitcher who wants to play in America

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Hideki Matsui, the former Yomiuri Giants and New York Yankees slugger, was named manager of the Giants on Friday, returning to the club where he became a national star with a three-year contract and the uniform number 90.

"It feels as if I have come back to my home town," Matsui, 52, told a news conference at a hotel in Tokyo. He said he was happy to take over what he called a strong and wonderful team, and that he wanted to start now so that the Giants could enter a new golden age.

Godzilla comes home

Matsui, nicknamed Godzilla, hit 507 home runs across his careers in Japan and the major leagues. The Giants chose him with the first pick in the 1993 draft, after four clubs competed for him, and he developed into the team's central hitter under the late manager Shigeo Nagashima, wearing No. 55.

He won the Central League home run and runs-batted-in titles three times each and the batting title once. In 2002, his last season in Japan, he hit 50 home runs, the first Japanese player to reach that mark since 1986.

The Yankees

He moved to the Yankees as a free agent in 2003 and became a key player in New York. In the 2009 World Series he hit three home runs, drove in eight runs and was named most valuable player. He retired in 2012 and received the People's Honour Award with Nagashima in 2013.

SPORTS

Giants Pick Oda, Who Wants to Play in America, and a 14-Year-Old Catcher; Rakuten and SoftBank Win Lotteries for Two Aoyama Gakuin Players

'My desire to take on America has not wavered at all,' Oda says; 127 players were chosen, 76 in the main draft and 51 in the developmental draft

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Yomiuri Giants used their first-round pick in Thursday's professional baseball draft on Shoki Oda, a pitcher from Yokohama High School in Kanagawa who has said he wants to play in the United States, surprising the room by choosing him unopposed.

"My desire to take on the challenge of America has not wavered at all," Oda said after he was chosen.

Two lotteries

Rakuten won the lottery for Kai Watabe, a catcher from Aoyama Gakuin University, and SoftBank won the lottery for his teammate Taisei Suzuki, a pitcher. Each was named by one other club. The two said they hoped to form a battery again for Samurai Japan, the national team, and Aoyama Gakuin produced two first-round picks for the fourth year in a row, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

Two-way Komoda

Nippon-Ham chose Haruki Komoda, a pitcher from Yamanashi Gakuin High School who will try to play as both pitcher and hitter.

A difficult season

The Giants have had a turbulent year. Shinnosuke Abe resigned as manager in May after his arrest, and the acting manager, Hideki Hashigami, led the team to second place in the regular season before it lost in the first stage of the Climax Series.

The draft

Matsui takes over a day after the Giants made the most talked-about picks of Thursday's draft. They chose Shoki Oda, a pitcher from Yokohama High School who has said he wants to play in the United States, with their first pick, and took Rentaro Seki, a 14-year-old junior high school catcher, in the fifth round of the developmental draft, the first time a junior high school student has been drafted.

Expectations

NHK had reported on Friday morning that Matsui would become manager, and the club made the announcement in the afternoon.

Coaching

Matsui has worked with the Yankees as a special adviser since retiring but has never managed or coached a professional team, so his first season will show whether a great player can also be a successful manager.

The number

Matsui will wear No. 90, rather than the 55 he wore as a player.

The other first picks

Seibu chose the pitcher Kawajiri of Asia University; Hanshin the outfielder Nanato Sakakibara of Meiji University; DeNA the pitcher Sena Hoshino of Osaka University of Commerce; Hiroshima the infielder Yamasato of Asia University; Yakult the outfielder Ryosuke Fujisawa of Tokyo Gas; and Orix the pitcher Tsunoda of Fuji University.

A second lottery

Chunichi and Lotte both chose the Kindai University pitcher Ren Miyahara with their second attempt at a first pick, and Chunichi won the lottery. Lotte, which lost two lotteries, then took the Kansai University pitcher Yonezawa.

A 14-year-old

In the developmental draft, the Giants chose Rentaro Seki, a 14-year-old catcher at Mukogaoka Junior High School in Kawasaki, in the fifth round, the first time a junior high school student has been picked in any draft. The nearest precedent was in 2004, when Hanshin chose Kento Tsujimoto, a 15-year-old pitcher at an American high school, in the eighth round.

His arm

Seki's strong throwing arm is considered his greatest asset, and he was chosen for Japan's under-15 national team. In a comment released by the club, he said he was happy because he had worn Giants uniforms in the club's junior and junior youth teams, but that there was much he did not yet understand and he wanted to talk to his family about his future.

The plan

The Giants' scouting director, Shinsuke Kurematsu, called him a wonderful prospect. If he joins, he would attend high school while taking part in the team's practices and games. Kurematsu acknowledged that it was a first and that some details would be worked out as they went along.

The Giants' class

The Giants also took the pitcher Hirata of Oita Commercial High School in the second round, the infielder Ikeda of Yokohama High School in the third, and the pitcher Sugimoto of Chiben Gakuen High School in Nara in the fourth, making high school players their first four picks.

From Nara

Three pitchers with ties to Nara were drafted: Sugimoto by the Giants, Matoba of Tenri University by Hanshin in the fifth round, and Shinjo of Nara University High School by Lotte in the fifth round, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

The total

In all, 127 players were chosen, 76 in the main draft and 51 in the developmental draft. Weekly Baseball Online said the Giants' pick of Oda was the shock of the Central League, while the picks of Rakuten and SoftBank were highly rated in the Pacific League.

SPORTS

Draft 2026: The First-Round Picks

By the Sports Desk

GIANTS: Shoki Oda, pitcher, Yokohama High School; chosen unopposed.

RAKUTEN: Kai Watabe, catcher, Aoyama Gakuin University; won by lottery.

SOFTBANK: Taisei Suzuki, pitcher, Aoyama Gakuin University; won by lottery.

NIPPON-HAM: Haruki Komoda, pitcher and hitter, Yamanashi Gakuin High School.

SEIBU: Kawajiri, pitcher, Asia University.

HANSHIN: Nanato Sakakibara, outfielder, Meiji University.

DENA: Sena Hoshino, pitcher, Osaka University of Commerce.

HIROSHIMA: Yamasato, infielder, Asia University.

YAKULT: Ryosuke Fujisawa, outfielder, Tokyo Gas.

ORIX: Tsunoda, pitcher, Fuji University.

CHUNICHI: Ren Miyahara, pitcher, Kindai University; won by lottery against Lotte.

LOTTE: Yonezawa, pitcher, Kansai University, after losing two lotteries.

DEVELOPMENTAL: The Giants took Rentaro Seki, 14, a junior high school catcher, in the fifth round.

TOTAL: 127 players, 76 in the main draft and 51 developmental.

SPORTS

Hideki Matsui by the Numbers

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

BORN: June 12, 1974, in Ishikawa Prefecture.

HIGH SCHOOL: Seiryu, Ishikawa; walked intentionally five times in a row in a game at Koshien in the summer of 1992.

DRAFT: First pick of the Giants in 1993, after four clubs named him.

GIANTS: 1993 to 2002; 332 home runs; uniform No. 55.

TITLES: Home runs and runs batted in, three times each; batting title once.

2002: 50 home runs, the first Japanese player to reach 50 since 1986.

MAJOR LEAGUES: Yankees, 2003 to 2009; then the Angels, the Athletics and the Rays; 175 home runs.

TOTAL: 507 home runs in Japan and the United States.

2009: World Series MVP, with three home runs and eight runs batted in.

HONOUR: People's Honour Award, with Shigeo Nagashima, 2013.

NOW: Giants manager, No. 90, three-year contract.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

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SPORTS

Hashimoto Wins a Fourth Straight World All-Around Title, Matching a Feat Only Kohei Uchimura Had Achieved

He takes the lead with the day's best scores on the parallel bars and high bar; qualifying leader Oka falls twice and finishes eighth

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Daiki Hashimoto won the men's all-around title at the world gymnastics championships in Rotterdam on Thursday, his fourth in a row, becoming only the second man to win four straight after Kohei Uchimura.

Hashimoto scored 85.998 points over the six apparatus. He had qualified second; scores from qualifying are not carried into the final.

The decisive rotations

On the parallel bars, his fifth apparatus, he scored 14.700, the best of the day on the event, moving into the lead. On the high bar, his last, he scored 14.766, again the day's best, and pulled away from the field.

The podium

Yang Haonan of China was second with 84.199, and Joe Fraser of Britain third.

Oka's day

Shinnosuke Oka, who qualified first and won the all-around at the Paris Olympics, finished eighth with 82.165 after falling on the landing of his vault, his fourth apparatus, and coming off the high bar.

Two golds

Hashimoto had already helped Japan win the team title, giving him two golds at these championships.

Uchimura's record

Uchimura won six straight world all-around titles from 2009 to 2015, as well as two Olympic golds.

The women

Japan's women won the team bronze earlier in the week, their first medal in the event in 60 years, securing their place at the Los Angeles Olympics. Aiko Sugihara called it the best day, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

What's next

The championships continue with the apparatus finals.

SPORTS

Susaki and Ozaki Lead Japan's Women Into the Wrestling World Championships, Which Open in Astana on Saturday

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

The world wrestling championships open in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Saturday, and Japan's women's team, aiming for a haul of medals, left Haneda Airport on Friday.

Yui Susaki, competing at 50 kilograms, is seeking her fifth world title. She said she intended to become champion to build momentum towards the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028.

Selection

The championships are an important chance to perform before selection for the Los Angeles team begins in December.

Asian Games champions

Four of the women, including Susaki, are reigning champions from the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

Ozaki

Nonoka Ozaki, at 62 kilograms, said she wanted to find her weaknesses and use the event to raise her level.

The men

In men's freestyle, Arashi Yoshida, a bronze medallist at the last world championships at 97 kilograms, is expected to do well.

Japan's strength

Japanese women have been among the most successful in the world for two decades, winning gold medals at every Olympics since women's wrestling was added in 2004.

Susaki

Susaki won the Olympic gold medal at 50 kilograms in Tokyo in 2021 and is one of the most dominant wrestlers of her generation.

SPORTS



SoftBank Hawks players celebrate a title, in a file photo. The Pacific League champions open the Japan Series against DeNA at Yokohama Stadium on Saturday. (File photo: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

SoftBank and DeNA Meet Again in the Japan Series, Which Opens on Saturday at Yokohama Stadium

The Hawks seek a second straight title after a third successive pennant; the BayStars, third in the Central League, hope to repeat their 2024 upset

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

The Japan Series opens on Saturday at Yokohama Stadium, with the Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks, champions of the Pacific League for the third year running, facing the Yokohama DeNA BayStars, who reached the series through the Climax Series after finishing third in the Central League.

Both teams practised at Yokohama Stadium on Thursday.

