

# Cold war over, security interests draw Japan closer

ARATI R. JERATH  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

**A**FTER a long time, an Indian Prime Minister's visit to Japan will have as much politics as economics on the agenda. In fact, in sharp contrast to Narasimha Rao's 1992 sojourn seeking Japanese Yen for investment, Vajpayee's five-day visit, beginning on Friday will see a shift in focus towards political and security issues.

The diplomats call it "concretisation of a global partnership for the 21st century based on a strategic convergence of interests". What it all means in plain

terms is that the Indo-Japan relationship is undergoing a qualitative change. From being the largest recipient of Japanese aid and a potential investment destination, India is now being viewed as a nation with which Tokyo wants to engage politically as well.

The shift, in fact, began with former Japanese PM Yoshino Mori's visit to India in August last year. The intervening period has seen a series of interactions between the two countries which would have been unimaginable a couple of years ago.

Increased defence contacts, to take one instance. Both Defence Minister George Fernandes and the Army Chief have visited Tokyo

in the recent past. The coast guard teams of both countries have held joint exercises and discussions on key issues like sea piracy and the protection of sea lanes.

The changing perception seems to have coincided with the May 1998 nuclear tests. Although the blasts initially saw bilateral relations go into a deep freeze, the pique subsided after both realised that a cold war wasn't doing either party any good. Mori's visit began the thaw which finally culminated in Japan lifting economic sanctions against India earlier this year.

Vajpayee goes to Japan against this background. In Osaka — his first stop in Japan — he will inter-



act with the captains of some of Japan's biggest industrial houses including Sumitomo, Marubeni, Matsushita and Hitachi.

The key part of his trip begins on Sunday when he reaches Tokyo. There he will have an au-



dience with Emperor Akihito who is being invited to India next year as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of Indo-Japan diplomatic ties.

Apart from talks with Koizumi, Vajpayee's agenda for

the day has some novel elements for a visiting Indian Prime Minister. For instance, the Japanese Leader of the Opposition will call on him. He will also meet Japanese parliamentarians. This political dimension has not been there before.

While Japanese investment remains a key issue, talks with Koizumi will focus more on security issues, including sensitive ones like Kashmir, the nuclear question and terrorism. It remains to be seen whether Japan will continue to harp on India signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or it will take a more realistic approach.

The need for reforms in the

United Nations and the expansion of the Security Council will also be on their agenda. Japan and India are both contenders for permanent seats in the Security Council.

Interestingly, the heavy emphasis on political issues during the trip seems to bear out the assessment of the Eminent Persons Group which went into the gamut of Indo-Japan relations recently and suggested that the political and security content be increased.

# A new sun on the horizon

Japan is a rising and a pivotal force in Asian strategic affairs. The government of India should shed its fixation with China where the situation is one of protracted conflict. Instead it should attend to the development of closer strategic and diplomatic ties with a country which is a player in the emerging Asian balance of power.

Japan is nobody's ally even though it maintains a pronounced tilt towards the United States of America and the two have strong military, economic and diplomatic ties. However, Japan has a well-defined strategic concept, which is to move from a position of forced pacification under American occupation in 1945 to one of internal stability and modernization, expansion of Japanese power projection capability in the Asia Pacific-Indian Ocean sphere along with the growth of Japanese presence in the region.

Having rejected war and imperialism as methods to exploit the international environment for its industrial and military wellbeing, Japan spent the last 50 years developing a significant economic presence through trade and investment in southeast Asia, the Korean peninsula, Taiwan. However, its focus was the Pacific rim and to a limited extent the Indian Ocean area in the form of economic linkages with South Africa. Now Japan is taking a new look at the importance of India but, unfortunately, the Indian political class has been so blinded by the Chinese rhetoric about normalization of relations that opportunities to re-orient India's relations with Japan have been ignored. This does not augur well for India's foreign relations at a time when Japan is seeking to broaden its international presence by opening dialogues with Moscow with whom it still does not have a peace treaty and there is a territorial dispute over the islands in the north with Moscow. The missing link for Japan is a broad and a deep relationship with India.

Japan's space in Asian and international strategic affairs is circumscribed by its internal attitude and politics and to an extent by China's preference for a manageable Japan. China in fact prefers the US to play a part in southeast Asian politics and curb Japanese independence in military affairs. China also does its best to prevent Japan from adopting independent policies and straying too far from the American and the Chinese fold.

Aware of the fact that its changing defence needs may require reduction in its overseas military forces, recognizing the force of internal politics in places where it has bases and the potential of the isolationist sentiment within America, the US has itself tried to encourage Japanese re-armament. The shift from Japan's disarmament to Japan's re-armament under American supervision, which started with the US's need to have Japan function as its strategic rear in the Korean conflict, and later in the Vietnam conflict, led to US-Japan military guidelines.

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India's fixation with creating a productive relationship with China is coming in the way of developing its ties with Japan, writes M.L. Sondhi and Ashok Kapur



Delayed sunrise

This had led to a sea change in Japan's defence thinking. Japan's constitution renounces war, but the attitude to the article 9 gradually started to change and self-defence was accepted as the basis for the creation of a self-defence agency. Now the Japan-US military guidelines and Japan's national policy are framed in terms of defence of "areas surrounding Japan". This has been kept vague deliberately and no geographical definition of the sphere of Japanese military operation has been provided.

However, there is a functional basis for the expanded role of Japanese forces. Assuming that US and Japanese security interests converge in terms of the physical security of Japan and overseas American installations in the Pacific, the preservation of the command from the Sea of Japan upto the Persian Gulf from where oil keeps Japan going, one can easily deduce that the limits of Japan's military operation is dictated by its definition of its interests and the available military means. Note that now Japan along with Australia will be participating in the international military coalition against terrorism in Afghanistan.

In other words, Japan's strategic presence is growing. It has some advantages which China does not have. It is a democracy, it is internally stable, de-

spite its recession it has a strong economic infrastructure, it retains its potential as the economic engine of Asia along with China and India. Moreover, it has a fine modern military establishment, its political class is shedding its defence allergy, and following the North Korean missile test in Japan's neighbourhood there is now a clear public identification with the importance of Japanese defence. Japan also has the means to go nuclear anytime. Its nuclear restraint is self-imposed. Japan is now aware that the nuclear question is still important in Asia and nuclear and missile proliferation cannot be put to rest because of the fluidity of the Asian strategic environment.

However, Japan's dream to become a good citizen in the globe through economic diplomacy and bypassing messy Asian conflicts has not gone far. Desert Storm convinced Japan that its cheque book diplomacy could only bring it a pat on the back while lucrative contracts in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait went to American companies. Japan has also discovered that there is limited mileage to be gained by talking about global norms and humanitarianism in Asia. September 11 simply confirmed this sense.

Once Japan's thinking began to change, the policy change was easily accomplished be-

cause Japan has many strategic assets in place whose use is entirely a matter of Japanese choice and is not externally dictated. Among them is its intimate knowledge of the Korean peninsula and Taiwan. Despite the brutality of its occupation there, Japan has left behind a well-organized political intelligence network which was embraced by the US and its allies. Also, Japan's educational policies left behind a legacy of Japanese speakers. Even today many Taiwanese legislators are fluent in Japanese. Japan has a strong and a secretive network of about nine international trading houses and their presence and resources in far-away places like Kazakhstan reveal Japan's global reach.

Several major developments have sharpened Japan's capacity to think strategically. First, the US southeast Asian policy recognizes that despite its superpower status it cannot manage the strategic equations in Asia alone. Hence the need for stronger ties with Japan, Australia and South Korea, as well as non-traditional allies like India, and new military partners like Singapore, which is slated to become a major military force in southeast Asia in the coming decade. Now both the US and Japan think in terms of developing an Asian balance of power with Russia, China and India.

Second, the Indian nuclear and missile tests and the North Korean missile tests have changed the Japanese perspective. Japan was once at the forefront of the international campaign against nuclear proliferation. Not so today. Japan has come to terms with a nuclear India and recognizes that India must be taken seriously if it is expected to conduct itself as a responsible international force. Which means Asian nuclear proliferation has undermined Japan's belief that it could become a major power via peace and economic diplomacy only.

Third, North Korea has acted provocatively against Japanese interests not only through missile tests which bother the Japanese but also by kidnapping Japanese women and trading them in what is known as the "wife for rice" programme. Also, North Korea has promoted drugs and counterfeit money trade into Japan. As a result of the missile tests, Japan has taken steps to significantly improve the coordination of its inter-service intelligence. Now defence issues are dealt with at a higher political plane, that is at the level of a cabinet committee or by the Diet.

Fourth, as noted earlier, Desert Storm convinced Japan that it needed to soil its hands with peace-keeping in Cambodia. Fifth, Japan is affected by China's push into Myanmar because Chinese naval presence in the Bay of Bengal could disrupt the flow of oil and Japanese commerce through the Indian Ocean and the strategic Malacca Straits. Japan has significant investments in Indonesia and political as well as social instability is of serious concern to Japanese interests in the region.

Japan is on the move but has India realized the opportunity to build its strategic links with Japan? India's fixation with the possibility of developing a productive relationship with China is coming in the way of building a sound Japan policy.

**'Japan is nobody's ally even though it maintains a pronounced tilt towards the US and the two have strong political, economic and military ties'**

# Japan, Pak. review bilateral ties

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 25. There is renewed Japanese interest in Pakistan following the September 11 terror attacks in the U.S. and the Musharraf Government's decision to join the international coalition in the fight against terrorism.

The Japanese Foreign Minister, Ms. Maikiko Tanaka, is here on a four-day visit for an "in-depth discussion" and "comprehensive review" of the relations between the two countries.

Islamabad has tried hard in the past few weeks to persuade Tokyo to write off some of its loans. The Pakistan Finance Minister, Mr. Shaukat Aziz, who was in Tokyo before the fall of Kabul, tried unsuccessfully to prevail upon the Japanese Government on the issue. Before the Bush administration came to power in January this year, Japan was pressuring Pakistan to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Though it has not exactly stepped up the pressure — as the issue is not a priority of the Bush regime — Japan is still interested in getting Pakistan to join the CTBT club.

The issue reportedly figured at the meeting between the visiting Japanese Minister and the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, here on Saturday. In the course of the meeting, the two Ministers reviewed Pakistan-Japan relations. Ms. Tanaka is expected to call on the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, tomorrow.

Mr. Sattar told Ms. Tanaka that Pakistan would continue to support non-proliferation and disarmament. Pakistan was not the first to conduct nuclear tests in South Asia and would not be the first to resume them. "They also discussed regional issues with special focus on the situation in Afghanistan and other international developments," an official

announcement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

Ms. Tanaka complimented Pakistan's 'key contribution' to the fight against terrorism. On behalf of the Japanese Government, she expressed solidarity and support for Pakistan's pivotal role in this regard. On his part, Mr. Sattar conveyed Pakistan's gratitude and appreciation for Japan's political support and significant economic assistance, following its decision to align with the international coalition. He also briefed his Japanese counterpart on Pakistan-India relations and the "struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination."

Ms. Tanaka gave a resume of the steps that the Japanese Government had taken to bolster the international coalition's fight against terrorism. She also explained the rationale behind the new overseas role of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces.

## Mulayam demands return of PoK

BAREILLY (U.P.), NOV. 25. The Samajwadi Party president, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, today said peace can't prevail in the South Asian region until Pakistan hands over Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) to India. Speaking at the valedictory session of a two-day State party convention here, Mr. Yadav urged the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, to put pressure on the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, and the international community to hand over PoK to India.

"It is also in the interest of the Pakistan military ruler that PoK was returned to India and this could prove helpful to both the countries for ensuring durable peace." — PTI, UNI

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THE HINDU

# Non-combat support

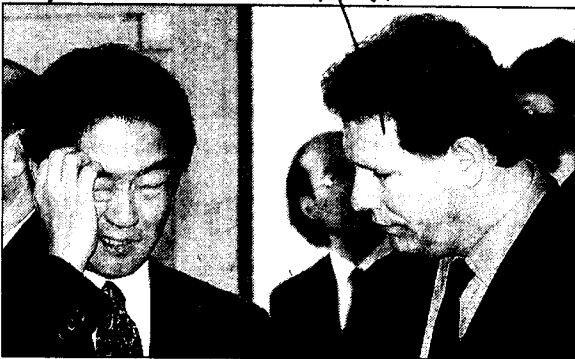
**N**OW that the Diet has passed a special law allowing Japan to lend logistic support to the US-led anti-terrorism campaign, what steps will the nation's Self-Defence Forces take to provide this support?

Specifics on the SDF missions — such as where SDF troops will be sent, what kind of activities they will engage in and the exact number of SDF warships, aeroplanes and troops involved — will

be detailed in a plan to be drawn up after 8 November by the Cabinet of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. According to government sources, SDF activities to support the US-led strikes on Afghanistan's Taliban forces, will focus on supply and transport missions carried out by Maritime Self-Defence Force vessels, rather than land activities.

The government intends to have MSDF supply vessels provide US warships in the Arabian Sea and elsewhere with fuel, food and other supplies. It is likely that two supply vessels will be despatched to ensure the efficiency of the supply activities. Each supply vessel will be accompanied by two escort warships, so the MSDF fleet is likely to be comprise about six vessels. The government is now studying the advisability of having an Aegis-equipped destroyer serve as one of the escort ships. The MSDF currently operates four destroyers equipped with the high-performance Aegis air defence system. The Aegis-equipped destroyers, if sent to Diego Garcia, an island in the Indian Ocean that serves as a major logistic base for US forces, will carry out patrols together with an MSDF P-3C patrol plane loaded with sophisticated information-gathering systems.

Specific MSDF missions will be decided after close consultation with US forces to co-ordinate activities. Although Japan had planned to supply food as part of its logistic support, the USA has unofficially made it known to the



Chikahito Harada, Japan's deputy director-general of the foreign ministry's North American Affairs Bureau with Peter Brooks, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Asia and Pacific Affairs, prior to their security talks on Thursday. — AP/PTI

Japanese government that SDF involvement in food-supply operations could cause confusion on the US side.

The US forces have a shipping

**Japan's plans for logistic support to the US-led campaign against terrorism will be worked out after 8 November. Maritime Self-Defence Force vessels are likely to provide US warships in the Arabian Sea and elsewhere with fuel, food and other supplies. TOSHIO HIEI and YOSHIAKI SHIMIZU report**

system to provide their personnel with food that separates different kinds of food items according to the colours of their containers. As a result, it seems there may be little room for the SDF to play a role in this area.

There is a possibility that SDF supply missions will be limited to such activities as providing spare parts to US warships for repairs and delivering beverages to US vessels when they are being refuelled. In addition, Air Self-

Defence Force aircraft such as C-130 transport planes will be used to transport US personnel and goods between US military bases in Japan.

They may also be used to transport goods and personnel between such US bases as those on Guam, Hawaii and Diego Garcia. About 1,000 SDF members will be sent abroad on the missions. The possibility of SDF troops being deployed for activities on land, however, is slim at present.

This is because public order in Pakistan has been rapidly worsening, making refugee relief activities, which were originally supposed to be undertaken by the Ground Self-Defence Force, hazardous. High-ranking MSDF officials are sceptical about sending MSDF members abroad for refugee relief purposes, saying the government should refrain from sending SDF members on refugee relief missions when forces of other countries have yet to embark on such activities. How much will Japan's logistic support activities cost?

When the MSDF participated in mine-removal operations in the Persian Gulf in 1991 after the Gulf War, its fleet comprised six vessels: four minesweepers, their command ship and a supply vessel. Minesweeping operations lasted for six months, with about 510 MSDF members taking part and the cost amounting to about Yen 1.3 billion. Another example was the weeklong despatch of six ASDF C-130 transport planes to Pakistan from 6 October to send emergency relief goods to Afghan refugees.

About 140 ASDF members were involved in the operation, which cost about Yen 200 million. Considering these examples, if MSDF vessels, together with ASDF and MSDF planes, are sent to the Indian Ocean, and if the US-led action does not end soon, it is likely to cost the government Yen 1 billion or

more. The government will grant Yen 353.1 million, or about \$3.3 million to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to support Afghan refugees, a government official said early this week.

The aid will be used to help Afghanistan's neighbours cope with the expected increase in the number of refugees flowing out of

the country. The government has decided to grant about Yen 14.5 billion, or \$120 million, to the UN. This will account for about 20 per cent of the Yen 72.5 billion, or \$600 million, that the UN estimates will be needed to support Afghan refugees.

— Yomiuri Shimbun / Asia News Network.

THE STATESMAN

Japan  
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# New law allows Japan to send troops abroad

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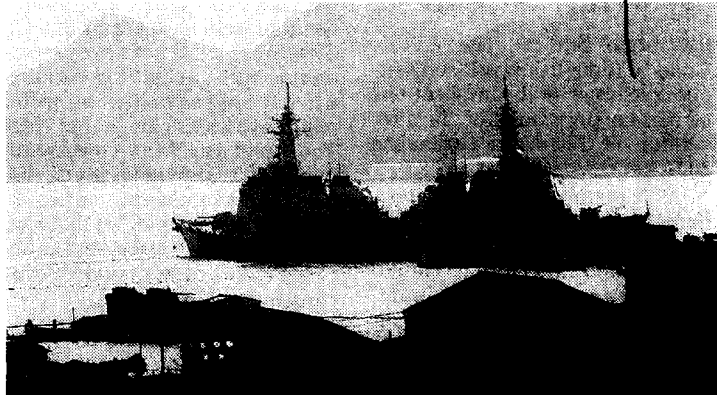
By Amit Baruah

**SINGAPORE, OCT. 29.** A Bill, which empowers Japanese Self-Defence Forces (SDF) to provide non-combat assistance to American forces in the ongoing military campaign in Afghanistan, was passed by Parliament in Tokyo today.