A rematch

It is the clubs' first meeting in the series since 2024, when DeNA, also third in the regular season, beat SoftBank four games to two after losing the first two, for its first title in 26 years.

At stake

SoftBank is seeking its 13th championship, including those won as the Nankai and Daiei Hawks, and a second in a row. DeNA is seeking its fourth, including those won as the Taiyo Whales and Yokohama BayStars.

The format

Games 1 and 2 are on Saturday and Sunday in Yokohama, under Central League rules without the designated hitter. Games 3 to 5 are at Mizuho PayPay Dome in Fukuoka, where the designated hitter is

used, and Games 6 and 7, if needed, return to Yokohama.

DeNA's run

DeNA swept the Climax Series, beating the Central League champions Hanshin in four straight games in the final stage.

SoftBank's ace

Livan Moinelo, the Hawks' ace left-hander, said this week that he was at 80 per cent after throwing live batting practice.

Former Hawks

DeNA's roster includes former SoftBank players, among them the infielder Mimori, who will face their old club.

The weather

Typhoon Champi is forecast to weaken to a tropical storm by Monday and to pass near southern Kyushu on Monday evening; the games in Fukuoka are played under the dome.

SPORTS

Brewers and Rays, Both Without a Title, Open the World Series in Milwaukee, With Ex-Fighter Martinez Starting for Tampa Bay

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The World Series opens in Milwaukee on Friday, American time, Saturday morning in Japan, with the National League champion Milwaukee Brewers facing the American League champion Tampa Bay Rays in a best-of-seven series that will give one of them its first title.

It is the first World Series since 1980 between two franchises that had never won it.

Game 1 starters

The Brewers will start their ace right-hander, Jacob Misiorowski, who went 16-5 with an earned run average of 1.80 this season. The Rays will start Nick Martinez, who pitched in Japan for the Nippon-Ham Fighters.

Practice

Both teams held their final workouts in Milwaukee on Thursday.

The Brewers

Milwaukee reached the World Series once before, in 1982, when it lost to the St. Louis Cardinals.

The Rays

Tampa Bay lost in the World Series in 2008 and 2020, the latter against the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Martinez in Japan

Martinez spent four seasons in Japan, with Nippon-Ham and then SoftBank, before returning to the major leagues, where he has worked as a starter and reliever.

1980

The last series between two first-time hopefuls was won by the Philadelphia Phillies against the Kansas City Royals.

SPORTS

76ers Come Back From 29 Points Down to Beat the Cavaliers as Maxey Scores 32; Hachimura Opens With 10 for the Clippers

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Philadelphia 76ers came back from a 29-point deficit to beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 114-106 on Thursday, outscoring them 69-37 in the second half.

Tyrese Maxey led Philadelphia with 32 points and Joel Embiid added 24. LeBron James, in his second game for the 76ers, had 17 points, 10 rebounds and five assists. Donovan Mitchell scored 32 for Cleveland, and James Harden 16.

The turnaround

Cleveland led 35-18 after the first quarter and 69-45 at half-time, but the 76ers scored 37 points in the third quarter and held the Cavaliers to 16 in the fourth.

Thunder

The Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Denver Nuggets 96-84. Jalen Williams scored 21 for the Thunder, and Aaron Gordon 20 for Denver, whose Jamal Murray made only two of 11 shots.

Hachimura

On Wednesday Rui Hachimura started his first game for the Los Angeles Clippers, scoring 10 points with eight rebounds and two assists in 31 minutes as the Clippers beat the Sacramento Kings 121-96 in Inglewood. He made 23.1 per cent of his shots. Darius Garland scored a game-high 30.

His eighth season

It is Hachimura's eighth season in the NBA; he moved to the Clippers from the Los Angeles Lakers.

Next

The Clippers play the Lakers on Friday, American time, giving Hachimura an early meeting with his former team.

LeBron

On Thursday President Donald Trump attacked James on social media, accusing him of insulting the country by warming up during the national anthem.

The season

Each team plays 82 regular-season games, with the season running until April 11.

SPORTS

Dearn and Saito Will Share the Captaincy as Japan Face Fiji at Chichibunomiya on Saturday

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

The Japan Rugby Football Union named its team on Thursday for Saturday's test against Fiji at Chichibunomiya Rugby Stadium in Tokyo, with the lock Warner Dearn and the scrum-half Naoto Saito as co-captains.

Dearn returns to the starting line-up after missing the Pacific Nations Cup in September.

Changes

The fly-half Ito of Meiji University and Ueda of Kobe also start. There are seven changes from the team that beat Fiji 20-15 in the Pacific Nations Cup final.

The coach

Head coach Eddie Jones told an online news conference that the two captains had different strengths and could together provide very strong leadership, even by world standards.

The opponents

Fiji are among the strongest teams in the Pacific and have beaten several leading rugby nations in recent years.

The World Cup

Japan are preparing for the World Cup in Australia from October to November next year. The advertising company Dentsu has acquired the Japanese broadcast rights and plans to show more than 20 matches, including Japan's, on free-to-air television.

The captains

Dearn, at over two metres tall, is one of Japan's most physically imposing forwards, and Saito is the team's established scrum-half.

The ground

Chichibunomiya, in Tokyo's Aoyama district, is the traditional home of Japanese rugby.

SPORTS

Ioka, 37, Will Fight On in a New Year's Eve Comeback; Naoya Inoue's Next Bout Is Likely in March

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Kazuto Ioka, the former four-division world champion, said on Thursday that he would continue boxing, with a comeback fight on New Year's Eve. His opponent and other details will be announced later.

Ioka, 37, lost a WBC bantamweight title fight to the champion Takuma Inoue in May, when he was knocked down twice and outclassed. The defeat ended his bid to become the first Japanese man to win world titles in five weight classes.

The injury

He fractured the floor of his right eye socket in the fight and had surgery. He said he had recovered enough to spar and that his eyesight was as good as before.

Last chance

Ioka called the comeback his last chance and said he wanted to show that a fighter who keeps going without giving up will win in the end.

Inoue

Naoya Inoue, the undisputed super bantamweight champion, said on Thursday that his next fight would probably be around March next year, and that a final decision by his opponent was still pending.

The options

Inoue is considering either a defence at super bantamweight, against an opponent he has long been linked with, the American Jesse Rodriguez, the WBA super champion at bantamweight, or a move up to featherweight to try to win a world title in a fifth division.

Featherweight

Inoue said he would definitely move up at some point, describing featherweight as the main stage for the later part of his career.

Brothers

Takuma Inoue, who beat Ioka, is Naoya's younger brother.

SPORTS

Robchen Draws Gate 4, No. 8, for Sunday's Kikuka Sho as It Bids for the Triple Crown

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

Robchen, the colt bidding to complete the Triple Crown, was drawn in gate 4, wearing No. 8, for Sunday's Kikuka Sho at Kyoto Racecourse, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

The Kikuka Sho, the Japanese St Leger, is run over 3,000 metres and is the last leg of the Triple Crown for three-year-olds, after the Satsuki Sho and the Japanese Derby.

The draw

An inside draw is generally seen as an advantage in a long race at Kyoto, allowing a horse to save ground on the turns.

History

Only eight horses have won the Japanese Triple Crown: St Lite in 1941, Shinzan in 1964, Mr. C.B. in 1983, Symboli Rudolf in 1984, Narita Brian in 1994, Deep Impact in 2005, Orfevre in 2011 and Contrail, a son of Deep Impact, in 2020.

Symboli Rudolf, Deep Impact and Contrail were all unbeaten when they completed the Triple Crown.

The distance

The 3,000 metres of the Kikuka Sho is a test of stamina that many horses have never faced, and it has upset favourites in the past.

Preparation

Robchen worked well in its final preparations this week, according to its stable.

The weekend

The race is the highlight of a weekend that also includes the Japan Series and the Fukushima governor's election.

SPORTS

Sports in Brief

By the Sports Desk

WHEELCHAIR TENNIS: Tokito Oda won the men's singles at the Asian Para Games on Friday, earning a place at the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics, after taking the doubles title with Daisuke Arai.

BOXING: Kazuto Ioka will make a comeback on New Year's Eve; Naoya Inoue expects to fight around March.

FIGURE SKATING: The Grand Prix of France opens in Angers, with Ami Nakai defending her title.

RUGBY: Japan play Fiji at Chichibunomiya on Saturday, with Warner Dearn and Naoto Saito as co-captains.

WRESTLING: The world championships open in Astana on Saturday.

FOOTBALL: The Asian Cup organisers say the tournament in Saudi Arabia will go ahead as planned.

B.LEAGUE: Ibaraki beat Alvark Tokyo and Sendai beat Yokohama B-Corsairs in B Premier on Thursday; Hachioji won their fifth game in B One.

TABLE TENNIS: The United States now has a professional table tennis league, part of a boom in American professional sports.

BASEBALL: The Japan Series opens on Saturday; the World Series on Saturday morning, Japan time.

HORSE RACING: The Kikuka Sho is run at Kyoto on Sunday.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Champi's track, Page 3.

Komeito and the 31-seat cut, Page 5.

Land near bases, Page 6.

SPORTS



The emblem of the 5th Asian Para Games, Aichi-Nagoya 2026, which close on Saturday. (File image: WPM Productions)

SPORTS

Oda Wins Wheelchair Tennis Gold and a Place at the Los Angeles Paralympics as Japan Piles Up Medals at the Asian Para Games

Ishiyama wins the 400 metres, Kimura takes a fifth straight swimming gold, and Asano and Wada win the mixed doubles in table tennis

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Tokito Oda won the men's wheelchair tennis singles at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games on Friday, the sixth day of competition, earning a place at the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics, Kyodo News reported.

Oda, 20, the Paralympic champion from Paris and a native of Aichi Prefecture, had already won the men's doubles with Daisuke Arai.

Thursday's golds

Japanese athletes won a string of gold medals in swimming, athletics and table tennis on Thursday, the fifth day of the Games.

In athletics, Daiki Ishiyama won the men's 400 metres in the T12 class for visually impaired athletes, and also took bronze in the long jump, according to the Yomiuri Shimbun. Tomoki Sato won the men's 400 metres in the T51/52 wheelchair class, and Kenya Karasawa the men's 1,500 metres for T11 runners.

In the pool

Keiichi Kimura won the men's 50 metres freestyle in the S11 class, his fifth consecutive gold, the Yomiuri Shimbun said. Ogiwara won the men's 100 metres backstroke in the S8 class at Nippon Gaishi Sports Plaza, Minai the men's 400 metres freestyle in the S10 class and Fukuda the women's 100 metres breaststroke in the SB8 class.

A record

Yamaguchi won the men's 100 metres breaststroke in the SB14 class for a second straight title, setting a Games record, The Yomiuri Shimbun's English edition reported.

Table tennis

Asano and Wada won the mixed doubles in table tennis.

Wheelchair tennis

In the women's wheelchair tennis singles, Yui Kamiji lost the final to a Chinese player on Thursday and took silver.

Oda's base

The Yomiuri Shimbun reported that local supporters have helped Oda develop a training base, including the production of wheelchairs, as he aims for the top.

Toyota's help

Toyota is providing vehicles that make it easier for wheelchair users to get in and out so that disabled children can watch the events, and on Thursday it took 10 children from a special needs school in Nagoya and their families to the Games.

The finish

The Games close on Saturday.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Matsui to lead the Giants, Page 26.

Editorial: one language, Page 30.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 19.

Crossword, Page 29.

Champi's track, Page 3.

SPORTS

Asian Cup Organisers Insist the Tournament in Saudi Arabia Will Go Ahead, as a One-Year Postponement Is Discussed

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The organising committee of the AFC Asian Cup, which Saudi Arabia is to host in January and February next year, said on Thursday that the tournament remained on schedule, despite doubts raised by the situation in the Middle East.

Speaking in Tokyo, where he was attending an Asian Football Confederation meeting, the committee's head of public relations said it was monitoring the regional situation closely, coordinating with the AFC and making thorough preparations.

Attacks

Saudi Arabia has come under repeated attacks from the Houthis, the pro-Iranian armed group in Yemen. The Houthis said this week that they had struck the defence ministry in Riyadh and airports in Dammam and Abha.

Postponement

Postponing the tournament by a year is being discussed. The AFC president, Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, plans to decide in November.

Daily life

The spokesman said domestic matches in Saudi Arabia were being played as normal and that daily life was unchanged.

Japan

Japan, four-time winners of the Asian Cup, are among the favourites.

Travel advice

Japan's foreign ministry has advised against all travel to Riyadh.

SPORTS

Dentsu Buys Japan's Broadcast Rights to the 2027 Rugby World Cup and Plans to Show All 52 Matches

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The advertising company Dentsu said on Thursday that it had acquired the Japanese broadcast rights to the Rugby World Cup in Australia, to be held from October to November next year.

The rights cover both television and internet streaming. Dentsu plans to show more than 20 matches, including Japan's, on free-to-air television and, with streaming services, to cover all 52 matches.

The price

The value of the contract was not disclosed.

Football

Dentsu also acquired the Japanese rights to this year's FIFA World Cup in North America, arranging free-to-air broadcasts of Japan's matches and working with streaming services to show every match.

Rising costs

The cost of broadcast rights for major tournaments has risen sharply, and Japanese broadcasters have struggled to afford them alone.

Japan's history

Japan's victory over South Africa at the 2015 World Cup and its run to the quarter-finals as host in 2019 made rugby one of the most watched sports on Japanese television.

One year out

An event marking one year to go before the tournament was held in Sydney on October 1.

CULTURE

Ryu Murakami, Who Shocked Japan With 'Almost Transparent Blue' and Captured Its Loneliness and Stagnation, Dies at 74

The Akutagawa Prize winner wrote 'Coin Locker Babies' and 'In the Miso Soup', and interviewed business leaders on television for two decades

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Ryu Murakami, the novelist whose debut, "Almost Transparent Blue", caused a sensation in 1976 and who went on to chronicle the desires, loneliness and sense of stagnation of Japanese society, died at his home on October 17. He was 74. A funeral was held

for family only.

Murakami, whose real name was Ryunosuke Murakami, was from Nagasaki Prefecture.

The debut

He wrote "Almost Transparent Blue" while a student at Musashino Art University. Its portrait of young people living a decadent life of drugs and sex near an American base won the Akutagawa Prize, was hailed as new literature from the postwar generation and became a bestseller.

Coin Locker Babies

"Coin Locker Babies", inspired by real cases of babies abandoned in coin lockers, won the Noma Literary New Face Prize.

Visions of Japan

In "Exodus From the Land of Hope", junior high school students stop going to school and plan to escape Japan. "From the Fatherland, With Love", in which North Korean guerrillas seize Fukuoka, won the Mainichi Publishing Culture Award and the Noma Literary Prize.

Hello Work

His "Hello Work for 13-Year-Olds", a guide to hundreds of occupations, was widely read by children and parents.

Television

He hosted "Cambria Palace", a television programme in which he interviewed leading business figures, for many years.

Abroad

Many of his novels were translated, and "In the Miso Soup" and "Audition", which the director Takashi Miike turned into a cult film, made him one of the best-known Japanese writers abroad.

The two Murakamis

For decades he was paired with Haruki Murakami, no relation, as the two Murakamis of contemporary Japanese fiction, though their styles could hardly have been more different.

His themes

Kyodo News said his work captured each era with a sharp sensibility, depicting people's desires and loneliness and the sense of stagnation in Japanese society.

CULTURE

Culture in Brief

By the Culture Desk

BUNRAKU: Shizuo Goto, a researcher of bunraku puppet theatre and professor emeritus at Kyoto City University of Arts, has died.

SHOSOIN: The 78th Shosoin Exhibition opens at the Nara National Museum on Saturday.

MIZUKAZE: Sixteen Japanese and French writers wrote a novel together during a day-long journey from Kyoto to Matsue on the luxury train Twilight Express Mizukaze, Kyodo News reported.

VAN GOGH: A team at a South Korean university has suggested that Van Gogh's "The Starry Night" was inspired by the July night sky.

AFRICAN ART: An exhibition connected with an art award created by Toyota Tsusho to promote African culture opens in Tokyo on Friday.

ORDER OF CULTURE: The ceremony is on November 3 at the Imperial Palace.

ZELDA: The Ocarina of Time remake goes on sale on November 5.

SHOCHIKUZA: Demolition of the Osaka theatre begins in November.

RYU MURAKAMI: The novelist died on October 17, aged 74.

TOM SKERRITT: The American actor of "Top Gun" and "Alien" died on Wednesday, aged 93.

CULTURE

Nobel Laureate Kenso Soai and 'Super Mario' Creator Shigeru Miyamoto Are Among Eight to Receive the Order of Culture

The architect Toyo Ito, the lighting designer Motoko Ishii and the composer Shunichi Tokura are also honoured; Ayako Okamoto, Rintaro and Sadao Watanabe become Persons of Cultural Merit

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The government decided on Friday to award this year's Order of Culture to eight people, among them the chemist Kenso Soai, 76, who shared this year's

Nobel Prize in Chemistry, and Shigeru Miyamoto, 73, the Nintendo representative director and fellow who created the Super Mario games.

The recipients

The eight are the lighting designer Motoko Ishii, 88; the architect Toyo Ito, 85; the biologist Tsuneyoshi Kuroiwa, 84; the scholar of French literature Tetsuya Shiokawa, 81; Soai, for organic synthetic chemistry; the composer Shunichi Tokura, 78, for popular music and music copyright; the immunologist Shigekazu Nagata, 77; and Miyamoto, for media arts.

Soai's discovery

Soai discovered asymmetric autocatalysis, a reaction in which only one of a pair of mirror-image molecules, like left and right hands, copies itself and multiplies. He shared the Nobel Prize, announced on October 7, with the French chemist Henri Kagan.

Miyamoto

Miyamoto also created The Legend of Zelda, which marks its 40th anniversary this year, and is a producer of the live-action Zelda film due next April.

Persons of Cultural Merit

The government also named 21 Persons of Cultural Merit, including Soai. Among them are the golfer Ayako Okamoto, 75, for promoting sport; the animation director Rintaro, 85; and the saxophonist Sadao Watanabe, 93.

The ceremonies

The Order of Culture will be presented at the Imperial Palace on November 3, Culture Day, and the Persons of Cultural Merit will be honoured at a ceremony at a Tokyo hotel on November 4.

The others

Ito won the Pritzker Prize in 2013. Ishii lit landmarks including Tokyo Tower. Nagata is known for his work on apoptosis, the process by which cells die in an orderly way, and Tokura, a composer of hit songs, served as commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

The order

The Order of Culture, established in 1937, is Japan's highest honour for contributions to culture, the arts and science.

CULTURE

The Legend of Zelda Turns 40: A Remake of Ocarina of Time Arrives on November 5 and a Live-Action Film Next April

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Nintendo's The Legend of Zelda, the adventure game series in which a hero fights his way through a fantasy kingdom, marks its 40th anniversary this year.

A remake of The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time goes on sale for the Nintendo Switch 2 on November 5, and a live-action film, The Legend of Zelda, opens on April 30 next year.

The first game

The first game was released in 1986 for the Family Computer, Nintendo's home console. The hero, Link, saves a kingdom from the demon king Ganon, and the game was a hit.

Ocarina of Time

Ocarina of Time, released in 1998, is regarded by fans as a classic. For the anniversary, its graphics and playability have been overhauled.

The film

The film's producers include Shigeru Miyamoto, who created the series and was named on Friday as a recipient of the Order of Culture.

Miyamoto's words

In September Miyamoto said on Nintendo's website that the series had continually taken on new forms of play alongside advances in digital technology and game hardware.