The Bill, seen as controversial, made it past the Upper House of Parliament having been approved by the Lower House earlier. The new law allows the Japanese Government to send its armed forces abroad for the first time after World War II. The SDF, if the Government decides, can be used to provide logistics support such as medical services and transportation of supplies. However, the Bill does not permit the SDF from ferrying weapons and ammunition on foreign soil. The new law will be effective for two years. One clause, which requires the Government to obtain parliament's approval within 20 days of the despatch of troops, has come under fire in the Japanese media.

Soon after the Bill was passed, the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, told reporters: "This completes arrangements for Japan to co-operate with the U.S. and the international community out of its own initiative."

"The focus of the legislation was on whether we think of the U.S. terrorist incidents in New York and Washington as other people's business or as our own affair," the Prime Minister was reported as saying. "What was being questioned was our basic stance — whether or not we can share the sorrow and anger of the American people," Mr. Koizumi stated. "The Government views the fight against terrorism as a challenge of its own, and with a view to securing the safety of the nation and its



**The Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force's Aegis-class destroyer Kongo, (left) and another vessel anchored at Sasebo naval base, Japan, seen in this file photo.**

people, will take measures based upon this law proactively and of its own initiative, within the framework of international co-operation," the Prime Minister said.

The Japanese Government has indicated that it will draw up a "basic plan" which will detail the size and activities of SDF personnel that are sent abroad. The intention is to send a fleet of maritime SDF to ferry supplies to the Indian Ocean military base of Diego Garcia. The vessels are likely to carry fuel, food and water to the British island. It remains to be seen whether Japan will also despatch an Aegis destroyer, equipped with sophisticated radar and capable of launching several missiles at one go.

The Japanese Defence Agency chief, Gen. Nakatani, has proposed that the Aegis destroyer be sent to gather information on the war against terrorism. He, however, made it clear that no decision had been taken on whether the Aegis destroyer would be sent or not. "We will continue to discuss details, including whether to des-

patch the Aegis destroyer," the General said. In an editorial, the *Asahi Shimbun* has criticised the Koizumi Government for showing "excessive eagerness" to send SDF units abroad so as to ensure that the U.S. does not point an "accusing finger" at Japan. "When SDF personnel are likely to be sent for the first time near a combat area in a foreign country, will it be appropriate in a democracy to give the Government a blank cheque to decide the areas of deployment, the scale of operations, and the kinds of task for the personnel?" the newspaper wanted to know.

"This is not a question of the Government's administrative discretion. It is a serious matter of whether the principle of civilian control of the SDF is observed and whether the Diet is properly functioning. The Bill (since passed) should be revised again in such a way as to make it mandatory for the Government to obtain prior approval (before forces are sent abroad) from the Diet," the editorial added.

THE HINDU

30 OCT 2001

# Japan rethinks sending ships to Indian Ocean

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25/9

REUTERS

TOKYO, Sept. 28. — In a sign of rough political waters ahead as Japan debates its support for America's "war on terrorism," Tokyo is backing away from plans to swiftly dispatch naval ships to the Indian Ocean for intelligence gathering.

"I haven't heard anything concrete about them being dispatched," chief cabinet secretary, Mr Yasuo Fukuda, told a press conference today.

"If the situation allows, we will consider it." Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi has vowed swift enactment of a new law that would allow Japan to provide rearguard, non-combat logistical support for any US military action.

The pledge has ignited heated debate over how far Japan can and should go without infringing its post-war pacifist constitution, which renounces war as a means to settle international disputes.

Successive governments have interpreted that to mean a ban on collective self-defence or aiding allies when they are attacked.

Mr Koizumi, despite wanting to change that ban eventually,

has therefore ruled out sending Japanese troops to fight side-by-side with US-led forces, or dispatching them to a combat zone.

Instead, the government is aiming to enact a law next month that would allow the dispatch of forces to provide rearguard logistics support such as medical services and supplies and sending troops to provide humanitarian aid for refugees.

The defence ministry has also been considering sending naval vessels including Aegis-class warships to the Indian Ocean sooner for intelligence gathering under existing law. Local media had said the ships might depart Japan as soon as this week.

The move has proved controversial both inside Mr Koizumi's Liberal Democratic Party and out.

Analysts said Mr Koizumi had failed to bring key ruling party heavyweights into the loop over the issue of dispatching the Aegis-equipped warships, which come with state-of-the-art intelligence-gathering systems.

"There are many people in the LDP who are opposed or urging caution," said Mr Seiichiro Takagi, director of the area studies department at the National Insti-

tute for Defence Studies. "They can't do this so quickly," he said.

This "will be a real war, except that there has been no attack on Japanese territory," wrote Masaru Honda, a senior staff writer for the liberal Asahi Shimbun newspaper, in an article.

"Given these circumstances, the obvious question that must follow is -- How can it be denied that the action of the SDF (Self Defence Force) vessels violates the constitutional ban on the exercise of the right to collective self-defence?" he added.

Unanswered questions as to precisely what kind of operation the USA is planning and when it will be launched also appear to have prompted a rethink of a hasty dispatch of the ships.

"The Americans haven't been clear as to what they will do," Mr Takagi said.

Mr Koizumi also faces a delicate task in trying to get Opposition support for the new law and other legal changes to expand the scope for military activities at home and abroad.

The three-party ruling camp has the numbers to pass the legislation on its own but has cleared that it would prefer to do so as a bipartisan effort.

THE STATESMAN

*Japan will  
apologise for  
POWs*

Tokyo, September 7

AT A weekend ceremony in the United States to commemorate the treaty ending World War II, Japan's foreign minister is set to apologise for the suffering of Americans who were held as prisoners of war by the Japanese military, a Japanese newspaper reported on Friday.

Japanese Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka will meet with Secretary of State Colin Powell in San Francisco on Saturday, when a ceremony will be held in remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the peace treaty bearing the city's name. Tanaka has decided to offer an apology at the ceremony for the suffering of American POWs in an attempt to soothe what remains a sore spot between the two countries, the nationally circulated Asahi newspaper reported.

A number of former American POWs have unsuccessfully sued Japanese companies for using them as forced labor during the war, and this year U.S. lawmakers introduced legislation to make it easier for such suits to be filed. The State Department's official position is that the 1951 peace treaty waived all future compensation claims against Japan. The unattributed report by the Asahi did not indicate whether Tanaka planned to apologise directly to American veterans or do so during her meeting with Powell.

The Guardian

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 8 SEP 20.



# Tokyo parlour blast kills 44

Tokyo, September 1

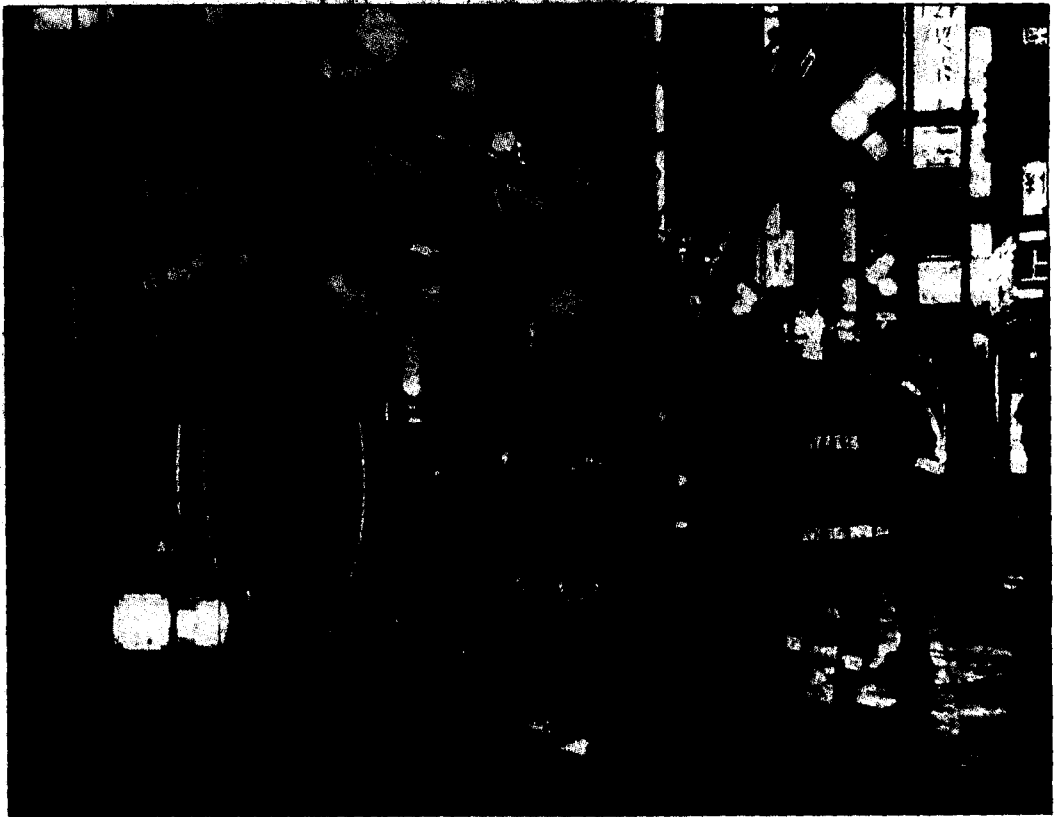
AT LEAST 44 people were killed in Tokyo's red light district on Friday when an explosion and fire tore through a narrow building containing a mah jong parlour, fetish clubs and restaurants.

The death toll could rise in what is already the worst fire disaster in postwar Japanese history, as firefighters continued to search for bodies this morning. At least three people were seriously injured while jumping to escape the flames. Police said they were still investigating the cause of the fire, which appeared to have started in the crowded mah jong parlour on the third floor of a four-storey building in Kabukicho, Tokyo's seediest nightspot, at about 1am local time.

Investigators have been told that a fireball ripped through the Ikkyu mah jong parlour when one of the staff opened the only door into the establishment. Television footage showed firemen climbing through the blackened hole that the explosion had punched through the front of the building, which was reportedly 50 centimetres by 1.5 metres. Fire engines and ambulances filled the streets below, which were strewn with broken glass. It took five hours to put the fire out.

According to NHK, the public broadcaster, half of the casualties were players and staff at the gaming tables on the third floor. The others were in the Super Loose sex establishment on the fourth floor. Of the dead, at least 10 were women in their 20s. "I heard a muffled explosion and then saw smoke billowing from the building," one witness said on television.

With only one narrow staircase in the building and no emergency exit, the people



Firefighters walk beside fire engines after an explosion ripped through a building housing restaurants and bars in central Tokyo's busy Shinjuku entertainment area.

inside were trapped. Some escaped to the roof. "I saw a man jump off the building and thought it was a suicide. Then I saw smoke pouring out of the building," a man in his 20s told NHK.

Other witnesses said the falls may have been caused by the explosion. "I think they were thrown out by the force of the blasts," a businessman told the TBS channel. "It was mayhem. Some people tried to get back in the building, shouting that there were women and customers inside."

Burn victims were taken to 18

hospitals in Tokyo. The Metropolitan Okubo hospital said all six of those it received were confirmed dead on arrival. No names were given.

The number of casualties surpassed the 33 who were killed in a fire that gutted a hotel in the Akasaka area of central Tokyo in 1982. The fire looks certain to raise questions about lax safety standards in the sex district.

Kabukicho, a five-minute walk from Shinjuku station in the west of the city, is an adult playground. Its narrow neon-lit streets are filled with bars,

karaoke parlours and gaming rooms as well as establishments catering to every sexual taste. It is always packed on a Friday night. Although prostitution has been illegal in Japan since 1958, fetish clubs and other sex businesses advertise openly. On the side of the building next to the fire, a large neon sign invites customers to the second-floor "sexual harassment clinic".

Most of the buildings in the district are run by crime syndicates and it is a place where the law and safety regulations are routinely flouted.

The Guardian

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

2 SEP 2001



# Japan plans non-religious monument for war dead

YOMIURI SHIMBUN  
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

TOKYO, Aug. 18. - The Japan government plans to build a non-religious cenotaph in memory of the war dead. The cenotaph would serve as a monument, not a cemetery, government officials said.

The cenotaph would not replace the Yasukuni Shrine as home to souls of the war dead, including those of Class-A war criminals, they said. The government was not planning to transfer remains and items from Chidorigafuchi cemetery park in central Tokyo to the new structure, they added.

Based on these preconditions, the government will begin discussions on the details of the new monument by September. A private advisory panel will be set up headed by the chief cabinet Secretary, Mr Yasuo Fukuda.

The Prime Minister, Mr Junichiro Koizumi, offered prayers at the Yasukuni Shrine on



**Koizumi: "We need to discuss what can be done so that foreigners and Japanese nationals can pay tribute without any discomfort." - AP/PTI**

Monday. In a statement, he said he would consider setting up the new monument to pay tribute to the war dead.

"We need to discuss what can be done so that foreigners and Japanese nationals can pay their tributes without any discomfort," Mr Koizumi said.

The plan to build a non-religious monument gained ground after politicians and others pointed out that Mr Koizumi's worship at the Yasukuni shrine may have violated the principle of separation of religion and government as stipulated in the Constitution.

There has also been considerable criticism at home and abroad of the Prime Ministers' worship at the shrine, where Class-A war criminals are enshrined with other war dead.

The government wants the new memorial to be a place where ceremonies can be held in a more informal style—without ties to specific religions— and where foreign dignitaries from diverse religious backgrounds could offer prayers in a relaxed frame of mind.

Some government official have expressed doubts about the plan. "Will bereaved family members be motivated to offer prayers at a facility that does not contain any remains and in which souls are not enshrined?" one official said.

THE STATESMAN

# Japan can make amends, says Koizumi

ND-12

16/8 20/20am

**TOKYO, AUG. 15.** Ignoring rising anti-Japanese sentiment in Asia, Cabinet Ministers and conservative politicians joined tens of thousands of ordinary citizens in silent prayer at a shrine for war dead to mark the 56th anniversary of the nation's World War II surrender.

Worshipping at Yasukuni shrine remains an emotional day for many older Japanese who still recall the unprecedented Aug. 15, 1945 radio address by then-Emperor Hirohito announcing that Japan would "bear the unbearable" and lay down its weapons following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

But for Chinese, Koreans and other Asian victims of Japanese aggression during the first half of the 20th century, official visits to Yasukuni — the Shinto shrine used during the war to whip up nationalist sentiment — are a sign that Japan glorifies its militarist past and refuses to atone for wartime atrocities.

"How can we make good friends with people who try to forget and ignore the many pains they inflicted on us?" asked the South Korean President, Mr. Kim Dae-jung, in a speech. In South Korea, Aug. 15 is celebrated as the day the Korean Peninsula was liberated from Japanese colonial rule.

Small groups of demonstrators in China and Taiwan burned Japanese flags and chanted anti-Japan slogans on Wednesday to protest the Prime Minister, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi's visit to the shrine on Monday.

Despite the protests, five Cabinet Ministers and at least 120 lawmakers or their representatives prayed at Yasukuni on Wednesday, bringing to nine the members of Cabinet who have made shrine visits this week.

In all, 125,000 Japanese thronged to Yasukuni, many more than the 55,000 who visited last

year and the highest in recent years, a spokesman for the shrine said on condition of anonymity.

On Wednesday, Mr. Koizumi joined Emperor Akihito — Hirohito's son — in expressing regrets for the war in a secular ceremony in Tokyo that honoured both military and civilian dead. "Our country has caused many countries, especially our Asian neighbours, significant damage and pain," said Mr. Koizumi in a speech beginning the ceremony, adding that Japan can make amends by fostering peace and prosperity in the region.

The Prime Minister proposed a meeting with the South Korean President and Chinese leaders to mend relations.

"Although there are differences in the view of history among countries, I think we share the feeling that we want to promote friendly relations, he said.

But critics say the shrine isn't an appropriate venue to promote peace.

Ultrarightist trucks outside the shrine blared wartime marching music, and a brief scuffle broke out between protesters and supporters of the shrine visits. One person was injured when he was punched in the face, a police official said on condition of anonymity. No one was arrested.

Yasukuni shrine honours Japan's 2.5 million war dead since the late 1800s, including executed World War II criminals.

War criminals or not, some Japanese say the dead are beyond reproach.

"Whether they were Class A war criminals or soldiers, once dead they are all Buddhas," said Ms. Tatsuko Tomozawa, a 67-year-old Tokyo housewife. "It's not right to make a fuss." — AP

THE HINDU

10 AUG 16

# JAPAN'S WAR GUILT

## The differences with Nazi Germany

THE Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni shrine dedicated to those who died in the last war, raises at least one important question: should we place Japan, one of the Axis powers, on par with Germany; as a criminal against humanity? Attention to atrocities committed by Japanese troops in China, Korea and the rest of Asia was drawn mainly because of the protests by "comfort women", Korean women who were used as sex slaves by the Japanese military. The Chinese have their own story to tell, about the horrors perpetrated by the Japanese in Manchuria and everyone has seen *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. To be fair, Japan's crimes were nothing compared to Germany's. In the first place, Japanese ultranationalism did not call for the mass extermination of peoples. There were no concentration camps, no gas chambers.