The business

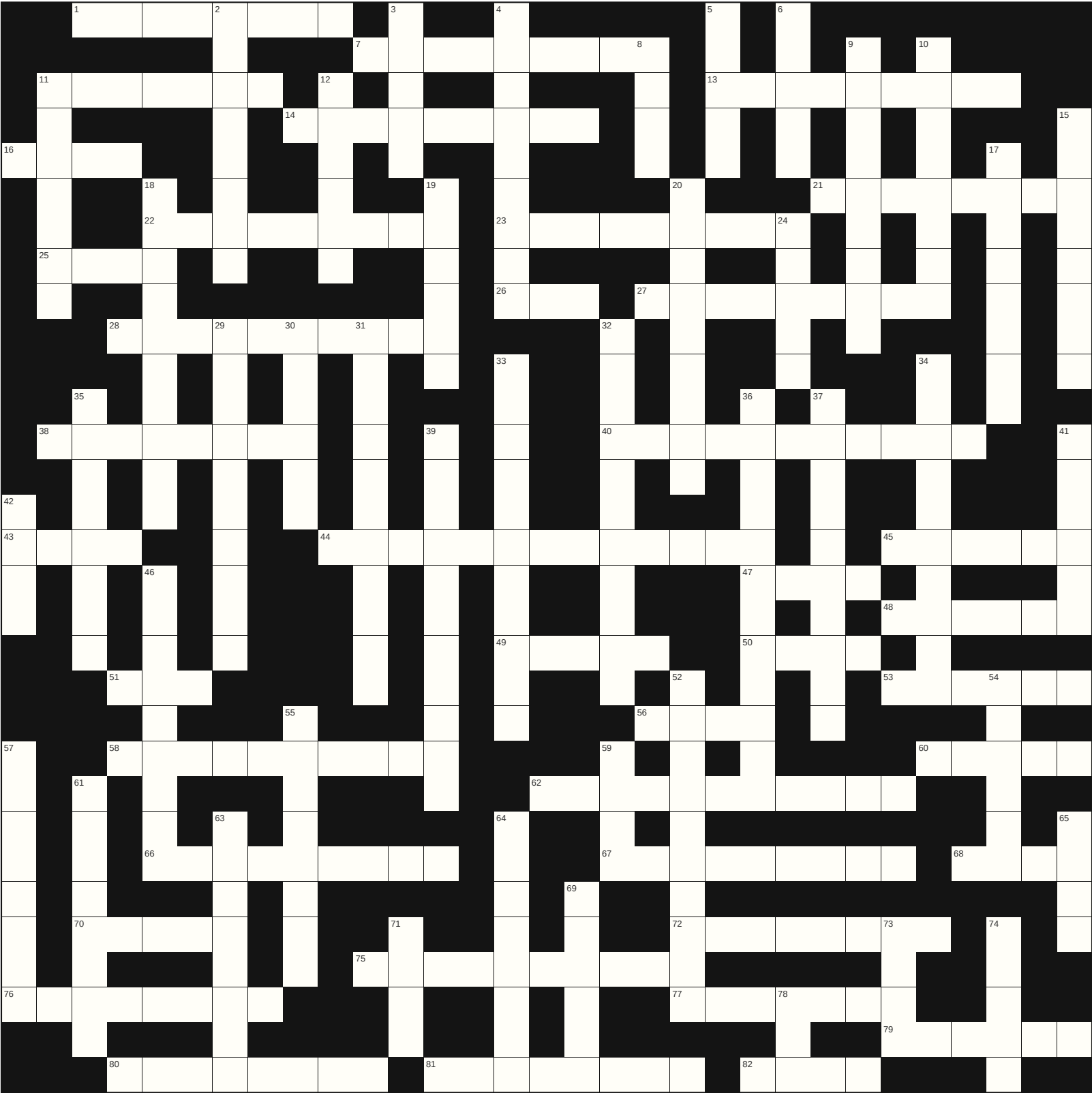
Nintendo plans to strengthen its strategy of using its characters and stories in films and other businesses to raise earnings, after the success of its Super Mario film.

The series

The series has sold well over 100 million copies, and its most recent major games became some of the best-selling titles on the Switch.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 83 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional.

ACROSS

1. Director linked to the burned studio (8)
7. Sanofi's antibody for RS virus (9)
11. British firm ranking airlines (7)
13. ___ Atlas, which counted Indonesia's burned land (9)
14. Fourth straight all-around champion (9)
16. Team Mirai leader Takahiro ___ (4)
21. Miyazaki carrier in ANA's plans (8)
22. Its 90th anniversary was marked in Beijing (9)
23. Island where it lies (9)
25. National police chief (4)
26. Islands where Champi should end as a low (3)
27. ___ adjustment, ruled an abuse (9)
28. Kawasaki racecourse worker (10)
38. City with the first lowland snow (8)
40. Brewers ace in Game 1 (11)
43. Lacquered highlight of the show (4)
44. Division Inoue plans to try (13)
45. Fifth consecutive gold (6)
47. Introduced on October 23, 2001 (4)
48. City that rose 16 degrees in a day (6)
49. Zelda's demon king (5)
50. Princess bound for Singapore (4)
51. Fuel of plutonium and uranium (3)
53. Contractor whose suspension delays the maglev (6)
56. Oda's doubles partner (4)
58. Osaka theatre being demolished (10)
60. Tibetan area hit by a magnitude 7.0 (5)
62. German state of a spy arrest (11)
66. JR Hokkaido's new luxury train (9)
67. Top airline's home, and Aiko's destination (9)
68. Shinkansen that derailed in 2004 (4)
70. Economic security minister (5)
72. 400 metres winner (8)
75. City of the giant footprint (10)
76. Allowed under the revised law (8)
77. City whose city hall was burned (7)
79. Veranda-style seats on the new train (6)
80. Only prince of his generation in line (8)
81. Virus with a first human case (8)
82. In the ___ Soup (4)

DOWN

2. Network Musk restored for Ukraine (8)
3. Lawmaker who asked for road request figures (5)
4. Its district (9)
5. Red Sea port with an Aramco site (5)
6. Station where the backpack was lost (5)
8. Fourteen-year-old draftee (4)
9. MSD's antibody for RS virus (9)
10. Where the reporter is held (8)
11. Islands where a 74-day streak ended (7)
12. Payment service dropping ID photos (6)
15. Police station of the officer who lost a bag (8)
17. Ukraine's president (8)
18. System of fines now going cashless (10)
19. Seat formula now in use (6)
20. Giants scouting director (9)
24. He apologised over 584.7 million yen (5)
29. Salt flats of land speed records (10)
30. Scored 24 for Philadelphia (6)
31. U.S. city where storms build (11)
32. Feared flood of flaws found by AI (11)
33. Formula kinder to small parties (11)
34. Hanshin's first pick (10)
35. Fund seeking a Takara meeting (8)
36. Payments the draft says should stop (12)
37. ___ Babies, his second hit (10)
39. Unit of Champi's 950 (11)
41. Finland's repository for spent fuel (6)
42. Yokohama ward of the fire (4)
46. City the centre line passes north of on Monday (9)
52. Life insurer hit by fraud (10)
54. Scenic trolley railway in Kyoto (6)
55. Chunichi's lottery win (8)
57. Ishin lawmaker who will accept it "for now" (8)
59. Her first official trip abroad (4)
61. Likely maker of that footprint (8)
63. Footballer whose doctors stood trial (8)
64. Acquitted in 2024 (8)
65. That mine's ventilation shaft (4)
69. Minister who corrected a spending report (6)
71. Saturday's rugby opponents (4)
73. Meta's AI agent (4)
74. Vietnam's leader, due November 8 (5)
78. Paper group whose unit broke the rules (3)

CULTURE

Kazuhiko Yamaguchi, Director of the Sister Street Fighter Films and the Drama School Wars, Dies at 89

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Kazuhiko Yamaguchi, a film director known for the martial arts films of the 1970s and for the television drama School Wars, died of pneumonia at his home in Yokohama on October 6, Kyodo News reported on Friday. He was 89.

His funeral was held privately with his close family.

Toei

A native of Nagasaki, Yamaguchi graduated from Waseda University and joined Toei's Tokyo studio.

Martial arts

He directed the Onna Hissatsu-ken series, released abroad as Sister Street Fighter, which starred Etsuko Shihomi.

He also made the Kenka Karate films, in which Sonny Chiba played Masutatsu Oyama, the founder of Kyokushin karate.

School Wars

On television he worked as a director on School Wars, the 1984-85 drama based on the true story of a teacher who turned a rough high school rugby team in Kyoto into national champions.

The real school

The school behind the story was Fushimi Technical High School, which won the national high school rugby championship in January 1981.

CULTURE

Shosoin Exhibition Opens in Nara on Saturday With 60 Treasures, 11 of Them Shown for the First Time, Including a Mummified Marten

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The 78th Shosoin Exhibition opens at the Nara National Museum on Saturday and runs until November 9, with 60 treasures from the imperial storehouse, 11 of them displayed for the first time. The museum showed the items to the press on Friday.

The highlight

This year's highlight is a lacquered ewer decorated with flowers, plants and deer.

Go stones

Also on display are go stones of ivory dyed red and decorated with birds, and a square mirror with designs of a lion-like mythical beast and insects.

A marten

Among the unusual items is the mummy of a Japanese marten, a member of the weasel family, which is likely to attract attention.

Masks and sutras

The exhibits include a sutra scroll setting out the precepts that monks must keep, and, among the items shown for the first time, a mask used in gigaku, a masked dance-drama brought from the Korean kingdom of Baekje.

Tickets

Admission requires a ticket for a specified date and time.

The storehouse

The Shosoin, a wooden storehouse at Todaiji temple, holds about 9,000 objects, many of them belonging to Emperor Shomu, who died in 756, and dedicated to the Great Buddha by his widow, Empress Komyo.

The exhibition

The treasures are shown each autumn, a selection at a time, and the exhibition is one of the most popular events in Nara.

CULTURE

Demolition of Osaka's Shochikuza, the 'Arc de Triomphe of Dotonbori', Will Begin in November

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Demolition of the Osaka Shochikuza theatre in Dotonbori will begin in November, its operator, Shochiku, said on Friday. No plan has been decided for the site.

The theatre closed in May because of the age of the building, ending a history of 103 years.

The arch

The theatre opened in 1923, and its arched facade earned it the nickname of the Arc de Triomphe of Dotonbori.

Two years

The demolition is expected to take about two years.

The future

Shochiku has said it is working towards a new base for culture and the performing arts, and a

representative said the company would keep talking with the city and prefecture of Osaka and wanted to decide its direction as soon as possible.

Kabuki

The theatre staged kabuki and other productions for generations of Osaka audiences, and its closure was mourned by actors and fans.

Dotonbori

Dotonbori, with its canal, neon signs and restaurants, is one of Osaka's busiest districts, and the theatre was a landmark on its main street.

EDITORIAL

Festivals and Events This Week

By the Culture Desk

NARA: The 78th Shosoin Exhibition at the Nara National Museum, from Saturday to November 9; timed tickets required.

KASHIHARA: About 2.4 million cosmos flowers in bloom at the Fujiwara Palace ruins.

TOKYO: An exhibition connected with Toyota Tsusho's award for African art, from Friday.

GINZA: Sapporo's Black Label bar and Yebisu beer hall open on October 27.

YOKOHAMA: Japan Series Games 1 and 2, Saturday and Sunday.

KYOTO: The Kikuka Sho at Kyoto Racecourse, Sunday.

TOKYO: Japan v Fiji at Chichibunomiya, Saturday.

NAGOYA: The Asian Para Games close on Saturday.

ARASHIYAMA: Autumn colours approach in the Hozu Gorge, usually at their best in November.

KYOTO: The Kurama Fire Festival and the Jidai Matsuri were held on Thursday.

EDITORIAL

Quotes of the Day

By the Editorial Desk

"It feels as if I have come back to my home town." Hideki Matsui, the new Giants manager.

"My desire to take on the challenge of America has not wavered at all." Shoki Oda, the Giants' first draft pick.

"Accept it for now." Ryuna Kanemura of Ishin, on the 31-seat compromise.

"A very large change to the system is undesirable."

Hiromasa Nakano, Komeito's policy chief.

"Covering a wider range of people carries great weight." Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama, on the new benefit.