Japan's lesser guilt and horrendous nuclear expiation allows Koizumi, unlike his German counterpart, to mourn dead heroes and former prime minister Mori to air ultranationalist sentiments in public. Koizumi was careful to say that Japan "had caused immeasurable pain and suffering" to "our Asian neighbours". The apologies have suddenly started pouring out after a gap of almost 50 years, primarily because some former victims are formidable economic powers important for Japanese trade. Otherwise, no one would have bothered. Besides, and perhaps above all, unlike Nazi Germany where the top and middle level Nazi leadership was completely eliminated — many disappeared — continuity was maintained in Japan by the presence of Hirohito who reigned through Japan's transition to a prosperous liberal-democratic country. The Japanese feel it is a war they can commemorate, both because its guilt is behind them, while its nationalism continues to live.

THE STATE

15 AUG 2001

# Koizumi visit: Protesters chop fingers

REUTERS  
SEOUL, AUG 13

JAPANESE Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni war shrine on Monday sparked outcry elsewhere in Asia, with China denouncing the move and 20 South Koreans chopping off their little fingers in protest.

But there was no immediate suggestion that the visit would cause lasting damage to relations between Koizumi's administration and Japan's Asian neighbours, who have repeatedly accused Tokyo of trying to whitewash its wartime past.

Koizumi, who portrayed his visit as a renewal of a pledge for peace, brought forward his gesture from Wednesday — the anniversary of Japan's surrender at the end of World War II and Liberation Day in South Korea.

He declined to clarify whether the visit was official or private, saying merely he had paid homage as "Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi" and had used his own money to pay for a floral offering sent in his name to the shrine at the weekend.

China and South Korea appeared unimpressed by this and the switch of dates, saying that deeper issues were at stake. "The essence of the Yasukuni Shrine question is

whether the Japanese side can sincerely repent that aggressive period of history," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement, noting that the shrine also honoured convicted war criminals.

"We are opposed to Japanese leaders paying their respects and worshipping at the Yasukuni Shrine to class-A war criminals."

Many young Chinese vented their spleens in Internet chatrooms and on website bulletin boards, some calling for a boycott of Japanese products. "There is no friendship between China and Japan," read one message. "There never was, there isn't now and there never will be."

Nations across Asia suffered from Japan's aggression in the early 20th century and atrocities ranging from killing and torture to the use of their women as sex slaves for its soldiers. South Korea's Liberation Day marks the end of Japan's brutal 35-year occupation of the Korean Peninsula.

Hours before Koizumi's visit, 20 South Korean men chopped off their little fingers in a macabre public protest. In a scene broadcast by



Twenty S Koreans shout slogans after they chopped off their little fingers in front of the Independence Gate in Seoul on Monday. Reuters photo

Seoul's YTN television, the men used small guillotines, then laid their severed digits in a South Korean flag which was wrapped and then tied in a knot. South Korea's government voiced "deep regret" over the visit, which compounds a dispute over a textbook denounced by Koreans and other Asians as a whitewash of Japanese

wartime brutality.

But there was no reaction from the Philippines, which also suffered under Japanese occupation during World War II but described the visit as an internal matter. "We don't see the need to issue a stand this time," President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's spokesman Rigoberto Tiglao said.

INDIAN EXPRESS

14 AUG 2001

HD-16

# Premier with a difference?

**H**E MAY or may not be able to keep the promise of reforming Japan. But, since taking over as Japan's head of Government in April, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi has shown that he is trying to be a different kind of Prime Minister. And, for the people of Japan, who have seen several indifferent leaders as Prime Minister lately, the 59-year-old has come as a breath of fresh air.

An avowed admirer of Winston Churchill, Mr. Koizumi led his once-limping Liberal Democratic Party to an emphatic victory in the July 29 elections to the Upper House of Parliament. Just a few months ago, the LDP was being written off. Mr. Koizumi, however, changed all that when he took on entrenched factions within his own party — what many believe remains one of the main stumbling blocks to his reform agenda.

In his policy address to the Japanese Diet (Parliament) on May 7, the Prime Minister said: "Since the outset of the decade of the 1990s... the Japanese economy has been unable to break free of long-term stagnation as trust in our political leadership has been eroded and our society has become enveloped in a spirit of disillusionment..."

"Given this context, the top priority that I must address is to rebuild our economy and reconstruct our society as one full of pride and confidence... in the belief that without structural reforms there can be no rebirth for Japan, I am resolved to ceaselessly advance structural reforms, including economic reforms, fiscal reforms, administrative reforms, social reforms and political reforms... we must embrace difficulties ahead, overcome barriers of fixed interests..." Mr. Koizumi said.

Clearly, for Japan, fixing the economy is an immediate priority.

According to available information, the Japanese economy contracted at an annualised rate of 0.8 per cent in the January-March quarter and is faring no better in the second quarter. Industrial production fell by four per cent in the April-June period.

In such a scenario, Mr. Koizumi is promising to cut spending — a move that might prove to be unpopular among the same people who helped the LDP to a stunning victory in the Upper House elections. The Prime Minister has promised to limit the issue of new Government bonds to 30 trillion yen (\$240 billions) in the next financial year beginning April 2002



Mr. Junichiro Koizumi paints eyes on a dharma doll for luck... he is going to need it.

*Mr. Junichiro Koizumi has shown that he is trying to be different... But he has enough domestic issues to tackle and does not need new problems with sensitive neighbours.*  
**Amit Baruah reports.**

— a cut in spending of three trillion yen.

That his challenges are immense is evident from the latest poll conducted to gauge the Prime Minister's popularity and his ability to deliver on his promises. According to an *Asahi Shimbun* poll, support for Mr. Koizumi was down to 69 per cent in August as opposed to 77 per cent in July. The poll had a sample of 2,183 individuals. "Fifty-two per cent of respondents expressed concern about Koizumi's structural reforms, while 37 per cent said they trusted Koizumi implicitly... 56 per cent of respondents said priority should be given to economic and employment measures while only 35 per cent said promotion of reform was more important," the poll said.

As Mr. Koizumi and his reform Government grapple with the realities of a sluggish Japanese economy, the Prime Minister's stated intention to visit the Yasukuni Shrine on August 15 — the anni-

versary of Japan's World War-II surrender — has raised a howl of protest. Apart from some domestic criticism over the Prime Minister's desire to visit the Shrine, where war criminals are also enshrined, China and the two Koreas have responded with concern.

The New Komeito Party, the second largest constituent of the alliance that governs Japan, has called upon Mr. Koizumi to drop plans for the controversial visit altogether. The Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Tang Jiaxuan, was quoted as telling his Japanese counterpart, Ms. Makiko Tanaka, in Hanoi last month: "I explicitly said that (Koizumi) should not make a visit to Yasukuni Shrine."

The mass-circulated *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper said it appeared from Mr. Tang's 'imperious' tone that he was giving an "order" to Japan's Prime Minister. The paper said Japanese Prime Ministers visited the Shrine while in office till August 1985 and the Chinese Government did not in-

sist that the "foundations of friendship" would collapse.

"Within the ruling parties, some have suggested that Koizumi should make the visit on a date other than August 15 as a gesture of compromise. However, China's argument is that it cannot allow the visit on August 15 or any other day as long as Class-A war criminals are enshrined there," the paper added.

While Japan and its neighbours await Mr. Koizumi's final decision on the visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, a parallel controversy relating to a junior school textbook which seeks to justify Japan's invasion of Asia continues to brew. A Tokyo metropolitan education board decision to prescribe the book written by 'nationalist' historians could lead to further criticism from China, South Korea and other Asian nations.

At a time when Mr. Koizumi is said to be focussing on the country's economy, the last thing he needs is bad relations with key neighbours. Japan's war past has still not been forgotten by its victims. Mr. Koizumi would do well not to rekindle memories of Japan's war role. The Prime Minister has enough domestic issues to tackle, he does not need to create any new problems for himself — especially with sensitive neighbours.

# Reforms a major challenge for Koizumi

By Gautaman Bhaskaran

*HD-15  
148*

**TOKYO, AUG. 10.** The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi's re-election on Thursday night as president of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) may allow him to stay in office for two more years, but the tenure will undoubtedly be challenging, if not extremely difficult. Although Mr. Koizumi won the support of the major LDP factions — including the largest one led by the former Prime Minister, Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, (often called the one-man resistance force to Mr. Koizumi's reform initiatives) — he will face mounting pressure on several domestic issues.

One of them is unemployment, which at the current 4.9 per cent is about the worst since World War II. The situation will probably worsen as Mr. Koizumi puts his economic reforms plans into action. For one, writing off bad debts by banks is expected to put a lot of people out of work.

Already, men and women have been losing their jobs. A journalist with *"The Japan Times"*, the leading English-language daily published from Tokyo and Osaka, says that even newspapers have had to retrench staffers. "I am lucky to have been able to hold on to my job. But I feel guilty that it had been at the cost of some others, and that the layoff had ensured that I enjoy the same level of salary I have been drawing". He says that an immediate fallout of this could be a rise in petty crime, a feature that Japan has been largely free of. In fact, one can drop one's wallet with wads of currency notes on a crowded city street and expect it to turn up at the "Lost and Found" office the following day, its contents intact.

But the journalist admits that reforms are a must, and the accompanying pain a necessary evil. Mr. Koizumi himself has said time and again that "there cannot be any reform without pain". As much as the average Japanese citizen will be inclined to face this with some stoicism,



**The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, bows after he was re-elected president of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party at the party lawmakers' meeting in Tokyo on Friday. — AP**

he is bound to ask whether better life will follow the suffering. Today, the youth especially is in no mood for a life of sacrifice if that will not ensure greater pleasures — after a comparatively short "grin-and-bear" period.

Since the most severe form of pain will be unemployment, the people may be tempted to revolt if the phase continues longer than their level of tolerance. And for the young, this threshold can be dangerously low, a fact that Mr. Koizumi can ignore at the peril of losing his chair.

**THE HINDU**

11 AUG 11.

# Upbeat Koizumi to give reforms a push

YOMIURI SHIMBUN  
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

TOKYO, July 30. — Riding high on the popularity of Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi, the Liberal Democratic Party won a majority of the contested seats in yesterday's House of Councilors' election, leading the Prime Ministers to claim a public mandate for "structural reform without sacred cows."

Of the 121 seats up for grabs — 73 in electoral districts and 48 through proportional representation — the LDP secured 64, three more than it had held before the election. It won 44 seats in electoral districts and 20 through proportional representation votes.

"(The party's victory indicates) I managed to clear the first hurdle, as a defeat would have meant my resignation," Mr Koizumi told reporters today. "I will cooperate with the ruling parties to implement basic policies on reforms (formulated by the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy)."

The LDP's coalition partners — New

Komeito and Hoshuto (New Conservative Party) — won 13 seats and one seat, respectively.

Although New Komeito maintained its pre-election strength, Hoshuto received one seat — which is to be occupied by its leader, Mr Chikage Ogi — down from the three seats it had occupied before the election.

Mr Koizumi plans to use the election victory as political leverage to push through his reforms.

The abolition of special quotas — which are not subject to caps — in requests for the fiscal 2002 budget will be a new approach to be adopted by Mr Koizumi, and is aimed at curbing an increase in the issuance of governmental bonds.

He plans to increase spending on such key areas as environmental preservation, and revitalisation of urban areas, while decreasing spending allocations in some areas, including public works and official development assistance to developing nations.

Mr Koizumi is set to start mapping out specific measures to reform public cor-

porations, many of which have apparently outlived their original purpose.

The chief Cabinet secretary, Mr Yasuo Fukuda, today hinted there would be no Cabinet reshuffle following the election. "It is too early for me to say whether there will be a Cabinet reshuffle as the matter should be consulted with the ruling parties," Mr Fukuda said at a press conference.

"The Prime Minister has often said that the same Cabinet line-up should be kept for each Cabinet. I think he wants to do that if at all possible."

**US envoy rejects Okinawa call:** The US ambassador here today repeated Washington's refusal to revise the agreement on the US military presence in Japan, amid tensions about crimes linked to soldiers at the Okinawa base, adds AFP.

The Governor of Okinawa Prefecture, Mr Keiichi Inamine, had asked for a revision of the 1960 Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement to allow for a reduction in the US military bases.

But the US ambassador to Japan, Mr



The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Junichiro Koizumi, at a press conference in Tokyo on Monday. — AP/PTI

Howard Baker, refused.

**Ex-airman convicted for rape:** A former Japanese serviceman, Lt Hiromitsu Meguro (34), was convicted of raping a 15-year-old schoolgirl on the island of Okinawa in March and sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison, court officials said today, adds AP.

He was dismissed from the military in April as punishment.



## Tsunami Koizumi

Every once in a while, venerable institutions suffer the indignity of being overshadowed by charismatic individuals. That's the fate that has befallen Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The party, which has ruled Japan continuously since 1955 — barring a short break in 1993 — has seen its support base eroding rapidly as a result of the country's painfully prolonged economic downturn. Thirteen prime ministers in the last 10 years have achieved little, apart from breeding an enormous sense of frustration among citizens. The LDP was widely blamed for Japan's woes, and was expected to suffer voter backlash during the key elections to the upper house of parliament. Enter Junichiro Koizumi. Divorced, outspoken, fond of pop music, a karaoke aficionado and stylishly coiffured, Mr Koizumi is a breath of fresh air for a country used to decrepit, consensual leaders. In a tsunami, or tidal wave, of support, he virtually hijacked the LDP leadership in April, and quickly emerged as post-war Japan's most popular prime minister. Curiously, Mr Koizumi is well-liked even though he is no populist. He led the LDP into this month's elections promising drastic reforms. If implemented, his plans will hurt business barons who have traditionally supported his party. But Mr Koizumi indicated that he would rather break up the LDP than compromise with its conservative leaders, and the desperate party had no choice but to quietly tag along. It was a wise decision. The LDP-led coalition has won a comprehensive victory in the upper house elections and Mr Koizumi now has an overwhelming mandate to proceed with his blueprint for a radical economic overhaul.

The Japanese prime minister's efforts will be closely watched not just by his countrymen but by the rest of the world, particularly the Asian tigers. The US slowdown is taking its toll on several export-oriented economies; a revived Japan capable of again being Asia's growth engine would be very good news indeed for the region. But Mr Koizumi has his task cut out. Japan is in the throes of a full-fledged industrial recession, unemployment is at a record 4.9 per cent, the stockmarket is hovering around a 16-year low, and a string of financial stimulus packages have only managed to run up huge levels of government debt. The crisis of confidence is reflected in poor credit offtake, even though interest rates are at virtually zero per cent. Mr Koizumi has vowed to slash government spending on costly public works projects and institute structural reforms like forcing commercial banks to write off bad debts and privatising Japan's postal savings system. The problem is, these reforms will almost certainly cause a lot of short-term pain. Some banks and financial institutions could go belly-up, and corporates may resort to mass lay-offs just as government subsidies start drying up. Mr Koizumi's popularity has so far survived controversies like the furor over his plan to visit a Shinto shrine honouring Japan's war dead, including convicted World War II criminals. But his real challenge begins now. He will have to get his countrymen to grit their teeth and ride out the turbulence ahead. If he can accomplish that, his place in history will be assured. If he fails, well, the LDP's sidelined old men are watching — and waiting.

NEIL A. MARTIN

**J**APANESE voters sent a clear message to the country's political leadership during recent Tokyo municipal elections — they want change and they want it now.

The municipal elections in Tokyo last week were viewed as the first test of fire for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi since he took control of the beleaguered Liberal Democratic Party in April. The Prime Minister's party, after being drubbed in similar elections three years ago, won 53 of the 127 slots at stake, increasing its pre-election strength by five to 48.

For a party that has seen its popularity dwindle in urban areas in recent years, the poll was reassuring but not convincing. It's unclear whether this local victory will translate into a decisive LDP win nationwide in the July 28 elections for the upper house of the Japanese Parliament. But even if the LDP's hand in the country's coalition government is strengthened later this month, it's no guarantee that Koizumi's government will have the power to reform and revitalise the country's troubled economy — and its troubled stock market.

After a brief confidence bounce the day after the Sunday elections, the benchmark Nikkei 225 resumed its continuing downward slide last week, closing Friday at 13,044, 2.28 per cent high on the day but 0.6 per cent down on the week. The stock market has fallen 24 per cent in dollar terms during the past 12 months, with foreigners turning net sellers since the week of May 28.

Foreign and domestic investors realise that despite the optimism about Koizumi, things are getting worse in Japan. According to the latest report from the Ministry of Finance, Japan's economy appears

# Reforms or not; more pain ahead for Koizumi's Japan

headed for its fourth technical recession in 11 years. The report finds that business confidence continues to shrink, consumer spending remains stagnant while the decline in company expenditures is greater than expected, unemployment is rising and housing starts are plunging sharply. Japan's Gross Domestic Product fell at an annual rate of 0.8 per cent during the first quarter of 2001, and indicators since April show that the economy continues to decelerate, the report said.

Such conditions have clearly alarmed the general population, at least as reflected by the tenor of television talks shows, newspaper editorials and statements in Tokyo by various opposition groups demanding immediate reforms.

Koizumi responded with a recent blueprint for change: promising to clean up the nation's banking mess, reduce the government's spiralling debt, crack down on pork-barrel spending, privatise the postal system, lower the capital-gains tax and create 5.3 million jobs over five years.