"It is important to discuss it, comparing every other form of propulsion." Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, on nuclear submarines.

"This is my last chance." Kazuto Ioka, 37, on his comeback.

"Not related at all." PHP Institute, the publisher, on the programming language.

"I want to apologise." Junya Ogawa, on the Centrist Reform Alliance's subsidies.

"It is something that must never happen." Yoshinobu Kusu, the national police chief, on the misuse of old licences.

EDITORIAL

Words in the News

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

SENJO KOSUITAI: A linear rainband; a line of thunderclouds that brings torrential rain to the same place for hours.

WHITE-HAT HACKER: A security specialist who uses attackers' techniques to find and close weaknesses.

BENEFICIAL OWNER: The person who ultimately owns or controls a company, whoever is named on paper.

SAINTE-LAGUE METHOD: A way of sharing proportional seats, dividing votes by odd numbers, that favours smaller parties more than D'Hondt.

MONETISATION: Paying social media users according to how many people see their posts.

REFUND METHOD: The tax-free system from November, in which visitors pay tax and get it back on departure.

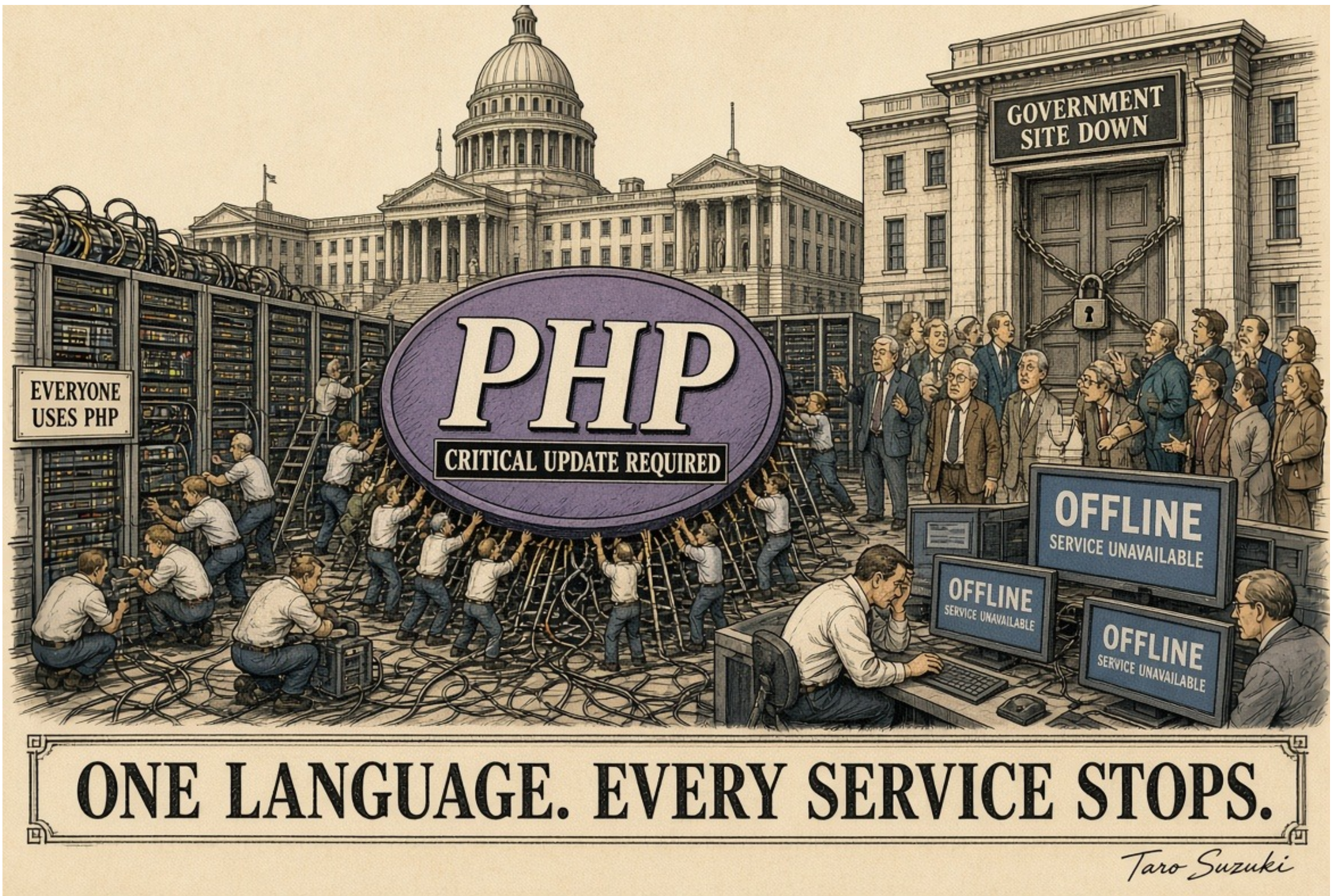
DEFLATION ADJUSTMENT: The basis for the welfare cuts the Supreme Court has twice found illegal.

EXTRATROPICAL LOW: What a typhoon becomes when it loses its warm core; still capable of strong winds and rain.

KEI CAR: Japan's smallest class of passenger car, with limits on size and engine power.

ORDER OF CULTURE: Japan's highest honour for culture, arts and science, presented on November 3.

EDITORIAL & OPINION



Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki for The Japan Morning Post.

EDITORIAL

One Language, Every Service Stops. This Week Showed How Much of Daily Life Rests on Software Nobody Thinks About, and Why Warnings That Save Lives Must Never Be Switched Off With It

Pausing websites to keep attackers out was often the right call. Silencing earthquake alerts for four days is another matter. Japan needs to know what it runs, fund the people who maintain it and build its most important services so that they keep working when the rest of the web is being repaired

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

At 6:47 on Friday morning, in a country that feels hundreds of earthquakes a year and on a day when a very strong typhoon was passing the Sakishima Islands, one of Japan's three largest mobile carriers stopped sending emergency alert mail. Until Monday, the phones of SoftBank, Y!mobile and LINEMO customers will not sound the alarm that gives people a few precious seconds before strong shaking arrives, nor deliver the tsunami warnings and evacuation information that travel the same way.

The reason, SoftBank said, was the problem involving PHP, the programming language whose two critical flaws were disclosed before dawn on Wednesday. The company asked its customers to install other apps in the meantime.

Today's cartoon shows technicians in shirtsleeves straining to hold up a giant PHP badge marked "critical update required" among racks of servers, while a crowd of officials stands outside a government building whose doors are chained shut beneath a sign reading "government site down", and a man at a desk holds his head in front of screens that say "offline". The line beneath reads: one language, every service stops. It is an exaggeration, as cartoons are meant to be. Not every service stopped; most of those that did were back within a day or two. But the exaggeration points at something true and uncomfortable, and SoftBank's decision has made it impossible to dismiss as a problem for programmers alone.

What happened this week

The facts are by now familiar. Researchers, helped by artificial intelligence, found two flaws deep in the PHP engine that would let an attacker who is not logged in run code on a web server from anywhere on the internet. The PHP project, a community of volunteers and companies supported by a small foundation, prepared fixes and released them late on Wednesday night, Japan time, after details began to

leak.

Governments everywhere gave the same blunt advice: apply the fixes at once, and if you cannot, take your systems off the internet until you can. Japan's National Cyber Office said temporarily suspending a website was an effective measure, and Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi repeated the point on social media, then suspended her own website overnight.

What followed was a strange, quiet holiday for parts of the Japanese internet. Pages of the health, finance and transport ministries went dark. So did the general website for My Number cards, about 60 websites run by JR West, the official site of JR Shikoku with its train running information, and the site of the Saga prefectural police. Osaka Prefecture switched off its press releases; Fukuoka Prefecture its tender search; Aomori Prefecture its map of bear sightings, in a region where bears have become a matter of public safety. Sendai suspended an app that carries weather and disaster information. JR Central closed the private work booths in its stations. A securities firm told Kyodo News it could not send market reports to clients or calculate exchange rates, and that a full fix might take a month.

Switching off was often right

It is worth saying clearly that many of these decisions were sensible. A flaw that allows remote code execution is the worst kind there is. An attacker who can run code on a server can read what it stores, alter what it shows to the public and plant software that stays behind after the hole has been closed. Cloudflare reported that attempts to exploit the flaws rose sharply as soon as they were disclosed, and Amazon said it had seen attempts even before. In those conditions, an organisation that cannot be sure its servers are fixed is right to take them offline for a few hours. Inconvenience is a better outcome than a breach that leaks citizens' data or turns a government

website into a weapon against its own visitors.

The question is not whether anyone should ever switch off. It is what the switching off revealed: how few organisations knew, quickly and confidently, which of their systems ran PHP, which version and who was responsible for updating it. The railway operator that told Kyodo News it had applied the fix again and again across sites built for its many businesses, coordinating with outside vendors and working through the night, was describing a familiar condition. Over two decades, websites and online services have been commissioned project by project, built by different contractors and then left to run, often on servers nobody inside the organisation fully understands. When a fix must be applied everywhere at once, that history becomes a liability.

The alerts are different

SoftBank's decision belongs in a different category. A ministry's press releases can wait a day. An earthquake early warning cannot, and neither can a tsunami warning or an instruction to evacuate. These messages are among the most valuable pieces of public infrastructure Japan has built since the Chuetsu earthquake of 2004 and the disaster of March 2011, and their value lies precisely in their arriving, without fail, on every phone in the affected area.

We do not yet know which part of SoftBank's system depends on PHP, or why the company judged that the only safe course was to suspend delivery entirely for four days. It may be that the vulnerable component sits in an administrative interface rather than in the broadcast itself; it may be that the company's engineers concluded, reasonably, that they could not rule out an intruder sending false alerts to millions of people. A fake tsunami warning would be its own kind of disaster, and nobody should want to see one.

But the result is that millions of people in Japan are without a safety system they have every reason to believe they have, for reasons they cannot see, on a schedule they cannot change. That should not be possible. A life-safety channel must be designed so that the parts exposed to the internet can be isolated, patched or replaced while the core keeps running, and so that the carrier can keep sending the agency's warnings even if every administrative website it operates has to be switched off.

SoftBank owes its customers and the public a full explanation once the immediate danger has passed: which component was affected, why the whole service had to stop and what it will change so that it never has to stop again. The internal affairs ministry, which began this week to examine how telecommunications carriers should defend their data, should make the resilience of emergency alerts an explicit part of that work, and it should not wait for a report in the summer of 2027 to ask the other carriers whether they could have found themselves in the same position.

In the meantime, the advice to customers is simple. Install a second alert app now, turn on its notifications and allow it to sound when the phone is silent. Keep a radio. Know which channels your municipality uses. None of that is a substitute for a system that works, but this week has shown that no single channel should be trusted alone.

Lessons from the islands

The people of the Sakishima Islands, who spent Friday inside the storm-force winds of Typhoon Champi, know something about redundancy. Generations of typhoons have taught them to keep water, food, batteries and a radio, to tie down what can blow away and to listen for the loudspeakers in the street as well as the phone in the pocket. Nobody there relies on a single source of warning, because experience has taught them that any one of them can fail when it is needed most.

The rest of the country, and the companies that run its digital services, could learn from that habit of mind. The question to ask of any system that matters is not whether it can fail but what happens when it does, and whether there is another way for the message to get through.

Telling people what is happening

That applies to information about the outages themselves. This week people had to piece together which services were working from company notices, news reports and posts on social media, some of them published on websites that were themselves offline. The National Cyber Office's decision to spread its warnings through social media was sensible, and the chief cabinet secretary's appeal to follow its accounts was practical advice for the moment.

But a government that asks organisations to switch

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off their websites should also be able to tell citizens, in one place that does not depend on the software under attack, which public services are affected and when they are expected back. Such a page need not be sophisticated. It needs to exist before the next emergency, and it needs to stay up when everything else goes down.

The people who did the work

It would be wrong to tell the story of this week only as one of failure. Engineers at railways, banks, ministries, town halls and hosting companies worked through the night to apply the fixes, test them and bring services back. Volunteers who maintain PHP prepared and released the fixes under great pressure after details began to leak. Their work is invisible when it succeeds, which is most of the time, and they deserve the thanks of the many people who never knew how close their data came to being exposed.

A single point of failure

The cartoon's line, one language, every service stops, is a description of what engineers call a single point of failure. PHP is not to blame for being popular. It became the language behind roughly seven in ten websites whose server software can be identified because it was free, easy to learn and supported by cheap hosting, and because the publishing systems built on it, WordPress above all, let millions of people and organisations put themselves online without writing a line of code. That is a remarkable achievement, and the volunteers who maintain the language responded to this week's crisis quickly and responsibly.

But popularity concentrates risk. When one component sits underneath most of the services in a society, a single flaw in it becomes a national event. The same is true of a handful of cloud providers, operating systems and code libraries on which almost everything now depends. The answer is not to abandon popular software for obscure alternatives, which would bring dangers of their own. It is to design important services so that they do not all fail together, and so that one failing part does not bring down the rest.

Some of that is a matter of architecture. A municipality's disaster information page does not need to be generated afresh by a server every time someone opens it; a simple, static page that can be served from anywhere and contains no program to attack would have stayed online all week. A carrier's broadcast system does not need to share anything with its customer websites. A railway's train information does not need to sit on the same platform as its marketing pages. Separating what matters most from what can wait is not expensive. It is a habit, and too few organisations have it.

Know what you run

The most useful thing any organisation can do after this week is also the most boring: make a list. Which systems do we operate, what software do they run, which versions, who built them, who maintains them and how quickly can each be updated? Security specialists call the result a software bill of materials, and governments in the United States and Europe have begun to require suppliers to provide one. Japan's ministries and local governments should demand the same from every contractor that builds a public website or service, and should keep the lists up to date.

An organisation that knows what it runs can patch in hours. One that must first discover what it runs will always be days behind the attackers, and this week the attackers were not waiting.

The machines are reading the code

That last point matters more than ever, because the pace of discovery has changed. The PHP flaws were found with the help of AI. OpenAI said security firms had used its newest model, among others, to find them, and predicted that similar discoveries would surge in the coming months. A body involved in PHP's development said reports of vulnerabilities had been arriving one after another since August, and that defenders and attackers alike could now find flaws faster than ever.

On Wednesday Microsoft described a hacker group it believes is linked to the Chinese government using an openly available AI tool to attack hundreds of organisations with little human involvement, in some cases taking control of cloud accounts within three hours of choosing a target. Kyodo News reported that the same tool was used in an attack that caused

damage at Japanese companies. Commentators have begun to speak of a coming flood of flaws, found faster than they can be fixed.

The consequences are not mysterious. If machines can read millions of lines of code and find weaknesses that human experts missed for years, then old software everywhere is about to give up its secrets, to whoever asks first. The comfortable rhythm in which a flaw is found, reported privately, fixed over weeks and then disclosed will come under strain. Patching will have to be faster and more automatic. And the defenders will need the same tools as the attackers.

A team of white hats is a start

The government's response this week has been energetic. The National Cyber Office used social media to spread warnings quickly, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara asked people to follow its accounts. The National Security Council discussed cybersecurity on Thursday. On Friday Industry Minister Ryosei Akazawa said the government would form a team of white-hat hackers, specialists who use attackers' methods to find and close holes, and the Liberal Democrats have proposed making wider use of such people. The government has also said it will compile principles for AI and digital reform by the end of the year.

All of that is welcome. But a team of specialists in Tokyo cannot patch the servers of every town hall, clinic and small business in the country. The Yomiuri Shimbun reported that officials worry about how small and medium-sized companies, which often have no security staff at all, will keep up. That worry is justified. The most effective help the government can give them is not advice but defaults: procurement rules that require suppliers to keep the software they deliver updated for its whole life, hosting services that apply critical fixes automatically unless a customer opts out, and support for regional bodies that can do the work for those who cannot do it themselves.

The law already points in this direction. The active cyber defence legislation passed last year requires operators of critical infrastructure to report serious incidents and gives the state new powers to detect and stop attacks, and the National Cyber Office was created to lead that work. This week was a rehearsal for the problems it was meant to solve, and the lessons should be written into its implementation now, while they are fresh.

Paying for what we use

There is one more lesson, and it is the one most likely to be forgotten once the websites are all back. PHP, like much of the software on which the modern economy runs, is maintained by a small number of people, many of them volunteers, supported by a foundation funded by donations from companies and individuals. The companies that profit from that work, in Japan as elsewhere, contribute a tiny fraction of what it is worth to them.

Japanese companies and government bodies run vast numbers of websites built on open-source software. They should help pay for its maintenance, through the foundations that look after it, through paid engineering time and through public funds where the software has become infrastructure in all but name. Germany has set up a public fund to support open-source software on which its economy depends. Japan, which has just watched one such piece of software reach into its ministries, railways, banks and mobile networks in a single night, should consider doing the same.

And stop collecting what you cannot protect

The PHP scare arrived in the middle of a run of breaches that had nothing to do with it. Sagawa Express said on Friday that personal information on up to 53.23 million deliveries may have leaked from its tracking service. Capcom said 11.77 million email addresses had leaked. Park24 said about 1.46 million images of driving licences and other identity documents had leaked and that it would pay each customer affected 3,000 yen. Arcadia, whose service sends disaster information for local governments, said intruders had used it to send 1.42 million suspicious emails. The Digital Agency said data from about 13,000 website inquiries may have leaked through a contractor.

The common thread is not one language but a careless attitude to data. Companies have collected photographs of licences and other documents for years because it was easy, and stored them because

nobody told them to delete them. PayPay's decision on Friday to verify identities only by reading the IC chips in documents, ahead of a legal requirement from 2027, and the moves by banks to stop accepting photographs, show the way. The safest data is the data a company never kept.

The line beneath the cartoon

One language, every service stops. It need not be so. Software will always have flaws, and AI will find more of them, faster. What turns a flaw into a national event is the way we build and run our systems: without knowing what is in them, without separating what saves lives from what merely informs, and without paying for the maintenance on which everything depends.

The websites that went dark this week are coming back on, and most people will forget the week by the time the leaves have turned. They should not be allowed to. Somewhere in Japan in the next few days a seismometer will detect the first faint waves of an earthquake, and the agency's warning will go out. Whether it reaches every phone it should is, this week, a question nobody in a modern society should have to ask.

ANALYSIS

Cutting Seats Is the Easy Part. How Votes Become Seats Will Decide Whether the Lower House Reform Has Any Legitimacy

By William | Senior Political Analyst

The Liberal Democrats' offer to cut 31 proportional seats from the House of Representatives, rather than the 45 in the bill they wrote with Ishin, was presented as arithmetic: a 6.7 per cent fall in population projected between 2015 and 2030, applied to 465 seats.

It is better understood as politics. The number matters less than the method attached to it.

Cutting proportional seats alone would hurt the smaller parties most, because each remaining seat in a regional block would need more votes to win. That is why every opposition party has objected, and why the governing party's offer to switch from the D'Hondt method to a modified Sainte-Lague method is the real concession.

The D'Hondt formula slightly favours large parties; Sainte-Lague is fairer to smaller ones. Combining a smaller cut with a fairer formula is a reasonable bargain, and it is telling that the Democratic Party for the People found parts of it to appreciate.

Komeito's decision to move towards opposing the plan is nevertheless a warning. Electoral rules are the rules of competition among the parties themselves, and Japan has generally tried to change them by broad agreement rather than by majority. A system changed over the objections of a large part of the opposition will carry a question mark through every election held under it.

The governing parties should therefore treat Monday's replies as the start of a negotiation, not a formality before a vote. The method could be refined; the size of the blocks could be reviewed; the cut could be phased in.

There is also a case for asking voters what they want. A smaller chamber is popular in the abstract. Whether it is worth reducing the range of views represented in the Diet is a question that deserves more than a month of talks between party officials.

Ishin made the cut a condition of its support for the government, and it is entitled to press for it. But a reform sold as a sacrifice by politicians should not end up as a gain for the largest party.

The real test is not whether a bill passes by the end of the session. It is whether, after the next election, the losers accept the result as fair.

If the parties keep that test in mind, a compromise is within reach.

ANALYSIS

The Supreme Court Has Now Said It Twice. The Government Should Stop Fighting Welfare Recipients and Repair the Damage

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

For the second time in 16 months, the Supreme Court has ruled that the government acted illegally when it cut the benefits of people living on public assistance from 2013.

The reasoning is the same as before. The health ministry based its so-called deflation adjustment on price changes alone, without the review by its expert panel that would have given the method a recognised basis, and in doing so it exceeded and abused its discretion.

The people affected are among the poorest in the country: elderly people living alone, people with disabilities, single parents. Many have waited more than a decade for the courts to reach a conclusion, and some have died while waiting.

The government should now settle the matter for everyone, not only those who went to court. Recipients who did not sue suffered the same cuts under the same flawed method.

It should also be candid about the cost. Repaying the difference with interest will be expensive, but the money was taken unlawfully, and the state cannot ask citizens to respect the law while declining to follow its highest court.

The lesson for policy is wider. Benefit levels for the poorest should be set transparently, with expert review, and adjusted for prices in both directions. When prices rise, as they are rising now, the same principle should protect recipients.