But can he do it? "It's hard to be sure that Koizumi is really committed to implementing all the reforms he is talking about, but there is a pretty reasonable chance that by the end of the year we will see some of these reforms in place," says Garry Evans, equity strategist with HSBC Securities in Tokyo. "But we should



know as soon as late August, what chance of success the government has. That's when the new Diet session starts and also the deadline for

**While growing unemployment and a plunging GDP hint at the economic slump, the tenor of TV talk shows and newspaper editorials show the people are alarmed**

overall allocations for next year's budget."

Hedge fund manager Allen Veryan of AGS Capital in Tokyo adds a further caveat. "Even if Koizumi is successful, people need to realise that there will be a lot of near-term pain before any long-term gains show up in the market," he says. "Things will get worse before they get better."

In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng index closed at 13,043, down slightly from the previous week. Shares of Sinopec, short for China Petroleum

and Chemical Corporation, the mainland's second largest oil company, increased one per cent last Monday on news that it will be the first mainland company listed in Hong Kong to be allowed to sell its shares to investors in China's yuan-dominated A share markets in Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Mainland Chinese investors are currently prohibited from buying shares of any foreign or domestic companies listed on bourses outside the mainland (although many do so illegally). But as part of the continuing reforms, the government plans to allow so-called H share companies like Sinopec, Tsingtao Brewery, China Shipping, and Huaneng Power, which are listed in Hong

Kong, to make initial public offerings on the mainland bourses.

In addition, the government next year is also

expected to allow so-called red chips — affiliates of mainland companies, incorporated and listed in Hong Kong, such as China Mobile, China Unicom, Legend, Cosco Pacific and PetroChina — to issue Chinese depository receipts in Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Both developments are intended to absorb excess liquidity in China's domestic markets as well as provide cheap expansion capital for the Hong Kong-listed companies.

"The key issue here is supply and demand," says Michael R. Preiss, se-

nior investment manager with MeesPierson Asia in Hong Kong. "Chinese investors have an estimated \$75 billion in foreign reserve deposits," he says, "and that's not counting undeclared holdings and the equivalent of \$1 trillion in yuan deposits. The A market listings and eventually the CDRs are both intended to keep money in China and offer local investors an alternative to low-interest bank rates," says Preiss, whose company manages about \$2 billion in Asian equities. "Foreign investors should also benefit from the impact of any new money coming into red chips or H shares listed in the Hong Kong market."

The Hang Seng red-chip index is up 12 per cent in dollar terms since January, while the exchange/H share index is ahead 42 per cent year-to-date, compared with a 14 per cent drop in the Hang Seng index since January.

Fear that China's markets may be overheating is apparently causing some global investors to take some profits. According to data compiled by J.P. Morgan, Asia fund managers increased their cash levels from 4.6 per cent to 5.2 per cent last April, when China's domestic markets were red hot, which apparently accounts for the later sell-off of shares in these markets.

"Some managers appear to have become risk-averse, which may limit the Hong Kong market's upside, unless there is a large asset allocation away from other markets" or there are some strong cash inflows, says Steven Li, J.P. Morgan's equity strategist in Hong Kong. But he adds that those don't seem likely given the "already high weightings in the Hong Kong market". "Local investors who remain fairly liquid, not institutions, will probably continue to be the drivers of the market."

(The Wall Street Journal)

# Japan's 'warped' history text draws protest

Tokyo, June 11

"TEACH OUR children the truth," chanted hundreds of people in central Tokyo on Monday, while protesting against a controversial history textbook that critics say whitewashes Japan's World War II atrocities.

Approved for use from next year by schoolchildren between 13 and 15, the textbook, written by nationalist historians, has angered Japan's neighbours and strained diplomatic ties, especially with China and South Korea.

Singing *We shall overcome* and waving placards, several hundred people from a number of nations, including South Korea, Philippines and Japan, held hands to form a human chain partway around the Education Ministry building in Kasumigaseki, the area that houses Japan's Government. "Correct the textbooks!" read one placard.

A school girl taking part in the protest said she couldn't believe the textbook had been approved.

Among the protesters were elderly Korean men in traditional black horsehair hats and white robes, shouting: "Stop this distorted interpretation of history."



A demonstration in front of Japan's education ministry in Tokyo on Monday, to protest a controversial history textbook.

"It's clear that the texts are wrong," said Satoko Tsagoshi, 72. "It is not only wrong to teach this to children, it's an international embarrassment for Japan."

The protest was the conclusion of a two-day conference to protest the textbook issue by a consortium of international groups, led by the Children and

Textbooks Japan Network 2001.

Both China and South Korea have strenuously objected to the textbook and have demanded extensive revisions, saying it glosses over Japanese aggression before and during World War Two.

During Japan's 1910-1945 colonisation of the Korean peninsula, it forced Koreans to

use its language and pledge loyalty to its emperor.

South Korea is particularly upset about phrasing in the textbook that suggests Korea "benefited" from the colonisation because it led to the development of railways and manufacturing industries. Seoul also says the textbook fails to explain the plight of the estimated 100,000 women, many of them Korean, who were forced to provide sex to Japanese troops during World War II.

At a news conference prior to the protest, 81-year old Kim Soon-Duk related how she was taken from her Korean home at the age of 17 and forced to become a sex slave in China. "Why is this sort of textbook still being used," she asked. "We will keep on calling for correction (of the book) as long as we all still live."

The Japanese Government has said the book does not represent Japan's official view of history and has resisted pressure to revise it, although it did agree to some revisions before the book was approved earlier this year. The Education Ministry now says no further revisions can be made unless there are factual errors.

Reuters

# Class terror part of rising trend

24/10/86  
5/19  
10/16

**T**HE Osaka massacre, in which eight children were knifed to death at their school, was, like the Columbine High School outrage in Colorado, something that the Japanese believed could never happen in their country.

That illusion has now been shattered in a particularly brutal way - in the wanton slaughter of those Japanese society holds most dear: its schoolchildren. The murders come after years of warnings by parents and educators that school violence was on the rise, and just over four years after the severed head of an elementary schoolboy was found in front of his school in nearby Kobe.

A teenager was later arrested for that crime, sparking a national debate on

how to protect young children, but the discussions failed to produce any change in school security. Friday's killings illustrate that even in a society with superior standards of public safety and low crime levels, and where strictly enforced gun laws ensure that few criminals get hold of firearms, there is little guarantee that such horrors can be avoided.

The tragedy was the deadliest mass killing since a sarin nerve-gas attack on the Tokyo underground six years ago by Aum Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth). That attack provoked intense shock, but pundits remain divided over whether it was a case of religious brainwashing or a symptom of a wider social malaise.

Since then there has been a sharp increase in the incidents of violence, particularly by young men. This indicates that the stresses of change from a tradition-bound society offering life-time career guarantees to a rapidly modernising economy in which thousands of people are put out of work, is proving too much for the younger generation.

Juvenile crime was the top story last year and the law had to be changed to tackle adolescent violence in a land renowned for its safety and low murder rate.

Last year, a youth aged 17 attacked

Some experts blame the increase in youth crime on a pressure cooker society, where those who fail examinations are not given a second chance to recover their footing, says **ROBERT WHYMANT**

passengers at a railway station with a baseball bat, severely injuring a housewife. Another youth of the same age beat his mother to death when she refused to give him pocket money. A third stabbed an elderly neighbour to death because he wanted to "experience killing someone".

More recently, four teenagers were arrested for beating a man senseless with baseball bats in a Tokyo suburb. Some experts blame the increase in youth crime on a pressure cooker society, where those who fail examinations are not given a second chance to recover their footing.

Others say today's young people are more narcissistic



**School children weep on the ground after fleeing from their classrooms at Ikeda Elementary School where a knife-wielding attacker killed eight children earlier in Ikeda, western Japan on Friday. The suspect is a 37-year-old unemployed man with what police say is a history of mental problems. - AP/PTI**

than previous generations, lack a sense of morality, and think only of fulfilling their immediate urges at any cost.

"Young people today recognise no controlling principle beyond themselves," said Keigo Okonogi, a professor of psychiatric medicine. "Desire is to be satisfied, not controlled."

A few years ago a weekly magazine ran a story "How to avoid being killed in America", giving advice to Japanese travellers. Now the Japanese are seeking advice on how to avoid falling victim to a wave of mindless violence in their own country.

Some Japanese say such violent acts are likely to increase as the country's ailing economy drives up unemployment figures.

*The Times, London.*

**THE STATESMAN**

# 8 pupils stabbed to death in Japan

YOMIURI SHIMBUN  
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ST-1 9/6  
OSAKA, June 8. - A mentally deranged man stabbed eight pupils to death and injured 18 other pupils and three teachers in an Ikeda primary school at Osaka this morning.

The dead and most of the injured in Japan's worst school tragedy were between seven and eight years in age.

The killer Mamoru Takuma (37) a resident of Mino, Osaka, was arrested from near the school about 10 minutes after the attack, police said. The injured were rushed to hospitals in Osaka and Hyogo.

Takuma is a patient of a mental hospital at Hyogo. A psychotropic drug was found on him. Police quoted him as having said that he had taken 10 times his daily dose of the drug before the attack.

He reportedly said he had wanted to kill himself after the attack. "I have tried to kill myself several times," he was quoted

as having said.

Takuma entered a second-year (class II) classroom from a first-floor verandah around 10.20 a.m. and started attacking pupils with a 28-cm-long knife, police said. He chased children in a corridor, slashing them as they tried to escape. He attacked pupils and teachers in four classrooms, which were covered with blood stains.

A teacher and the vice-principal caught up with Takuma when he re-entered the first classroom and snatched the knife from him.

Children's screams could be heard over the school's public address system. Many ran out on to the playground. People came to know about the attack when about 10 pupils, some of them with bloodstains on their uniforms, ran into a nearby supermarket, crying for help.

A 64-year-old woman in the supermarket said the petrified children huddled together in a corner of the store. Shoppers comforted them till

ambulances arrived. A boy, with bloodstains on his back and stomach, couldn't move and had to be lifted up to the ambulance, she said.

The supermarket staff and customers informed the emergency services. Seven police counsellors were sent to the school to help the pupils and staff.

Pupils were in a state of shock after the stabbing. Most of them were crying and looking for their parents among the crowd that had assembled at the school. Even teachers couldn't speak coherently.

A car in which Takuma reportedly drove to the school was found parked near the gate.

Takuma used to work as a maintenance man in a municipal primary school in Itami, Hyogo. He dropped out of a technical high school, and in 1993 got a job in Itami municipality. He joined the Itami school in April 1998.

He was arrested in March 1999 for serving colleagues tea containing a psychotropic drug.

THE STATES

# Coast Guard of Japan to join S-E Asian drill

YOMIURI SHIMBUN  
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

595  
716  
TOKYO, June 6. - The Japan Coast Guard is planning to periodically send a large patrol boat to South-east Asian nations to participate in joint training sessions to combat pirates in the Strait of Malacca and neighbouring areas, coast guard officials said.

Initially, some Coast Guard officials were cautious about dispatching an armed vessel to the region. However, they adopted the plan because the nations concerned have said they were willing to accept it.

The first patrol vessel will probably be dispatched in July.

The governments of Japan and South-east Asian countries stepped up efforts to present a united front against piracy in the region, particularly after pirates attacked the Alondra Rainbow, a 7,762-tonne freighter, in the Strait of Malacca in October 1999.

When Japan proposed holding an international conference to deal with pirates during the Japan-Asean summit meeting in November of the same year, Asean nations called for Japan's cooperation in joint patrols. In April 2000, 15 nations gathered in Tokyo to work out measures to deal with the problem. In September, research groups from the Japan Coast Guard and the foreign ministry visited some South-east Asian nations, including the Philippines and Malaysia, to discuss joint drills.

In November, a Coast Guard patrol vessel was sent to India and Malaysia to participate in their first drills to crack down on pirates. On that occasion, some government officials voiced concerns, saying sending a vessel armed with machine guns could provoke a backlash from the people of South-east Asian nations.

THE STATESMAN

# Japanese town to vote on controversial nuclear fuel

REUTERS

KARIWA VILLAGE, JAPAN, MAY 26

A tiny village in northern Japan could become a key factor in the country's energy policy as it prepares to vote on Sunday in a rare referendum on the use of controversial recycled nuclear fuel.

The farming village of Kariwa along the Sea of Japan coast has become the focus of attention for its vote to decide whether Tokyo Electric Power Co (TEPCO), should be allowed to use recycled MOX fuel in its Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant in the village.

"The referendum will be held to know what the village people want," Hiroo Shinada, village Chief of Kariwa, about 300 km (186 miles) North of Tokyo, told Reuters on Saturday.

Such defiance of officialdom is unusual in Japan and although one ministry source has said the use of MOX will go ahead anyway, the government's response to Sunday's vote is by no means clear.

The use of MOX — a blend of uranium and plutonium recycled from spent nuclear fuel — is a cornerstone of Japan's energy policy. The resource-poor country depends on nuclear energy for a third of its power needs and the recycling helps avoid the thorny issue of what to do with nuclear waste.

Japan's power industry had planned to begin commercial use of MOX fuel in 1999 but was forced to postpone its plans after controversy over falsified data on MOX fuel shipped from Britain to Kansai Electric Power Co in western Japan.

A string of nuclear power-related accidents in recent years, including the country's worst nuclear acci-

dent in which two workers were killed and hundreds of residents exposed to radiation, has eroded public faith in Japan's nuclear industry.

The referendum, which will not be legally binding, will be decided by 4,092 eligible village voters.

Anti-MOX campaigners say the fuel is dangerous and does not make economic sense because it is more expensive than conventional nuclear fuel.

"It is dangerous. It is costly. There is nothing good in it," said Kazuyuki Takemoto, one of the leaders of the anti-MOX campaigns.

However, others argue that the use of recycled nuclear fuel was unavoidable.

On Wednesday, the Japanese government took the unprecedented step of issuing a letter asking people living near nuclear power plants to understand the importance of using nuclear fuel.

On Tuesday, head of the Agency of Natural Resources and Energy Hirobumi Kawano and other trade ministry officials visited Kariwa to attend a public debate with the villagers.

"I think we need to use MOX fuel safely. That is the only way we can provide for our electricity," said one female restaurant owner who declined to be identified. "And I am sure that TEPCO will handle the fuel safely because the workers are the ones who will be affected the most if anything occurs."

With both camps heating up their campaigns to attract votes, the outcome is uncertain.

A poll conducted by Kyodo news agency on a randomly selected 100 eligible voters showed on Friday that 51 people opposed the plan to use MOX fuel while 41 supported it. Eight withheld their views.



## *New Japan PM holds out olive branch to China*

Tokyo, May 7

JAPANESE PRIME Minister Junichiro Koizumi held out an olive branch to regional rival China in his debut parliamentary speech on Monday, avoiding a string of tricky diplomatic issues that have irritated relations with Beijing.

Koizumi vowed to boost cooperation with the giant Asian neighbour. "Relations with China are among the most important bilateral relations for our country," Koizumi told parliament's Lower House. "We hope China will take a greater part in international society and will continue to strengthen ties with them through occasions such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (forum) scheduled in autumn in Shanghai," he added.

But Koizumi also reiterated that the US-Japan alliance was the bedrock of Tokyo's diplomatic and security policy. "Japan's prosperity is based on Japan-US relations, which have functioned effectively," Koizumi told the House. "Using the Japan-US alliance as a basis, it is important that we maintain and develop cooperative relations with our neighbouring countries such as China, South Korea, and Russia."

Japan has been locked in bitter disputes with China over a string of issues, including a controversial visit to Japan last month by former Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui and the Government's approval of a school history textbook that critics say glosses over Tokyo's wartime aggression.

**Reuters**

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

8 MAY 2001

# Kim son entered Japan with fake passport

YOMIURI SHIMBUN  
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

TOKYO, May 4. - Mr Kim Jong Nam, the eldest son of the North Korean leader, Mr Kim Jong II, sneaked into Japan with a forged passport in 1995 to visit tourist spots with people linked to the Communist nation during a short stay in the Kanto region, sources said.

The Japanese public security authorities didn't recognize him when he arrived at Narita airport since there are few close-up images available on the younger Kim. The immigration office reportedly failed to detect at the time that his passport was forged.

Public security officers, however, tailed the young man from the airport, where he was greeted respectfully by people, hav-

ing connections with Pyongyang. The authorities suspected the man was engaged in intelligence activities or had a contact in Japan.

During the week-long visit, Mr Jong Nam stayed in a first-class hotel here, visited Tokyo Disneyland and other spots.

Subsequent investigations by authorities confirmed the man to be Mr Kim Jong Nam, who entered Japan using a fake Latin American



A man, believed to be Kim Jong Nam, boards a plane at Narita airport on Friday upon his deportation to China.

- Yomiuri Shimbun/ANN

stern intelligence agencies said his family members were apparently seeking to leave Europe for Tokyo immediately before he entered Japan. But they didn't attempt it.

Including the most recent trip, Mr Jong Nam has entered Japan on three different occasions, sources said.

Regarding Tuesday's attempted entry into Japan by a man possessing a forged Dominican Republic passport, public security authori-

ties and others were on alert, as they were informed that Kim was planning to come to Japan soon. On Tuesday, however, nobody linked to Pyongyang was spotted at Narita airport.

Narita airport officials said the man arrived at 3:40 p.m. on Tuesday aboard Japan Airlines Flight 712. When he proceeded to the immigration counter at Narita's terminal No 2, an alarm buzzer went off, detecting an abnormality in his passport.

The Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau's Narita airport branch officials said the man was wearing a T-shirt, brown vest and black pants. A boy, accompanying him, was wearing white pants and a short-sleeved shirt. Both looked like tourists, they said. However, the man was not held.

THE STATESMAN

5 MAY 2001

THE victory of a long-haired, divorced, heavy-metal rock fan in the contest to become the next Japanese Prime Minister is an event of momentous importance - not only for Japan but probably also for the world economy and certainly for the global financial markets.

Junichiro Koizumi, the self-styled "maverick" who astonished all experienced observers by trouncing traditional candidates in this week's election for the leadership of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, may or may not be a sincere reformer, a strong leader or a competent economist. But the mere fact that he was able to win this contest on the basis of his public popularity and against the determined opposition of the previously all-powerful LDP faction leaders, may be more important than what Mr Koizumi stands for.

To understand the scale of the political upset, imagine that Tony Blair resigned and Ken Livingstone suddenly wrested the leadership of the Labour Party from Gordon Brown. Mr Koizumi's victory suggests that the world's second-largest advanced industrialised country may finally be ready for the radical reforms in its politics, economy and society that have long been demanded by forward-looking politicians, businessmen and financiers both within and outside Japan.

I emphasise that this is just my opinion because most observers in Tokyo, who are infinitely more expert in all things Japanese than I am, react to such hopes with world-weary condescension. On my recent trip to Tokyo, I met only two influential Japanese who believed that Mr Koizumi had a serious chance of becoming the next LDP leader. They were also the only people who predicted major improvements in Japan's domestic and international position during the next two years.

Most experts on Japan have always been cynical about the prospects of any serious reform process and their cynicism seems, if anything, to have become even deeper after this week's events. Although Mr Koizumi has promised to reform both economics and politics in many of the ways that investors and foreign experts have been demand-

56-7

ing, his landslide victory is irrelevant, they insist. To some extent, this cynicism reflects the wounded pride of the embarrassed experts (including most of the political analysts working for Japanese newspapers) who failed to anticipate Mr Koizumi's landslide victory. But beyond that, the scepticism is based on three more substantial arguments.

First, Mr Koizumi had to compromise on many of his radical commitments (for example, a promise to privatise the country's powerful and financially bloated post office savings system) to win the election. He no longer stands for reform and perhaps never did. Second, Mr Koizumi will not have political backing from senior LDP leaders. So even if he sincerely wanted to push reforms, he would not be able to achieve much. Third, even if the new Prime Minister did manage to implement some radical changes, such as bank restructuring and consolidation of the government's finances, these reforms would prove too painful and be abandoned before they had a chance to work.

There seems to be truth in these arguments. But I believe that Mr Koizumi's election may prove to be a turning point - first for the Japanese financial markets, then for the economy and ultimately, perhaps, for the nation. To see why, consider the objections of world-weary Japan experts around the world. Mr Koizumi is not a "true reformer". He is, after all, a third-generation politician who

# The man who can turn Japan around



worked his way up the LDP faction system by loyally toeing the line - until the past few months. He is not a Thatcher-type charismatic leader. He will have to make compromises and he will never enjoy the sort of untrammelled power and party discipline that British Prime Ministers take for granted. All this is true, but does it matter?

Japan does not need the kind of medicine administered to Britain by Mrs Thatcher. To compare Japan's problems today with those of Britain in the 1970s is like comparing a bad headache with a brain tumour. Japan is not run by politicians. It is run by bureaucrats and business lobbies. The bureaucracy - especially the finance ministry and Bank of Japan - now seems to be committed to the cause of radical economic reform. So are most large companies. To move ahead, Japan does not need a Prime Minister with enormous political power or detailed policy prescriptions. It only needs someone with a broad sense of direction who is willing to let the bureaucrats get on with their jobs. To put it another way, Mr Koizumi's victory was not just a random blip on the political radar. It was part of a consensus in favour of a "comprehensive package" of economic reforms that was spreading through Japan's civil service, political system and industrial establishment when I visited Tokyo this year. The vital element still missing from this consensus was political acquiescence. To pursue the reform

process, Japan's bureaucratically driven system does not require a charismatic leader. But it does need the politicians to stop sabotaging reforms. This limited objective must surely have been fulfilled, if only because of the terror and confusion spread among LDP traditionalists by Mr Koizumi's victory. Experts on Japan have complained for years that nothing ever seemed to change there because there was "no sense of crisis". But Mr Koizumi's astonishing victory over the LDP godfathers suggested that the sense of crisis has reached even the country's most deeply conservative institution, the faction system of the LDP.

With Mr Koizumi's election, all the main elements of the "comprehensive package" have fallen into place. The Financial Services Agency has announced a bank restructuring plan. The Bank of Japan has reverted to zero interest rates and promised to expand the money supply without limit. Slowly but surely the economy is being deregulated and exposed to more competition. Now the biggest remaining blockage - the LDP's patronage and faction system - seems broken.

Inevitably, the reform process will involve compromises between self-styled radicals such as Mr Koizumi and traditional political interests. But that in itself need do no harm. Some of the policy compromises demanded of the new Prime Minister by the more conservative LDP politicians are desirable from an economic point of view. For example, Mr Koizumi's initial inclination to cut government borrowing immediately was manifestly insane. An attempt to tighten fiscal policy now would have caused a depression comparable to the one in Britain from 1979 to 1981. And a full dose of Thatcherism - this cannot be repeated too often - is a bitter medicine that Japan in 2001 does not require. What Japan needs is something closer to the Reaganomics of the mid-1980s - a more palatable combination of deregulation, trade liberalisation, supply-side tax reform and easy money.

The more I think about it, the more Japan today reminds me of America in the summer of 1982.

- The Times, London.

# Japanese PM Koizumi names new Cabinet posts

BY LINDA SIEG

AP-9 29/4  
Tokyo, April 26: In a keenly watched test of his will to reform, newly-elected Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Thursday chose his cabinet, keeping a highly regarded financial regulator and naming a woman as foreign minister for the first time.

Parlaying his reputation as an eccentric into a powerful image as a popular reformer, Mr Koizumi — also known for his nationalist tinge — rose to the top post with resounding support from local members of his ruling Liberal Democratic Party afraid of losing a July election for the Upper House. "I want to appoint those who are zealous about reform," Mr Koizumi told reporters, and moved quickly to fulfil his pledge.

A smiling Mr Koizumi, wearing a light grey suit and silver tie with blue cranes in flight, looked tired and a little tense as he cast his vote in Parliament's Lower House. He received 287 of the 478 ballots cast in the chamber, which has the final

say in electing the Prime Minister.

Mr Koizumi, 59, shot to the top party post after the ruling bloc decided to ditch the hugely unpopular outgoing Prime Minister, Yoshiro Mori, to boost its chances in the Upper House poll.

Mr Mori and his cabinet resigned en masse on Thursday morning. He becomes Japan's 11th prime minister in 13 years, following a string of leaders, many of whose terms were cut short by scandals, political confusion — or sheer weariness.

Mr Koizumi, who had pledged to break the fetters of old-style party factionalism, appointed five women — the most ever in a Japanese cabinet — two men in their 40s and three private sector people to fill his cabinet roster. Seven ministers retained their posts, including two from the LDP's partners in the three-way ruling coalition. In a move welcome to financial markets, Mr Koizumi re-appointed Financial Services Agency chief Hakuo Yanagisawa. (Reuters)

KEY POSTS

THE ASIAN AGE

27 APR 2001

## WHO REPLACES MORI?

*Japan* LDP prospects may not improve *MA*

**J**JAPANESE Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori didn't really give himself much of a chance. He started off by saying Japan was a divine country, ruled by a god-like emperor, which immediately aroused the suspicion of his party colleagues that he was a throwback to the extreme right-wing philosophy that had led Japan into the last war. They were reinforced when his chief cabinet secretary had to resign over a sex scandal, but also because of his connections with an extreme right-wing group. A few months later, Mori himself was embarrassed by the publication of a picture with a right-wing Yakuza gangster. Most damaging was the fact that he led the ruling LDP to a loss of single-party majority in the Lower House of the Diet in July last year. Since then, Mori's approval ratings have dipped steadily hitting a low of 6.5 per cent. Mori was also criticised for not leaving the golf course even while the news came in that a US submarine had hit and sunk a Japanese trawler. The other problem was that with his reduced majority he could not push through the crucial structural and fiscal reforms that were needed to redress Japan's critical debt situation. In February this year, Standard & Poor revised Japan's sovereign debt rating down to AA+ from AAA.

Mori was thoroughly discredited within his own party and his coalition partners who didn't have confidence in his ability to run the country. He managed to scrape through two no-trust motions, despite threats to renege by reformist challenger Koichi Kato and coalition partner, the New Komeito Party. LDP general secretary Honaka, one of those responsible for getting Mori elected, quit in December last year, while his economics minister and MP Masakuni Murakami did so early this year after another LDP legislator was found taking bribes. All these setbacks taken together not only damaged the image of the government, but also undermined support for Mori. The larger problem is with the LDP which has ruled Japan for too long and whose top leadership is probably out of tune with the new political and social ethos that is ironically the LDP's creation.

THE STATE MAN

27 APR 2001

Japan's new Prime Minister, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, has appointed five women, a record in Japanese politics, to his Cabinet on Thursday. From left: the Environment Minister, Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, 60, the Foreign Minister, Ms. Makiko Tanaka, 57, the Land, Infrastructure and Transport Minister, Ms. Chikage Ogi, 67, the Justice Minister, Ms. Mayumi Moriyama, 73, and the Education Minister, Ms. Atsuko Toyama, 62. — AP

## JAPAN / NEW CABINET HAS TANAKA AS FOREIGN MINISTER

# Koizumi is elected P.M.

*Japan 12-16*

**TOKYO, APRIL 26.** Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, a reformer with a nationalist tinge, was elected Prime Minister today as the public watched to see if he would keep his pledge to fix Japan's stagnant economy and shake up his hide-bound ruling party.

Parlaying his reputation as an eccentric into a powerful image as a popular reformer, Mr. Koizumi rose to the top post on a platform of change that won resounding support from local members of his ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) deeply afraid of losing a July national election. A smiling Mr. Koizumi, wearing a light grey suit and silver tie with blue cranes in flight, looked tired and a little tense as he cast his vote in the Lower Chamber, which has the final say over electing the Prime Minister. He received 287 votes out of the 478 ballots cast, while the Opposition Democratic Party chief, Mr. Yukio Hatoyama got 127 votes.

Mr. Koizumi, once dubbed an eccentric but now seen as a potentially bold reformer, then named his new Cabinet line-up, keeping a highly regarded financial regulator in his post and tapping a veteran lawmaker as Finance Minister. Mr. Koizumi shot to the top party post after the ruling bloc decided to ditch the hugely unpopular outgoing Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori, to boost its chances in the

Upper House election. Mr. Mori and his Cabinet resigned en masse today morning.

Mr. Koizumi, 59, becomes Japan's 11th Prime Minister in 13 years, following a string of leaders, many of whose terms were cut short by scandals, political confusion — or sheer weariness. In a move welcome to financial markets, Mr. Koizumi re-appointed the reform-minded financial services agency chief, Mr. Hakuo Yanagisawa. But he surprised many by selecting the former Transport and Education Minister, Mr. Masajuro Shiokawa as Finance Minister.

The relatively unknown Mr. Shiokawa is 79, just two years younger than his predecessor, Mr. Kiichi Miyazawa, and the appointment aroused suspicions that Mr. Koizumi had had difficulty filling his Cabinet. But some analysts said Mr. Shiokawa's political experience was vital and noted that the post of Finance Minister has lost some of its immense power in a recent administrative reshuffle.

The popular ruling party iconoclast, Ms. Makiko Tanaka will become Japan's first woman Foreign Minister. The daughter of the late LDP kingmaker, Mr. Kakuei Tanaka, she takes over the post at a time of trade and diplomatic strains between Japan and its Asian neighbours, notably China. Ironically, it was

her father who normalised Sino-Japanese relations in 1972.

The Chief Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, himself a hold-over from the previous Cabinet, announced the appointments at a news conference. The Trade Minister, Mr. Takeo Hiranuma was also retained. Mr. Heizo Takenaka, an economics professor at Tokyo's Keio university known for his advocacy of painful economic reforms, will become Minister in charge of economic and fiscal policy. The "Young Turk" LDP lawmaker, Mr. Nobuteru Ishihara, 44, and son of the outspoken nationalist Tokyo Governor, Mr. Shintaro Ishihara, was named Minister in charge of administrative reform.

Financial experts reacted positively to the appointment as Economics Minister of Mr. Heizo Takenaka, an Economics Professor at Tokyo's Keio University who served as an adviser to the two previous Cabinets, including that of Mr. Mori. Media and analysts have described Mr. Koizumi's victory in the LDP race over the establishment favourite, former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, as a seismic shift inside a party long seen by voters as tainted by corruption, bound by special interests and dominated by factional feuding. — Reuters

THE HINDU

27 APR 2001

# Reformist Koizumi likely to become next PM of Japan

By Harvey Stockwin

The Times of India News Service

HONG KONG: The long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) on Tuesday elected reformist Junichiro Koizumi as the party chief on the first ballot with a decisive majority.

Prior to the election, the vote had been heavily weighed in favour of 346 LDP members of the Diet and the factional bosses who control them. Only 141 votes were set aside for party members in Japan's 47 prefectures —almost as an afterthought.

But in the end it was the tail that wagged the dog as party members voiced their displeasure with politics as usual with stunning clarity. Mr Koizumi was the only one of the four candidates who had the wit to clearly voice a consistent (though often vague) reformist line. It was what the LDP members, fearing for their party's future after Japan's 11 years in the economic doldrums, wanted to hear.

A stunning 87 per cent of the prefectural vote went to Mr Koizumi. Former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, who a week ago was seen as the likely winner, won a mere 15 delegates as a result of this lopsided vote, whereas Mr Koizumi won 123 and another candidate Shizuka Kamei three.

LDP members of the Diet were quick to read the writing on the wall as they abandoned their normal factional loyalties and voted for Mr Koizumi. Mr Koizumi had three factions supporting him which would have left him well short of a majority on the first ballot.

But as events turned out he won the support of 175 members of parliament and so swept home on the first ballot with 298 of the 487 possible votes. It was not merely a

sweeping victory, it was also a notable defeat. This was the very first time that the largest LDP faction, originally expanded into a dominant party position by former Prime Ministers Kakuei Tanaka and Noboru Takeshita, and now led by Mr Hashimoto, had not secured the victory of its own aspirant when one was a candidate in a leadership struggle. Mr Hashimoto only won 155 votes.

Mr Koizumi has no time to sit back and enjoy his victory, but will have to face three tests.

First, in order to ensure parliamentary stability of the ruling coalition, he will have to somehow placate the New Komeito and New Conservative parties. Both have expressed some reservations about Mr Koizumi, and New Komeito may prefer to stay in the coalition but outside the cabinet. But Mr Koizumi has hinted he might look for a wider ruling coalition.

Secondly, assuming that the House of Representatives approves Mr Koizumi as Japan's 56th prime minister at its meeting on Thursday, he will have to quickly demonstrate his reformist credentials with his choice of cabinet.

Normally cabinet positions in Japan are awarded on the basis of factional strength and seniority. Naturally, Japanese will be looking at Mr Koizumi's choice to see if he gives a greater priority to persons with talent and reformist convictions. Should too many old conservative party hacks be chosen, the suspicion will quickly arise that Tuesday's victory was accompanied by some dubious backroom deals.

Third, and the most important, Mr Koizumi has set his own bar high. Speaking at a campaign rally, he said, "My political life will be at an end if I fail to form a cabinet that reflects the voice of the people."

THE TIMES OF INDIA

25 APR 2001



# Koizumi set to be PM

YOMIURI SHIMBUN  
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

TOKYO, April 24. - Pledging to reform his Liberal Democratic Party and the nation, Mr Junichiro Koizumi (59) was today named to replace the Prime Minister, Mr Yoshiro Mori, as the new party president.

LDP lawmakers and local officials unanimously adopted a motion to back Mr Koizumi for the Prime Minister's post. He is expected to be named Prime Minister in both chambers of the Diet on Thursday.

During a general meeting at the LDP's headquarters in Tokyo, the former health and welfare minister received 298 out of a possible 487 votes from LDP lawmakers and represen-

tatives from the party's prefectural chapters. He defeated former Prime Minister Mr Ryutaro Hashimoto, state minister in charge of administrative reforms, and Mr Taro Aso, state minister in charge of economic and fiscal policy. Mr Hashimoto received 155 votes and Mr Aso 31. Three ballots were declared invalid.

A fourth candidate, LDP Policy Research Council chairman Mr Shizuka Kamei, withdrew his candidacy just prior to the



Mr Junichiro Koizumi

vote, citing a written agreement between Mr Koizumi and himself concerning basic policy issues.

"My duty is to enable the LDP to fulfill its primary obligations, while also transforming it into a party that the public will readily trust as a dedicated reformer," Mr Koizumi said after his win.

His election came after his sweeping victory in 47 prefectural primaries in which rank-and-file LDP members of the

party voted. However, it is questionable whether he will be able to live up to his election promise of ending the long-established practices and systems of the LDP, observers said.

Yesterday night, he had to retract his earlier decision to put off - until the Diet elects a Prime Minister on Thursday - key policy talks with the LDP's coalition partners and a reshuffle of the party's top executives.

Mr Koizumi's decision reflected his desire to handpick people he favours in forming a new Cabinet. His change of heart came after his coalition partners, New Komeito and Hoshuto (New Conservative Party), strongly opposed his decision.