On the same day, the Asahi Shimbun reported that the ministry was considering letting single parents with young children keep a car while on welfare. That would be a humane change, and a sign of a ministry willing to look at the system through the eyes of the people who live in it.

The courts have done their part. It is time for the government to do its own.

Every month of delay is a month in which people with the least are asked to wait the longest.

A government that settles promptly would also strengthen trust in the welfare system, which depends on people believing that it treats them fairly.

ANALYSIS

The New Imperial House Law Changes Lives, Not Just Rules. It Should Be Put Into Practice Slowly and With the Family's Consent

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

On Saturday the revised Imperial House Law takes effect, and with it the most significant change to the imperial system in decades. Women of the imperial family will keep their status after marriage, and men descended in the male line from the former branch families may be adopted into it.

The law answers a real problem. The family has been shrinking for years, and the burden of official duties falls on fewer and fewer people. Prince Hisahito is the only member of his generation in the line of succession.

But laws about the imperial family are unlike other laws. They decide where real people will live, whom they may marry and what their children will be. The Imperial Household Agency's statement that it will take the wishes of the family into account should be the governing principle of everything that follows.

The adoption ceremony the agency is considering, modelled on the imperial wedding rite, shows how much remains undecided. So does the question of how the marriages of women who keep their status will be conducted.

None of this needs to be rushed. The public, which by most polls is more open to change than the law, deserves clear explanations as each step is taken.

The deeper question of stable succession, which the Diet's supplementary resolution says will continue to be considered, has been put off again. That was perhaps inevitable. It should not be put off indefinitely.

Princess Aiko's visit to Singapore next month, approved on Friday, is a reminder of what the family does for the country: quiet, patient work that builds goodwill abroad.

The best way to honour that work is to treat the people who do it with the same patience.

The law is in force from Saturday. How it is lived will take years to settle.

Those years should be used to listen, to the family and to the public, before the next decision is taken.

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ANALYSIS

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Protecting Bases From Hostile Buyers Is Reasonable. The Rules Must Be Precise, and Ordinary Owners Must Not Pay the Price

By Jonathan Mercer | Diplomatic Correspondent

The bill approved by the Cabinet on Friday would require government permission for land purchases within about a kilometre of Self-Defense Force bases and on uninhabited border islands, and bar foreign governments and military personnel from buying.

The purpose is sound. A drone launched from a field next to a base, or an antenna on a rooftop overlooking a runway, can do real harm, and no country should make it easy for a hostile state to buy such vantage points.

The concern is in the detail. A zone of a kilometre around a base can include houses, farms and shops whose owners have done nothing wrong and whose property will now be harder to sell.

The bill also bars people who are obliged to cooperate with a foreign government's intelligence activities. Some foreign laws impose such a duty on every citizen, so the provision could, if applied broadly, become a ban on buyers from whole countries. If that is the intention, the government should say so openly.

On-site inspections by Cabinet Office staff are another power that will need clear limits and independent oversight.

The companion bill on beneficial owners is a welcome tool against money laundering and will make it easier to see who is behind a purchase. Used together, the two bills could replace suspicion with information.

The Diet should examine both carefully, define the zones precisely and require regular reports on how the powers are used.

Security and property rights are both public goods. A good law protects the first without needlessly sacrificing the second.

The test will be whether the rules can be explained clearly to the people who live next to the bases.

If they can, the law will command support; if they cannot, it will breed the suspicion it was meant to dispel.

ANALYSIS

Rengo's 6 Per Cent Is the Right Ambition. It Will Mean Little Unless Small Companies Can Pass Costs to Their Customers

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Rengo's decision to aim for pay rises of around 6 per cent next spring, and at least 5 per cent, is a sign of how much has changed in Japan's labour market. Three years ago such numbers would have seemed fanciful.

The federation is right that many workers do not feel better off. Prices of food have risen year after year, and on Friday core inflation returned above 2 per cent.

The difficulty lies with small and medium-sized companies, which employ most of Japan's workers. Large firms with record profits can afford generous rises; many smaller ones cannot, because they cannot raise the prices they charge the larger companies they supply.

That is why the Fair Trade Commission's action against an Oji Holdings subsidiary this week, for making suppliers store printing plates and moulds for free, is not a minor story. Every cost pushed down the supply chain is a cost that small firms cannot pay in wages.

The government has been right to press large companies to share their gains with their suppliers. It should keep pressing, and publish the names of companies that refuse.

Rengo's separate target of at least 6 per cent for smaller firms is a recognition of the gap. It will only be met if the price chain moves too.

The Bank of Japan will watch the spring talks closely as it judges whether 2 per cent inflation is now sustainable. A strong result would support that judgment; a weak one at small firms would undermine it.

The goal is a cycle in which rising wages support

spending, which supports profits, which support wages. Japan has never been closer to it. It would be a pity to stall at the last step.

That step depends less on the unions than on the companies at the top of the supply chain.

If they pay fair prices to their suppliers, the 6 per cent target will look less like a hope and more like a plan.

ANALYSIS

Core Inflation Is Back Above 2 Per Cent. The Bank of Japan Should Look at What Is Driving It Before Declaring Victory

By Daniel Brooks | Markets Editor

Core consumer prices rose 2.1 per cent in September, back above the Bank of Japan's target for the first time in nine months, a week before a policy meeting at which the bank is expected to judge whether its long pursuit of 2 per cent has succeeded.

The headline will please those who want the bank to declare victory. The composition is less clear.

Food excluding fresh produce rose 2.9 per cent, while rice fell a record 20.6 per cent as stocks piled up after the shortage of the past two years. Energy prices are being held down by subsidies. Strip out those special factors and the picture of steady, wage-driven inflation the bank wants to see is still forming.

The spring wage talks will be the real test. Rengo's target of around 6 per cent is encouraging, but small companies may struggle to match it.

Markets, meanwhile, are nervous. The Nikkei lost more than 1,700 yen on Thursday and more than 1,400 at one point on Friday as doubts about returns on artificial intelligence spread from Wall Street. Long-term interest rates in Japan, America and Europe are at historically high levels.

In those conditions, the bank's best course is to explain its judgment carefully and to avoid surprising markets.

The government's food tax cut, if it passes, will also lower measured inflation for a time, complicating the picture further.

Two per cent was always meant to be a description of a healthy economy, not a number to be reached once and celebrated.

The bank should judge the economy, not the month.

If the judgment next week is cautious, it will not be a failure. It will be a sign that the bank has learned from a long, hard decade.

ANALYSIS

Stop Asking Customers to Photograph Their Driving Licences. The Images Are a Gift to Fraudsters

By Maya Suzuki | Technology Correspondent

Park24's announcement on Friday that about 1.46 million images of driving licences and other identity documents had leaked should be the moment Japanese business abandons a bad habit.

For years, services from car sharing to mobile payments have asked new customers to photograph their licences and upload the images. It was cheap and convenient. It also created vast stores of exactly the information criminals need to impersonate someone.

A licence image shows a name, an address, a date of birth and a face. In the wrong hands it can be used to open accounts, sign contracts or take out loans.

PayPay's decision to verify identities only by reading the IC chips in documents, from early November, is the right one, and it comes ahead of a legal requirement from the spring of 2027. Banks are dropping photographed licences for online accounts too.

Every company still collecting images should follow at once, and should delete the images it already holds unless the law requires it to keep them.

Park24's payments of 3,000 yen to affected customers are a courtesy, but no sum can undo the exposure. The damage of leaked identity documents can surface years later.

Regulators should also ask why so many companies kept the images long after the identity check was complete.

The broader lesson of this week's breaches is simple. Data that is never collected cannot leak, and data that is deleted cannot be stolen.

Customers can help by choosing services that read chips rather than photographs, and by asking companies what they keep.

The law will require the change from 2027. Nobody needs to wait that long.

ANALYSIS

Three Months After the Earthquake, Hinagu Needs a Shop as Much as It Needs Rebuilt Roads

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The question asked by an 83-year-old woman in an evacuation shelter in Yatsushiro, whether anyone could live on pouch meals for three months, deserves an answer from more than her neighbours.

The Hinagu district, among the hardest hit by July's earthquake, has lost its only supermarket. Six in 10 residents are 65 or older, and many cannot drive. A free van to shops outside the district takes 40 minutes each way, and longer coming home.

Disaster recovery in Japan is good at the big things: roads, rail lines, embankments. It is often slower at the small things that make a place livable, such as a shop that sells eggs and natto within walking distance.

Mobile shops, subsidised deliveries and temporary stores in prefabricated buildings have helped communities after earlier disasters. They should be in place in Hinagu now, not after the shelters close.

The national government and the prefecture should treat food access as part of reconstruction, with money to match.

The same district has also seen a collapsed chimney at a paper mill prompt a national survey that found damage in four in 10 tall chimneys, a reminder that the effects of an earthquake travel far beyond the area it shakes.

Kumamoto has rebuilt once in the past decade. It will rebuild again. The people of Hinagu should not have to wait for everything else before they can buy their groceries.

Winter is coming, and shelters are no place to spend it.

A shop is not a luxury. For people who cannot drive, it is the difference between living somewhere and merely staying there.

Those who decide the reconstruction budget should visit Hinagu and ask residents what they need first. The answer may surprise them.

ANALYSIS

Matsui's Return Is Good for the Giants and Good for Baseball. He Will Need Time, and the Club Should Give It to Him

By Kenji Tanaka | Sports Desk

There are few figures in Japanese baseball who can unite fans of rival clubs. Hideki Matsui is one of them.

His career, from the five intentional walks at Koshien to the 50 home runs of 2002 and the World Series MVP award in 2009, belongs to the whole country, and his return to the Giants as manager is the best news the club has had in a difficult year.

It is also a gamble. Matsui has never managed or coached a professional team. Great players do not always make great managers, and the Giants, a club that expects to win every year, are not a patient employer.

The three-year contract is a sensible signal. The club should mean it, and resist the temptation to judge him on his first spring.

He inherits a team that finished second and a draft class that has already made news. Shoki Oda, the first pick, has said his desire to play in America has not wavered. Rentaro Seki, the 14-year-old catcher, is an experiment no club has tried before.

Matsui, who left the Giants for the Yankees as a free agent, is well placed to talk honestly with a young player who dreams of the major leagues. That honesty may matter more than any tactical skill.

The Seki case will need particular care. A boy of 14 should be allowed to grow up, go to school and change his mind. The club has said he would attend high school while training with the team; the details, and the safeguards, should be made public.

The Giants have long been the club others love to dislike. A manager admired across the league could

change that, and it would do Japanese baseball no harm.

He said he wants to start a new golden age. He should be given the time to try.

The first test comes in spring training, when a club of stars will see whether its new manager can lead as well as he once hit.