THE STATESMAN

APR 25 1998

JAPAN / MAJOR CABINET SHUFFLE LIKELY

# Koizumi breezes through LDP poll

By F.J. Khergamvala

TOKYO, APRIL 24. "I was able to win strong support from many party members and lawmakers by saying, change the LDP, change Japan." "I now keenly feel the weight of the responsibility I now face."

These were the select words from a brief acceptance speech after Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, 59, expectedly won the Japanese ruling Liberal Democratic Party leadership election hands down and is now to be the nation's next Prime Minister on Thursday. At the LDP headquarters this afternoon, the party gave Mr. Koizumi a big thumbs up after he had swept the nationwide preliminaries grass roots vote over a four-day period. Of the 141 votes cast, Mr. Koizumi virtually decimated the opposition by bagging 123 of them. This afternoon, at a one hour live televised, disciplined balloting event, he got another windfall. Mr. Shizuka Kamei, the third ranking candidate fell out of the first ballot in favour of Mr. Koizumi. The end result was that, of the 487 votes cast, 298 for Mr. Koizumi, 155 for Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto and 31 for Mr. Taro Aso, with three ballots invalidated. There was no run-off between the two top candidates because that occurs only if neither has secured a simple majority in the first ballot.

Japan's ruling LDP has a two-stage voting process. For about four days, prefecture (State) rank and file representatives, at three per prefecture, vote at 47 nation-wide prefectures for the preferred candidates. Ordinarily, no candidate can claim a final win on the strength of voting in the prefectures alone. The 141 seats allocated to the rank and file at the prefectures level fall well short of one third of the total of 487 who constitute the balance between the elected Diet members and the representatives of the rank and file LDP.

The focus had already shifted from the various trade offs for a run-off election, to the composition of the top party positions and the new Cabinet. The charismatic Mr. Koizumi campaigned on what he is now projecting as a victory for the "winds of change" in the LDP, which he said would be reflected in a complete overhaul of the top party positions, who in turn would recommend a restructured Cabinet to him. The onus of final selection would rest on himself. This would be a smart way of warding off any criticism that his new LDP lieutenants had taken into account the factional balance, the very structure that Mr. Koizumi has pledged to dismantle.



The newly-elected Liberal Democratic Party President, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi (second from left), is congratulated by the former Prime Minister, Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, after he defeated Mr. Hashimoto and the Economics Minister, Mr. Taro Aso (right), to win the party presidential elections at its headquarters in Tokyo on Tuesday. Mr. Koizumi's win ensures his election as next Prime Minister, succeeding Mr. Yoshiro Mori (left). — AP

"Just watch, has been Mr. Koizumi's way of responding to Doubting Thomases sceptical of his ability to overturn a structure that has been rocked before. The dailies mentioned the likelihood of a drastic cabinet reshuffle that would include more women from outside the political structure too. Whether that implies bringing in Ms. Makiko Tanaka or granting her a top party position to be the front "hatchet-man" to damage the LDP's factional structure remains to be seen.

The new leader's first challenge is to hold his coalition together until the Upper House polls in July. Victory has a thousand fathers, so that should be easy by weight of the popular support he showed evidence of in the 47 prefectural representative elections. Later, as with most governments, he has to grapple with being all things to all people and appear to be dismantling a faction based structure that he has strongly opposed. Notably, no deadline is attached to this purpose. Yet, if the LDP is not to return to its old ways, this is what Mr. Koizumi's mass base expects.

The biggest nuisance to Mr. Koizumi are the

largest faction of Mr. Hashimoto and the party elders who run it from the wings like Mr. Hiro-mu Nonaka. To them and the unpopular coalition ally, the Soka Gakkai backed New Komeito, their power lies in their faction numbers. A faction-less party means rapidly dwindling power and correspondingly, depleted coffers for the party's largest faction. The new leader has also to mobilise greater support for going for structural party and nationwide economic reforms to bear down a lobby demanding fiscal reconsolidation, but at the same time get the Kamei group behind him and do some public spending.

The details on most critical areas like encouraging the winding up of totally insolvent companies can be filled in later but there is just one thing Mr. Koizumi cannot buy. He cannot be forced by Mr. Kamei to cut the consumption tax by two per cent. Mr. Koizumi will have to be at the pinnacle of power if he has to accomplish one of his earliest stated pledges — that of privatising postal services. Once he reaches that stage, by LDP standards, he would be starting downhill.

THE HINDU

25 APR 2001

# Koizumi emerges front-runner

By F.J. Khergamvala

TOKYO, APRIL 23. The balloting papers have not even been distributed as yet to Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party parliamentary members, but from all unofficially "declared" reports from the voting by the party's state-wide workers, it appears the LDP prefers a promised revolution to change than an evolution.

A full day before votes are cast by those entitled to, it is evident that Mr. Junichiro Koizumi (59), will be the mantle bearer of that change. The other two contenders have expressed an inclination to discuss avoiding even the first ballot in the Diet. The former Prime Minister, Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto (63), may even concede before the vote takes place among the LDP's Members of Parliament, even if some of the Hashimoto faction have declared to wish to fight to the end and assert factional strength.

Because of its clear majority in the Lower House, the LDP's leader automatically gets elected as the nation's Prime Minister. Mr. Koizumi will become Japan's 11th Prime Minister since 1989. A formal vote to that position will be taken immediately or soon after Tuesday.

By 10 P.M., with just three pre-

ferences to be counted among 141. Mr. Koizumi had a formidable 123 popular ballots, Mr. Hashimoto 15 and Mr. Kamei just three.

This grassroots based landslide is a huge guarantee for the LDP that it has almost destroyed the chances of the opposition from



Junichiro Koizumi

making dents in the LDP's strength in the polls to the Upper House in late July. The LDP might bolster its position to the point it does not need a coalition unless the LDP's Diet members are so suicidal to the point of defying public opinion and voting down the nation's rank and file LDP expression.

Mr. Koizumi has not always been a keen backer on a coalition with the religious sect Sokka-Gakkai backed New Komeito and another New Conservative party. Until the new Upper House elections in late July, to get legislation through that chamber he will need the practical necessities of the coalition and the factions.

THE HINDU

24 APR 2001

# Japanese voters face tough choice on Tuesday

By F.J. Khergamwala

**TOKYO, APRIL 21.** Voters of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party are offered two sets of broad choices on Tuesday. Either accept a dirty election in public or a closed selection process in so-called smoke-filled backrooms.

The other option is, choose between a Prime Minister, once humiliated and a revolutionary seeking to overturn the LDP's faction based foundation. The winner will also become Prime Minister because of the LDP's strength in the Lower House.

It is now between Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, 63, the leader of the largest faction that carries his name and Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, 59, who has just left the second largest Mori faction to make the point that he opposes the party's present power-sharing system.

Standing beside him is the country's most popular politician, Mr. Makiko Tanaka, who has long been factionless and is voted the first choice among the people as their clear choice. There are two other candidates, one notional, the other who

enters the market only if neither Mr. Hashimoto nor Mr. Koizumi fail to make it by a simple majority in the first round of voting.

Mr. Taro Aso, 60, belonging to the Kono faction, is the Economic and Fiscal Reform Minister but an honest non-candidate. Not since 1982 has the LDP fielded so many in one leadership rescue attempt.

Finally, there is Mr. Shizuka Kamei, 64, an ex-cop. As the policy affairs chief of the LDP, he was Mr. Mori's strongest backer with 55 seats in the control of the Eto-Kamei faction. It is his entry into the fray that will make the contest quite dirty and may even decide the LDP's fate in the upcoming summer elections to half the Upper House.

Tuesday's battle lines are: the Hashimoto faction 102 (factional strengths in Diet only, do not include local, regional cadre), Mori (59), Eto-Kamei (55), Horiuchi (43, allied to Mr. Hashimoto), plus a few smaller factions, groups. A major unknown is the prefectural chapters' representatives with 141, largely believed to favour Mr. Koizumi.

The major and clever reason for Mr.

through numbers but some are worth mentioning. Mr. Kamei alone favours a consumption tax roll back.

He and Mr. Aso favour fiscal reform, Mr. Koizumi backs it but Mr. Hashimoto was forced by factions to a more neutral position as an apology that they could sell to their constituencies and housewives, if he wanted the support of the whole faction. He complied and has begged for 200 days to plan "something".

Finally, where they really stand out, other than the faction issue, is on Mr. Koizumi's lone and long held position in support of privatising postal operations and savings.

This would not only deprive the power factions of a reliable fund mechanism for the bigger factions, especially the Hashimoto faction but a source of influence for 250,000 retired postal managers too at local levels. Mr. Koizumi's central platform was, "without structural reform there is no economic recovery." His clever tactic to paint himself into a corner of the contest becoming a him versus they affair.

At his most aggressive in propagating postal reform, the maverick politician attacked political mismanagement of the

public's safest vault, the approximately \$2.5 trillion, where the annual return is just 0.04 per cent. This has encouraged public waste projects like dams or schools with one student and eight teachers. Shifting opinion polls show Mr. Hashimoto with just below 20 per cent, Mr. Koizumi drawing over 50 per cent, with the other two in single digits.

The outcome of the first ballot is not expected to be that clear cut. That is where the LDP faces a great dilemma. In a bludgeoning, dirty style that has become typical of him, the Hashimoto faction's effective boss, Mr. Hiromu Nonaka, said if Mr. Hashimoto wins, he would like to see Mr. Kamei retain his post as party policy chief.

If this scenario unfolds, at it may well, Mr. Hashimoto could get what he wants, as could Mr. Kamei, but only till July's Upper House poll, which is what this election is all about. The public would be outraged for the LDP bosses not getting the wider message and might send a reminder like it did in June last year, when in Tokyo, six incumbent and former P.M.s from the capital's constituencies failed to be re-elected.

# Japan grants visa to Lee



Former President of Taiwan Mr Lee Teng Hui explains his need to visit Japan for medical treatment. — API/PTI

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

TOKYO, April 20. — Japan today issued an entry visa to the former President of Taiwan, Mr Lee Teng-Hui. This is expected to incur China's wrath.

China has accused Mr Teng-Hui of making overseas trips to campaign against its goal of reunification with Taiwan.

After sitting over the matter for about a fortnight due to Beijing's threats to Tokyo of severe consequences on bilateral relations, Japan allowed the veteran Taiwanese leader to visit the country on humanitarian grounds.

The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Yoshiro Mori, took the decision despite foreign minister Mr Yohei Kono's opposition.

Kyodo news agency quoted sources as saying that the decision follows an agreement between Japan and Taiwan on conditions of Mr Teng-Hui's visit.

The former Taiwanese President has been asked not to conduct any political activity in the country. The trip would be limited to Japan's western city of Kurashiki where he would undergo heart check-up.

China said Mr Teng-Hui's visit was not by an ordinary citizen, asking Japan to "take a clear and definite attitude to prevent him from going to Japan."

2 APR 2001

# Mori, Govt. split on visa for Lee

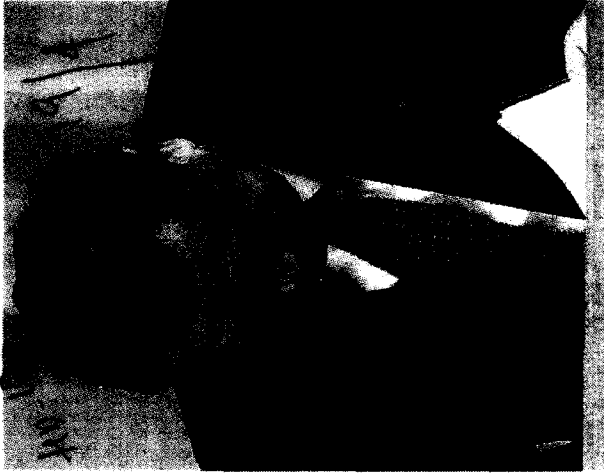
By F.J. Khergamvala

**TOKYO, APRIL 18.** A few days before he leaves office, the Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori, has adopted what is the most popular and proper position of his term but his Government is largely bent on disregarding a lame-duck leader's decision and is leaning towards its customary appeasement of China.

Since a fortnight there have been conflicting reports about what Japan is up to, in deciding the visa application of the former Taiwan President, Mr. Lee Teng-hui. It has now emerged that Mr. Mori is strongly in favour of a visa, with certain movement and contact restrictions, but his Foreign Ministry continues to lay down reasons why it should give in to China. China has been urging Japan since last year that the "splittist" should not be given a visa. The *Yomiuri Shimbun* today reported this split in the Mori-led Government and gave some clarity to the confusion that reigns over the controversy.

For weeks, Mr. Lee Teng-hui, former President of Taiwan, has sought a visa to travel to a hospital in southern Japan to have his Japanese cardiac consultant have a look at his heart. Mr. Lee who has left office a year and a month ago had undergone a procedure in Taiwan after the 1996 run in with China, at which the Japanese consultant was present. But now, for follow-up, the cardiologist himself has stated that he cannot carry some hospital equipment required for tests to Taipei and, therefore, Mr. Lee must visit the hospital in Japan.

Over the past couple of days top Taiwanese figures, in Government and outside have lashed out at Japan. Mr. Lee himself hit out at the meek attitude even though this was a humanitarian measure and pressed Mr. Mori to be firm on the issue. Mr. Chen Shui-bian, President, too said Japan was always too concerned about how Beijing would react. Mr. Chen's



**BOWING OUT: The outgoing Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori, bows to conclude his last press conference at the Prime Minister's official residence in Tokyo on Wednesday.** — AP

deputy, Ms. Annette Liu, echoing a view widely held in Asia, said, "now we understand why Japan is not held in respect." Interestingly, this comes out in very sharp contrast with the U.S. attitude. Despite the air incident flap, Mr. Lee is being allowed a visit to the U.S. in early May to see his daughter who studies at Cornell.

Elements in Japan in favour of the no-visa position say that three recent Japanese actions have already aroused anger from official Beijing. On Monday Japan is going to implement a measure its ruling Liberal Democratic Party

considers necessary. It will impose temporary import curbs on three farm products imported from China at prices better than local produce. China had strongly protested against the LDP Government for revising textbooks carrying purportedly inaccurate versions of Japanese history in China and the Koreas.

Japan has ignored the fact that even Taiwan has protested this version. Besides, even without these measures, a year ago, the passport of Chinese dissenter, Wang Dang, mysteriously disappeared after it landed at a Japanese mission with an application to travel to Japan.

Mr. Mori's position is that Mr. Lee should be given a visa on the basis that the U.S. applies. His movement should be restricted to the town where the Japanese hospital is located. He should not be allowed to meet people with political affiliations that might create suspicions about Mr. Lee's presence and his time stay in Japan ought to be limited.

At his farewell press conference on Wednesday, Mr. Mori reiterated that though the international environment was important, Japan should give priority to humanitarian considerations. NHK TV later reported that the Foreign Ministry would approach Beijing with the limitations on Mr. Lee that Mr. Mori had suggested and would give a decision "as soon as possible." At the end of the day, it would be a great shame if Mr. Lee's cardiologist goes to the U.S. to use some equipment to do a follow-up on Mr. Lee while the latter is there in early May.

Public opinion on the subject is strongly in support of a visa on humanitarian grounds, in a country that makes its official aid conditional on promoting democracy. Taiwan is an exception, as is India. Taiwan is not a country but it issues visas recognised by Japan. The campaigning Japanese candidates have taken some positions, but their real colours will show up once they are called upon to make a decision.

HD-16  
15/4

# Four in the fray

**F**OR MORE than a month, no one came out openly to say he was willing to lead the Japanese ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) after the party and the public forced Mr. Yoshiro Mori to step down. On Thursday, as entries closed, the party's election officials declared four candidates had thrown their hats in the ring.

The party's objective? To cut the deficit? To undertake structural reform? To resolve the banks' non-performing loans problem? Political reform in a country where at least 60 per cent of the people now live in urban areas, but the system is loaded in favour of the LDP's constituency of rural voters? Actually, none of the above.

The LDP wants to and must try and regain some strength in the Upper House. Elections to half of the Upper House are to take place towards the end of July.

After seeing Mr. Mori's approval ratings sink to and stay in single digits, it was firmly determined that his continued presence jeopardised any one with a political career in the LDP.

The single major reason why no one wanted to jump into the fray was that no one wanted to be thrown to the wolves as a sacrifice or a stop-gap.

The four people aspiring to the post of president of the LDP, for which elections should ordinarily have been held in September, are former Prime Minister, Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, 63, the former Health and Welfare Minister, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, 59, the party's policy head, Mr. Shizuka Kamei, 64, and the present Minister for Economy and Fiscal Policy, Mr. Taro Aso, 60.

Because of the system of preliminary elections, there is a possibility of this list shrinking on the day of the vote. Officially, the winner will have to obtain a fresh party mandate in September.

The election will take place on April 24. Should no candidate obtain victory by a simple majority, the top two vote-getters will contest a run-off election immediately.

Inevitably, because of the LDP's majority with the largest legislative mandate, whoever is elected the LDP head gets

elected the Prime Minister later in the same week.

The party's septuagenarian bosses would have again preferred to wield authority by selecting, not electing, a leader in some hotel room, as they did Mr. Mori. As the conservative *Yomiuri Shimbun* editorialised, this gave the "impression that the election process was not transparent. This led to public distrust in the Mori administration".