EDITORIAL

Today's Numbers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

6:47 A.M.: When SoftBank stopped sending emergency alert mail, until Monday.

53.23 MILLION: Deliveries whose personal data may have leaked from Sagawa Express.

11.77 MILLION: CAPCOM ID email addresses leaked.

1.46 MILLION: ID document images leaked from Park24.

31: Lower house seats the Liberal Democrats propose to cut.

1,713.40: Yen the Nikkei lost on Thursday.

2.1 PER CENT: September's rise in core consumer prices.

20.6 PER CENT: The fall in rice prices, a record.

950: Champi's central pressure in hectopascals at 3 p.m.

74: Days in a row Chinese ships were near the Senkakus, until the typhoon.

90: Hideki Matsui's number as Giants manager.

14: Rentaro Seki's age when drafted.

EDITORIAL

October 23 in History

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1642: The Battle of Edgehill, the first pitched battle of the English Civil War, is fought in Warwickshire.

1707: The first Parliament of Great Britain meets, after the union of England and Scotland.

1868: The era name changes to Meiji, beginning the period of modernisation that followed the restoration of imperial rule.

1911: An Italian pilot flies the first military reconnaissance mission by aeroplane, over Turkish lines in Libya.

1942: The Second Battle of El Alamein begins in Egypt.

1944: The Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval battle of the Second World War, begins in the Philippines.

1946: The United Nations General Assembly meets in New York for the first time.

1956: The Hungarian uprising against Soviet rule begins in Budapest.

1958: The Smurfs first appear, in the Belgian comic magazine Spirou.

1983: Bombings of barracks in Beirut kill 241 American servicemen and 58 French paratroopers.

1989: Hungary is proclaimed a republic, on the anniversary of the 1956 uprising.

1991: The Paris Peace Agreements on Cambodia are signed.

2001: Apple introduces the iPod.

2002: Chechen militants seize a Moscow theatre, beginning a three-day hostage crisis.

2004: The Chuetsu earthquake strikes Niigata Prefecture, killing 68 people.

2011: An earthquake of magnitude 7.1 strikes Van province in eastern Turkey.

MORE INSIDE TODAY

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EDITORIAL & OPINION

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Japan Morning Post corrects errors of fact as soon as they are identified: corrections@japanmorningpost.com.
CLARIFICATION: Thursday's report on about 4 billion yen in lottery proceeds for reconstruction in Kumamoto described only the earthquakes of April 2016. A further earthquake struck the region on July 28 this year, registering the maximum intensity of 7 in Hikawa, and areas including Hinagu in Yatsushiro are still recovering; the report did not establish which disaster the funds are for. The notes supplied for today's edition contain several errors that we have corrected: they again call Typhoon No. 30 Champa, but its international name is Champi; they place Rengo's wage demand in the 2015 spring talks, but the plan is for the 2027 talks next spring; they call Team Mirai the Mirai Party and its leader Yasuno, but the leader is Takahiro Anno; they give the Giants' first pick once as Shohei Oda, but he is Shoki Oda; and they give Rakuten's first pick as Kai Watanabe, whose surname is read Watabe. The notes give the Kikuka Sho draw for Robchen both as gate 4, No. 8, and as gate 8 in stall 4; we follow the Yomiuri Shimbun's headline, gate 4, No. 8. The Yomiuri Shimbun counts 14 municipalities and 1.7 billion yen in overpaid reconstruction grants; Kyodo News, citing the Board of Audit, reports 16 municipalities and about 1.79 billion yen, and both figures are given in our report.

Not repeated today because they were reported in earlier editions: the shelving of the maiden-name bill, the cut in EV subsidies, Japan-India two-plus-two talks, the release of Stephen Hubbard, the sanction on Meta, Ohtani's plans to pitch, Hitachi's cooling plate and the women gymnasts' bronze, except for a quotation from Aiko Sugihara. Several items in the notes, including some arrests and a reported instruction to a minister on AI, are not reported because we could not confirm them. Items attributed to other newspapers and services are reported as those sources gave them. The names in the English-language image of the Giants' draft list are readings that may differ from the official ones; where we could not confirm a reading we give the surname only.

THE WEEK AHEAD

SAT. 24: Revised Imperial House Law takes effect; Japan Series Game 1 at Yokohama Stadium; Japan v Fiji at Chichibunomiya; World Wrestling Championships open in Astana; Shosoin Exhibition opens in Nara; Asian Para Games close; World Series Game 1 in Milwaukee and Hachimura's Clippers against the Lakers (both Saturday morning, Japan time); Champi about 200 km north of Yonaguni by 3 p.m. SUN. 25: Japan Series Game 2; Kikuka Sho at Kyoto; Fukushima governor and Naha mayoral elections; Europe's clocks go back. MON. 26: SoftBank alert mail due to resume; parties reply to the Liberal Democrats on the 31-seat cut; Champi, as a tropical storm, west of Kyushu and near Kagoshima in the evening. TUE. 27: Inter-party talks on the lower house resume; Israel's general election; the security panel's fifth meeting; Sapporo's Ginza bars open. OCT. 27-28: U.S. Federal Reserve. OCT. 29-30: Bank of Japan, with a judgment on its 2 per cent target; EU-Canada summit in Montreal. OCT. 30: Vice-capital law takes effect. NOV. 1: Tax-free shopping switches to refunds on departure. NOV. 3: Order of Culture ceremony; U.S. midterms. NOV. 5: Ocarina of Time remake on sale. NOV. 8-11: Vietnam's To Lam in Japan. NOV. 9: Uchibo Line reopens in full; Shosoin Exhibition closes. NOV. 14-15: The Emperor and Empress in Osaka. NOV. 17-21: Princess Aiko in Singapore. NOV. 19-20: Peru's President Keiko Fujimori in Japan. DEC. 12: Diet session ends.

TYPHOON AND MARINE ADVISORIES

3 p.m. Friday. No. 30, Champi: large, very strong typhoon about 80 km south-south-east of Yonaguni, 23.8N, 123.3E; 950 hPa; winds 45 m/s, gusts 60; moving north-north-west at 20 km/h. Storm-force winds 330 km to the north and 280 km to the south; gale-force winds 850 km to the north-east and 600 km to the south-west. Forecast: slowing and turning west tonight, then north over the East China Sea; a strong typhoon about 200 km north of Yonaguni at 3 p.m. Saturday; a tropical storm west of Kyushu on Monday, passing near Kagoshima that evening; an extratropical low about 350 km south of Tokyo by 3 p.m. Tuesday. Waves of up to 11 m around the Sakishima Islands; linear rainbands possible in Miyako and Yaeyama until early Saturday; up to 250

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mm of rain in parts of the Okinawa region in the 24 hours to midnight Friday. A tropical depression near the Marshall Islands is forecast to become a strong typhoon by Monday. Emergencies at sea: 118.

MARKET REFERENCE

Friday close: Nikkei 225 62,693.16, down 214.68; Topix 3,965.81, down 31.69. Thursday close: Nikkei 62,907.84, down 1,713.40; Topix 3,997.50, down 46.23. New York, Thursday: Dow 52,867.98, up 11.89; Nasdaq 26,008.86, down 694.00. Dollar 156.46-47 yen at 10 a.m. Friday in Tokyo; euro 175.55-56 yen. Core consumer prices, September: up 2.1 per cent; rice down 20.6 per cent. Federal Reserve meets October 27-28; Bank of Japan October 29-30.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

Front: the Emperor and Empress with Princess Aiko, file photo, WPM Productions. Typhoon map, Japan and United States weather maps: supplied for this edition. The prime minister at the Diet rostrum, the briefing room at the Prime Minister's Office, the Paris street, the ANA 787, the TV Asahi building, the Capcom building, the OpenAI logo, Princess Aiko, the Giants' draft list, the SoftBank Hawks and the Asian Para Games emblem: file photos and images, WPM Productions. SpaceX Dragon: NASA. Nozomi train: photo by Akihiko Maeda. Tokyo Stock Exchange: photo by TG2 (CC). Cartoon: Taro Suzuki. U.S. government works are public domain and credited; agency news photographs are not reproduced.

SYMBOLS, UNITS AND TIMES

Map symbols: sun, sunny; cloud, cloudy; cloud with strokes, rain; an arrow, one sky giving way to another; a slanting stroke, one sky with the other at times. Today's Japan map gives highs and lows observed during the day, in degrees Celsius; the U.S. map gives forecasts in Fahrenheit. Wind in metres a second (1 m/s is 3.6 km/h); at sea, in knots (1 knot is about 1.85 km/h). Pressure in hectopascals. Typhoon grades: strong from 33 m/s, very strong from 44 m/s and violent from 54 m/s; large when gales reach 500 km from the centre, very large from 800 km. Japan is 9 hours ahead of GMT, 13 ahead of New York and 16 ahead of Los Angeles; it is 7 hours ahead of Paris and Rome until Europe's clocks go back on Sunday, and 8 hours ahead after that. Japanese names are given family name last. A person arrested or referred to prosecutors is presumed innocent until convicted.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Police 110. Fire and ambulance 119. Coast guard 118. Disaster message dial 171. Police consultation #9110. Consumer hotline 188. Child guidance centres 189. SoftBank, Y!mobile and LINEMO customers: emergency alert mail is suspended until Monday, so receive earthquake and tsunami warnings through

television, radio and an alert app, and allow the app to sound when the phone is silent. In the Sakishima Islands, follow municipal evacuation information through every channel and stay indoors while the winds are strong. Website owners: update PHP to 8.5.12, 8.4.27, 8.3.36 or 8.2.35, or ask your hosting company whether it has done so. Anyone whose personal data may have leaked should change reused passwords, turn on two-step verification and ignore links in unexpected messages, including fake delivery notices.

OPINION AND SOURCES

The editorial is the view of the editorial page and takes its subject from the day's cartoon; Analysis articles are the judgment of their writers. Reports draw on the Friday papers, including the Yomiuri Shimbun, the Asahi Shimbun, the Mainichi Shimbun, the Sankei Shimbun, the Nikkei and the Nishinippon Shimbun; on Kyodo News, NHK and The Japan Times; on government ministries and agencies, the Japan Meteorological Agency and Weathernews; on announcements by the companies named in the reports; and on the U.S. National Weather Service for the American map.

READER SERVICES

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TOMORROW'S EDITION

Saturday: Typhoon Champi's passage west of Yonaguni and its turn north, the revised Imperial House Law in force, Game 1 of the Japan Series in Yokohama and of the World Series in Milwaukee, Hachimura against his old team, Japan against Fiji, the opening of the Shosoin Exhibition, the close of the Asian Para Games and the latest on the PHP flaws and SoftBank's alerts.

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