The younger politicians demanded an election be held in the full glare of a public election thus challenging the elders. Mostly accumulated in the party's largest Hashimoto

On the face of it, the strongest in numbers is Mr. Hashimoto. But, in terms of policy clarity and intra-faction

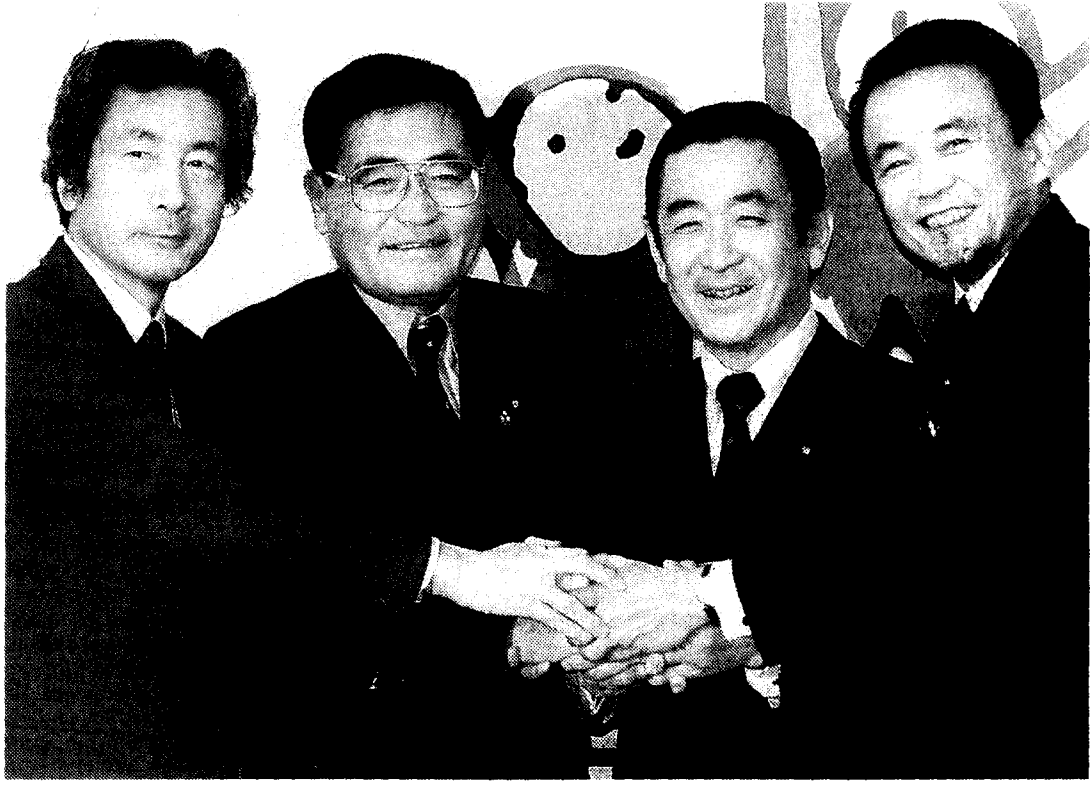
*In Japan, the elders in the ruling party, the LDP would have preferred selecting a new leader but the younger lot have forced an election.*  
F. J. Khergamvala reports.

Again, it would appear this election brings to the fore competing economic policies.

Mr. Koizumi has tactically dropped his plan to privatise post offices and their operations as it might eventually affect the party's coffers and his own strength, if he wins.

But, he has said he favours a measure of consolidation, will not rely on Government bonds, push structural reform, not band-aid measures and in a major electoral platform, has gone on a high-profile assault against party factionalism.

Poll after poll shows non-affiliated politicians like Ms.



**THE CONTENDERS:** (From left) Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Mr. Shizuka Kamei, Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto and Mr. Taro Aso announce their candidature for the post of LDP chief.

faction, a descendant of the erstwhile Tanaka faction, the elders' leverage lies in collecting money and dispensing it, the brute force of "goondalism" exercised through gangster *yakuza*, threats against media outlets and, horse-trading cabinet and party posts.

They compromised by giving up some faction-based clout against larger prefectural participation. This broader state party level participation improves Mr. Koizumi's prospects well beyond his (same as Mr. Mori's) faction strength.

leadership, he is weaker than the two other faction leaders in the scramble, Mr. Koizumi and Mr. Kamei. (Mr. Aso does not lead his own faction).

Mr. Hashimoto's candidature was uncertain until the eleventh hour because the younger in his faction refused to back him until he apologised for the past and retracted from his known fiscal consolidation policies at a special meeting. Two years ago, in the elections to half the Upper House Mr. Hashimoto had led the LDP to a debacle and had to resign the same night.

Makiko Tanaka way ahead of faction leaders.

But, it will take much to change a system that the LDP has occasionally dispensed with then again sought sanctuary in.

Mr. Kamei believes in economic recovery with a populist appeal of cutting the consumption tax from five to three per cent.

But, essentially, observers believe he is in the race to make his faction count and, as potential king-maker, sell his 55 faction numbers to the highest bidder in a run-off.



# Japan hopefuls focus on economy

Tokyo, April 12

YF-11 138/4

## Challengers in textbook race

CONTENDERS TO replace Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori officially kicked off their campaigns today and began thrashing about strategies to revive the feeble economy that is likely to become the dominant theme in the race.

Four ruling Liberal Democratic Party politicians, former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, reformist Junichiro Koizumi, LDP policy chief Shizuka Kamei and Economics Minister Taro Aso, will vie to become party president.

"I would like to be given a chance to tackle the challenges facing Japan," Hashimoto told a news conference, saying his goal was to legislate measures within 200 days to help the economy

MINDFUL OF a possible backlash from conservative voters, all contenders to replace Yoshiro Mori on Thursday threw their support behind a new history textbook written by nationalist scholars. Japan's Education Ministry approved the draft of the textbook this month after some amendments, setting off fierce protests from North and South Korea as well as from China. "Each country has its own history, and it is natural that there should be various views of such history," former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto told a news conference. "But we must not hurt each other maliciously."

Reuters, Tokyo

recover and banks to dispose of their massive sour loans.

Self-styled reformer Junichiro Koizumi and the LDP's outspoken policy chief, Shizuka Kamei, have already announced their intentions to run in the race for the LDP's presidency. Aso, back-

ed by younger lawmakers, also tossed his hat in.

The LDP presidency virtually guarantees the job of Prime Minister given the majority held by the LDP-led coalition in Parliament's powerful Lower House.

Hashimoto is the favourite at

this stage due to support from his faction, which is the largest in the LDP. But the usually predetermined race could get close if, as many expect, the campaign goes to a run-off vote and pitches Hashimoto against Koizumi, who is seen as having wider public support and has already lived up to his reputation as an eccentric by ditching his LDP faction.

Regardless of who runs, Upper House elections in July are casting a shadow over the race. If the LDP fares as badly as many expect, the outcome could force the winner to resign only three months into the job.

Analysts expect the fight to revolve largely around conflicting economic policies.

Reuters

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

13 APR 2001

# Leadership vacuum weakens Japan position

By F.J. Khergamvala

TOKYO, APRIL 2. With a leadership in transition, the Mori government is no longer competent to let Japan play the role of a natural Group of Eight leader to mobilise industrialised nations against the Bush administration's sudden reversal of the Kyoto Protocol on curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

Europe is seen as a bit too "green" by some developing countries, making Japan an ideal mediator to find a way between a U.S. government, completely moved only by business interests, and the rest. Mr. Yoshiro Mori's successor will be in the saddle early by April 23. Therefore, except for some lip service like writing to the U.S. President or sending Diet members to the U.S., Japan can follow the lead of the European Union, which has not exactly distinguished itself at the last COP held in November in the Netherlands. This hardly makes for a convincing preparation to at the next meeting in Bonn in July, which the U.S. has agreed to attend to explore alternative solutions that must include certain developing nations.

As host nation in Kyoto in December 1997, Japan made a successful effort at forging non-enforceable targets to curb carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions. Known as the Kyoto Protocol, the developed nations, grouped under Annexure One parties of the Berlin Mandate, requires the signatories to cut greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 5.2 per cent from 1990 emission levels. The U.S. agreed to cut emissions

by seven per cent from base levels of 1990, within the target years 2008 to 2012. The commitments also apply to Japan (six per cent) and the EU (eight per cent) as well as certain former east bloc nations like Russia which are also parties to the protocol.

There was little doubt that there is significant opposition in Congress to the U.S. commitments from the day the Kyoto meetings convened. This opposition was later codified in a U.S. Senate resolution in June last year making the ratification of any U.S. commitments in an international agreement conditional upon some commitments by the developing nations.

The U.S. had never officially identified the developing nations, but its frequent references to "meaningful participation by key developing countries" which are believed to include China, India and Indonesia on one hand to Argentina, Brazil on the other, left little room for doubt on which markets they are after. At Kyoto there were 150 nations, but the developing were exempt from the Berlin Mandate.

For the most part, Japan has shown poor leadership. After Kyoto, it joined the U.S. in applying pressure on developing nations, largely because its own industry found a niche in exploiting several market-based mechanisms introduced by the U.S. as a way to meet its emission targets. Since Kyoto, which was known as COP 3 or Third Conference of the Parties to the U.N. Convention on Climate Change, there have been three

such meetings. Gradually it is the U.S., through its cleverly conceived emission-bartering systems including carbon dioxide absorbed by 'sinks' or forests and farmlands, that has taken the leadership.

At future meetings, as at Kyoto, "voluntary" participation by developing countries will be sought by the U.S. The Clinton administration had already driven a wedge among the developing nations, starting with Argentina. After much theoretical objections, India too joined China in exploring the benefits of market-based and flexibility mechanisms, like joint implementation and clean development mechanism. To date, only Romania has ratified Kyoto.

It is very easy to label the U.S. government a rogue nation on certain international issues where its position is totally at odds with the rest of the world, such as sanctions on Cuba, abortion value based assistance, refusal to pay full U.N. dues, etc. But, a sincere attempt at emission cuts has also to include bringing the biggest defaulter into line.

India could do some geopolitical calculations about the utility of pushing open the east Asian door by dividing Japan from the U.S. It was to promote market-related mechanisms that the U.S. pushed the idea of an APEC "bubble" and to include Russia in the forum. Both industrialised competitors want to trade off Russia's expected unused emissions quota in exchange for assistance from the two developed nations.

THE HINDU

3 APR 2001

# Japanese Prime Minister to quit, successor soon



Japan Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori at the Tokyo International Airport.

AFP PHOTO

Tokyo, April 6

PRIME MINISTER Yoshiro Mori told his Cabinet on Friday that he would step down, signalling the end of one of Japan's most unpopular governments since the end of World War II.

Mori, under fire for months over verbal gaffes and missteps, had been long expected to quit. The Ruling Liberal Democratic Party is planning to hold a leadership election later this month to choose a successor.

But Friday's announcement did not solve Japan's mounting problems. A long-awaited recovery from the lengthy economic downturn has stalled, and banks are still crippled by a decade-long debt crisis.

Mori hinted at the troubles Japan faces in his statement, his first public announcement of an intention to step down. "I made up my mind to resign because I think it is necessary to tackle mounting issues both at home and abroad under a new admin-

istration," chief Cabinet secretary Yasuo Fukuda quoted Mori as telling the Cabinet.

The apparent top-runner to replace Mori is former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, who served from 1996 to 1998. Hashimoto heads the LDP's largest faction and reportedly has the support of two other factions.

Hashimoto said on Friday that he was flattered by the attention, but stopped short of declaring his candidacy. "As I've said before, it's an honour for a politician," Hashimoto told reporters.

There is general agreement in Japan that Mori leaves the country hungry for leadership, and his missteps have severely damaged the LDP, which has ruled nearly uninterrupted since 1955.

"Japan needs economic reforms no matter who the Prime Minister is," said Masumi Ishikawa, a political expert at Obirin University in Tokyo. "The year 2001 will be the year that made it clear that the LDP is

finally falling apart."

The Cabinet on Friday announced an emergency economic package that set a two-year deadline for banks to dispose of their riskiest bad loans. The debt load by one estimate is 12.7 trillion yen (\$102 billion).

Mori's announcement was likely to be met with relief among LDP rank-and-file, who had widely feared that public distaste for the premier would hurt the party in Upper House elections scheduled for July.

The biggest of the LDP's two coalition partners, the Komeito, was also relieved.

"I think it's too bad, but it had to be done," Komeito leader Takenori Kanzaki told reporters. "The ruling parties have to be united to avoid a political vacuum for even one day."

Mori took office in April 2000 after Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi suffered a fatal stroke. Immediately, his selection in a closed-door meeting of LDP bigwigs came under heavy criticism

and he was widely assailed as a policy lightweight.

He has also been attacked for comments recalling Japan's wartime emperor-worship and militarism, and for his decision to continue a round of golf after being told of the February 9 collision of a US submarine and a fishing vessel that killed nine Japanese.

His public support ratings have plunged below 10 per cent, making him the second-most unpopular Prime Minister in Japan since World War II, after Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita, who resigned in 1989.

The LDP began preparations this week to hold elections on April 24 for a new party president. The LDP president is almost guaranteed to become Prime Minister because of the party's domination of Parliament. The date still needs to be approved by other party officials and a final decision was scheduled for next Tuesday.

AP

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

7 APR 2001

## Mori decides to quit

**TOKYO, APRIL 6.** A feisty former premier and a charismatic innovator prepared to battle for the helm of economically troubled Japan after the Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori, made a long-awaited announcement on Friday that he will step down.

Mr. Mori has been under pressure for months to quit over diplomatic blunders and ineffectual leadership widely perceived as having helped push the nation back to the brink of recession.

While he gave a strong hint last month that he would resign, Friday's official statement opened the way for top contenders within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to make public pitches to be considered for the job.

"I think it is necessary to tackle mounting issues...under a new administration," Mr. Mori said in a Friday morning meeting with his Cabinet. Hours afterward, Japanese media reported that an LDP leadership election set for this month was turning into a face-off between the former Prime Minister, Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, and reform-minded party veteran, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi.

The underdog Mr. Koizumi jumped into the running first. "It would be cowardly not to run out of a fear of losing. I have to burn my bridges and run." — AP



The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori (right), presides over an emergency economic package meeting at his official residence in Tokyo on Friday. At left is the Finance Minister, Mr. Kijishi.

## Arrest warrant handed over in Belgrade

**BELGRADE, APRIL 6.** An official of the International War Crimes Tribunal handed over the indictment and arrest warrant for the former President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, to the Yugoslav Justice Minister, Mr. Momcilo Grubac today, radio B-92 reported.

The official, Mr. Hans Holthius, said Mr. Grubac pledged to pass on the documents to Mr. Milosevic, the radio reported.

Mr. Holthius added that Mr. Grubac "provided useful information" on the draft law on Yugoslavia's cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, which also regulates the contentious issue of extradition.

Mr. Milosevic has been under a Hague indictment since May 1999, over his responsibility in crimes against humanity in Kosovo allegedly committed by Yugoslav and Serbian security forces.

He was arrested early Sunday in connection with financial abuse during his term in power. The new authorities in Belgrade are refusing to hand Mr. Milosevic and other war crimes suspects over to The Hague, saying that legal changes are neces-

# Revised Japanese textbook reopens war wounds

MASAYOSHI KANABAYASHI

JAPAN'S invasion of East Asia as recounted in the nation's textbooks has emerged as a major diplomatic issue between Tokyo and its neighbors, China and South Korea all over again.

And again, the Japanese foreign ministry is busy trying to ease concerns in Beijing and Seoul.

What makes this round of revisionism different is the rising number of Japanese citizens who object to foreign criticism of their nation's version of history, claiming that it is unwarranted foreign intervention in Japan's domestic affairs.

Beijing and Seoul have been alarmed by media reports that an advisory panel to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is expected to approve a controversial junior high school textbook.

The ministry, which refused to comment on the current debate, must review and approve any texts publishers want to sell to schools.

The book was written by members of a group that calls itself the Committee to Create New History Textbooks. It was formed in 1997 by Japanese scholars who wanted to eliminate references in junior high school texts to wartime "comfort women," Asian women forced into prostitution by the Japanese military during the war years.

Japanese media reports say the changes suggested by the advisory panel are purportedly designed to avoid offending neighboring Asian countries that had suffered from Japanese colonial rule or wartime occupation. These reports say the original version of the textbook justified some Japanese actions that resulted in engulfing the region in war.

According to the Mainichi Shinbun, the textbook's original version played down the systematic brutality often associated with the Rape of Nanjing, saying, "Even if there were some killings, it was because this was during wartime. It wasn't a kind of holocaust."

But the revised version, according to the paper, reads: "The Tokyo (war-crimes) trial recognised that Japan's armed forces killed a lot of Chinese people. But given some questions about (historical) documentation, even today, a debate over the extensiveness of the killing continues." The Tokyo war-crimes trials took place from 1946 through 1948, after Japan's defeat in the war and under the authority of the allied countries, headed by the U.S.

The New History Textbooks Committee also put a spin on Japan's annexation of Korea, according to the Mainichi Shinbun.

The original version, the Mainichi reports, claimed that "based on the principle of international relations then, the annexation was carried out legitimately."

Revised, the section reads: "Japan carried out the annexation by containing opposition within Korea with the backing of military force."

Wang Yi, a Chinese foreign ministry official, earlier this month warned Yoshio Nomoto, interim Japanese ambassador to Beijing, that Tokyo shouldn't approve the textbook, saying: "A textbook that denies invasion and beautifies history should be held back."

South Korea's Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister, Lee Jung Binn, expressed Seoul's concern to the Japanese ambassador to South Korea last month. And the South Korean national parliament passed a resolution on the same day calling on Japan

not to distort the history between the two nations. Last week, former Korean Prime Minister Kim Jong Pil visited Japan and asked Japanese government leaders to take appropriate action on this issue.

Japanese conservatives, however, are standing firm. On March 4, a group of about 80 conservative lawmakers from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party blasted neighboring countries' criticism of the textbook as an intervention in Japan's internal affairs.

Shoichi Nakagawa, a former agriculture minister who heads a group of lawmakers called the Committee of Young Parliamentarians to Consider Japan's Future and History Education, met Prime Minister Yosturo Mori and urged him to reject the foreign criticism and take a "resolute stance against it."

(The Wall Street Journal)

INDIAN EXPRESS

MAR 2001

## Mori survives censure vote

TOKYO, MARCH 14. The embattled Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori, today survived a motion of censure in Parliament, but his ruling party openly kept up the debate on elections to choose his successor.

The ruling coalition, led by Mr. Mori's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), voted down the motion in the parliamentary upper House.

The censure vote was tabled yesterday by the four main Opposition parties and a group of independent lawmakers, citing the Premier's mismanagement of a submarine tragedy off Hawaii in February that left nine Japanese dead. The censure move, which only has moral weight and is not legally binding, also cited the arrest of an LDP heavyweight earlier in the month, along with the Government's economic policy drift, which was blamed for adding to Japan's woes.

The Tokyo stock exchange's Nikkei index plunged to the lowest close since early 1985 yesterday. The indicator recovered slightly today, but brokers warned the chances of another dip were high. — AFP

THE HINDU

15 MAR 2001

# Mori denies reports of resignation <sup>110-16</sup>

By F. J. Khergamvala <sup>183</sup>

quarter October to December 2000.

**TOKYO, MARCH 12.** The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori, hinted on Saturday that he would leave the same way he came in on April 5 last year, by informing a small conclave, including himself, but he would quit only after obdurately staying in office for a year.

On Monday, Mr. Mori chose a nation-wide newspaper holiday to reverse course. He denied using words to signal any intention to resign. He then laid the blame on reporters for writing pre-conceived notions.

Mr. Mori arrived early on Monday for the Diet's Upper House Budget Committee session. On national TV, he denied saying that he had intended to propose bringing closer the election, or selection, of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's top officials. "I do not think I said such a thing at all. Neither myself, nor the five top LDP executives in the meeting understand it as a resignation announcement."

Almost every daily on Sunday used the term "Mori signals intention to leave", without saying that he will definitely resign in April. They had uniformly admitted using as their basis the Mori remark that he intended to propose on Tuesday, at a ruling LDP convention, that the party leadership election be brought up from September.

Mr. Mori will make a quick two-day trip to meet the U.S. President, Mr. George W. Bush, on March 19, and a longer session with Russia's Mr. Vladimir Putin in Irkutsk. These are adequate reasons to avoid using the term "resignation", easily substituted in the media by "lame-duck." The awaiting of the automatic passage of the budget bills through the Upper House in April are the ostensible, face-saving reasons to postpone the "non-resignation resignation."

"There is no right way, or a wrong way, but a Japanese way," commented Mr. Shigeki Hijino, the head of Britannica Japan. An Opposition member, however, berated and tried to provoke Mr. Mori by saying, "If you say you will quit immediately, there will be no political confusion."

Confusion indeed. The moment Mr. Mori altered the purported intent of seeking to bring closer the party election, yen sales accelerated despite a Cabinet office preliminary report that the economy grew a real 0.8 per cent in the

Politicians put their own spin on Mr. Mori's code. "It is wrong to report that the Prime Minister announced his intention to resign", said Mr. Mori's strongest supporter and a top LDP official, Mr. Shizuko Kamei, on NHK TV on Sunday. Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, the Chief Cabinet Secretary, echoed Mr. Kamei's sentiment. The media quoted Mr. Takenori Kanzaki, the leader of the New Komeito, as stating, "I consider his (Mr. Mori) words a de facto resignation announcement." New Komeito is the LDP's main coalition partner.

A few analysts felt that Mr. Mori overcame his reluctance to address the issue at all, after LDP



young Turks threatened to confront him publicly at Tuesday's noisy party session itself. These analysts do not rule out Mr. Mori ascending the moral high ground at the convention by seeking a new transparent and trustworthy LDP.

When he came in after Mr. Keizo Obuchi was affected by a stroke in early April last year, Mr. Mori enjoyed an approval rating of 41 per cent. As of the end of last month, Kyodo measured his approval rating at 7 per cent. But, Japan, where the definition of "consensus" requires a separate consensus of its own, differs from Australia, where Mr. John Howard is said to be in deep trouble because his favourable ratings are down to 30 per cent.

Mr. Noboru Takeshita was forced to quit as Prime Minister after a Kyodo poll gave him just four per cent in April 1989. The controlling impulse of most LDP factions is to get rid of Mr. Mori before the July 29 election to half the seats in the upper House.

THE HINDU

13 MAR 2001

# Japan joins save-Buddha mission

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, March 7. — A Japanese parliamentarians' delegation will reach Pakistan tomorrow to join international efforts to persuade Taliban not to destroy the two giant Bamiyan Buddha statues.

Diplomats today said the Liberal Democratic Party's Mr Akihiko Kumashiro will lead a 3-man delegation and seek a meeting with the Taliban supreme leader, Mulla Mohammed Omar, in Kandahar.

Japan, which has a 80 per cent Buddhist population, is worried at Mulla Omar's decree to destroy pre-Islamic statues in Afghanistan.

Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Mulla AS Zaef, said yesterday that 25 per cent of the two giant Buddha statues had been destroyed. But the demolition has been halted because of Id-uz-Zoha and is likely to be resumed on Thursday.

The Japanese ambassador to Pakistan, Mr Sadako Numata, has met the Taliban envoy to Pakistan and given several proposals to save the statues. He has reportedly proposed that the statues pieces be given to Japan so they could be rebuilt.

He has warned Mulla Zaef of suspending humanitarian aid

to Afghanistan if Taliban didn't stop the destruction.

**Colombo proposal:** Sri Lanka today offered to finance a possible international operation to save the priceless Buddha statues, says a report from Colombo. The Lankan President today wrote to the UN Secretary-General, offering to join any collective drive to save the statues.

Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga's secretary said India had offered to provide shelter to the statues and Colombo fully supported New Delhi's position.

**'Little hope':** Unesco special envoy, Mr Pierre Lafrance,

however, believes there's "little hope" of persuading Taliban to preserve the country's ancient treasure. He told the BBC that Taliban had shown little interest in reversing their order to destroy priceless statues.

But he cited "very reliable" sources as having said that the Bamiyan statues had not been damaged to the extent the militia had publicly claimed.

**China treads softly:** China today half-heartedly joined the growing international condemnation of the Taliban's wanton destruction Buddha's statues. "We've taken note of the relevant reports," a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Mr Zhu Bangzao said in Beijing.

THE STATESMAN

10 MAR 2001





The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori, bows deeply after the lower house of Parliament voted 274-192 to defeat a no-confidence motion submitted earlier in the day by four Opposition parties in Tokyo on Monday. — AP

## Mori survives no-trust move

*Japan  
H10-16*

**TOKYO, MARCH 5.** The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori, survived his second no-confidence vote in Parliament on Monday, but a string of scandals and the stumbling economy were expected to force the hugely unpopular Premier to resign soon.

The lower House of Parliament voted 274-192 to defeat the no-confidence motion submitted earlier in the day by four Opposition parties. Mr. Mori, whose Liberal Democrats hold a majority in the chamber, had defeated a similar measure in November.

The vote gave Mr. Mori's enfeebled Government a respite, but it was expected to be brief. Speculation was rife that he could step down this week as the LDP readies for its annual party convention on March 13 and searches for a successor.

Mr. Mori showed no signs of backing down soon, saying he considered the vote a victory. "Doesn't that mean that the Cabinet is trusted?" he asked reporters. "Doesn't that mean that I must continue working responsibly?"

The sharply worded debate on the motion in Parliament, however, was further humiliation for a Prime Minister whose support ratings have fallen to under 10 per cent. "A person like you could be described with the phrase, 'He doesn't know what shame is,'" said Mr. Yukio Hatoyama, the leader of the largest Opposition party, the Democrats.

The LDP-led three-party coalition, in turn, criticised the Opposition for paralyzing the Government with political jockeying and distracting officials from pressing national issues, such as the economy.

The political quagmire comes at a tough time for Japan. Stock prices have fallen to a 15-year low, unemployment is at a record

high, and officials are worried about a string of trends that show recovery from a decade-long slowdown may have stalled.

The LDP is worried that Mr. Mori's unpopularity could severely damage it in the upper House elections coming up in July, and is eager to find a more popular replacement.

An especially poor showing by the LDP in July could strengthen an expected campaign by the opposition to push for snap elections in the more-powerful lower house.

The dearth of support for Mr. Mori in his own camp was plain on Monday. Mr. Takenori Kanazaki, leader of the New Komeito Party, a key LDP coalition partner, said a defeat of the motion did not mean support for Mr. Mori. "The motion is something submitted as a tactic to delay deliberations on the budget, so my party will vote against it," Mr. Kanazaki was quoted as saying by Kyodo News agency before the vote. Rejection of the motion, however, "is different from problems with Prime Minister Mori himself, and does not mean that the Premier wins a vote of confidence," Kyodo quoted him as saying.

Dissent came from inside the LDP as well. The vote was boycotted by the former LDP Secretary General, Mr. Koichi Kato, and six members of his faction, one of two groups that staged a failed revolt against Mr. Mori in November.

In a joint statement on Monday explaining the submission of the no-confidence motion, Opposition parties blamed Mr. Mori for the country's troubles, criticised him for a series of scandals that have tarnished his one-year administration, and called his leadership "confused." Mr. Mori narrowly survived a no-confidence motion in November. — AP

AP 3/5/00

AP 3/5/00

# No-trust move against Mori today

By F.J. Khergamvala *FJK*

**TOKYO, MARCH 4.** On Monday morning, the four mainstream Opposition parties are expected to submit a no-confidence motion against the Liberal Democratic Party-led coalition of Mr. Yoshiro Mori. Japan's Lower House, consisting of 480 seats of which 277 belong to the coalition, is most unlikely to vote for the motion.

The defeat of the no-confidence motion will not be a vote of confidence in the Mori administration. Mr Mori will survive March 5, but irrespective of the vote, the motion itself will force him to make a decision of when to quit. He could announce a decision at the March 13 party convention, or earlier. Alternately, if Mr. George W. Bush agrees to receive Mr. Mori before March 13, he could buy a few more days and the Japanese economy could take a few more losses.

Constitutionally, unless a reasonable number of young Turks in the party refuse to vote against the motion, there is very little that can be done to force a politically aurally challenged person to heed the public call. Perhaps no other party in any democracy in the world could expect to survive with approval ratings of between 5.4 per cent and 8 per cent. Indeed, there is perhaps no other party in the world so reconciled to its negative fate in the July Upper House elections that it cannot find itself a leader willing to take the party into those elections.

Last Friday, the Lower House passed the budget bill for fiscal 2001, worth yen 82.65 trillions. Even though it has been sent to the other chamber, the bill takes effect 30 days after the Lower House enacts it. Therefore, the budget is no pretext for Mr. Mori's continuation. The Opposition may have postponed the submission of the no-confidence motion in the hope of using the weekend to gather a few votes from outside its ranks.

Last week, some other elements of the coalition, namely the New Conservative Party chief, Ms. Chikage Ogi, told reporters, "the coalition does not support Mr. Mori as an individual but is supporting the LDP." Mr. Mori himself says he is keen to "confront many issues before the nation."



He did not clarify why he failed to do that over the past eleven months.

The *Yomiuri Shimbun* published a survey on Sunday by an Opposition Diet member analyst to show that since Mr. Mori took office, the Nikkei Stock Average dropped by 37.04 per cent, the worst rate of decline under any Prime Minister. There have been several changes in the economy and the Nikkei over the survey period which covers 23 Prime Ministers. Hence, statistically the survey is skewed, but it does reflect the general message about Japan going out to the world. The lack of political leadership is preventing any structural reforms.

On Thursday, prosecutors arrested Mr. Masakuni Murakami, a former LDP Diet member who had just quit the Upper House and the Party for allegedly accepting about yen 72 millions (\$620,000) from KSD, a mutual aid foundation for small businesses. Mr. Murakami was one of the five members of the LDP inner caucus who selected Mr. Mori to replace Mr. Keizo Obuchi. The group included Mr. Mori himself.

Amidst all the critical brouhaha in the Japanese media about American culture using possible legal incrimination as a pretext for avoiding an apology, Mr. Murakami announced in the Diet on Thursday that he had done nothing wrong and would not apologise as it could imply that he was criminally responsible. The KSD scandal has already claimed a rising member of the Hashimoto faction. It has the potential of claiming others. To that extent, with many other hands that are dirty, but as yet unidentified to all, there is a limit of how much pressure can be brought on Mr. Mori.

THE HINDU

25 MAR 2001

## Dissent in ruling coalition

# No-trust move against Mori

FROM GEORGE NISHIYAMA

Tokyo, March 2 (Reuters): Japan's opposition agreed to submit a no-confidence motion against Yoshiro Mori on Monday, a move expected to electrify the ruling coalition's own campaign to unseat the deeply unpopular Prime Minister — even if voted down.

Lawmakers in the three-way ruling camp are themselves keen to ditch Mori, whose public support ratings have sunk to single digits due to gaffes and scandals, ahead of a key Upper House election in July.

Mori has shown no public sign of being ready to throw in the towel, but most analysts expect his days in office are numbered. "I will make every effort to cope with the many issues confronting parliament, both in domestic and foreign policies," Mori told the Lower House budget panel today.

The four opposition parties will lodge a no-confidence motion early on Monday morning, Hiro-taka Akamatsu, a senior official of

the main opposition Democratic Party, said. The Lower House will vote on it on Monday afternoon.

The motion would have only symbolic value given the coalition's majority in the 480-member chamber, where it holds 277 seats, unless some ruling lawmakers back it or abstain. Opposition officials appeared to be hoping that, by waiting until Monday, they could persuade some ruling MPs to back the motion and at least embarrass the coalition.

However, the challenge lacks the punch of a drama last November when reformist rebel Koichi Kato said he would support a similar opposition-sponsored motion only to back down at the last minute. The ruling camp looks set to rally round and defeat the opposition's motion, only to then intensify their own efforts to topple Mori in back-room deals. A senior executive in the number-two ruling party, the New Komeito, said his group would oppose the motion, a stance that would virtually guarantee its defeat.



Mori

THE TELEGRAPH

- 3 MAR 2001

## Oppn. is readying no-trust vote against Mori

TOKYO: In the latest attack on Japan's already wobbly Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, several major opposition parties said on Wednesday they are readying a motion of no-confidence that could be submitted later this week. 11-15

Opposition leaders met on Tuesday night to discuss how and when to submit the motion against Mr Mori, according to Kengo Tsuchiya, a spokesman for the Social Democratic Party. Mr Tsuchiya refused to give further details on the opposition's plan, but the motion is widely expected to be submitted soon after the passage on Friday of the 2001 budget in the Lower House of Parliament.

Though the opposition alone does not have the votes to push the motion through Parliament, it would be another embarrassment for Mr Mori, whose support in public opinion polls has fallen below 10 per cent. Mr Mori, whose less than one year in office has been marred by scandals and repeated gaffes, is also facing calls from within his own party to resign. He barely survived a no-confidence motion last year when a faction within the party threatened to join the opposition voting bloc.

13  
Former prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, one of the most powerful leaders in Mr Mori's Liberal Democratic Party, acknowledged

on Tuesday that the public is critical of Mr Mori, and said it is an issue that must be addressed at the party's annual convention on March 13.

Party leaders have expressed concern that Mr Mori's unpopularity might hurt the party in parliamentary elections due to be held this summer. To make matters worse, the Liberal Democrats are mired in a bribery scandal as well. On Wednesday, an LDP heavyweight was grilled in Parliament over allegations he was bribed by a small business cooperative. The scandal had already forced the politician, Masakuni Murakami, to resign from Parliament. (AP)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 MAR 2001  
20 FEB 2001

1 MAR 2001

# Pressure on Mori to quit

Tokyo, Feb 16 (Reuters): Pressure on Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori to quit rose today when a coalition partner whose backing is crucial warned his party would not automatically vote against a no-confidence motion.

Local lawmakers from the Premier's own party also urged an early election to choose a new party chief to replace Mori, who has become one of Japan's most unpopular Prime Ministers ever.

The potential setbacks coincided with media reports of a fresh golfing scandal involving the Premier, who is already under fire for not leaving the green on learning a US submarine had hit and sunk a Japanese trawler packed with fisheries students.

Nine of the 35 aboard are still missing, including four 17-year-old students, and all are presumed dead. "We are not thinking of voting in favour (of a no-confidence motion) but it is not the case that we have already decided to oppose it," the official from the New Komeito Party, who was not identified, said.

Speculation is swirling that Mori, under fire for a string of blunders, may be forced to resign by leaders of this three-party ruling coalition who are worried about their chances in an Upper House election in July. Support from the New Komeito — which is showing clear signs of distancing itself from the unpopular Prime Minister — is critical to the ruling camp, which lacks a majority in

parliament's powerful Lower House without it.

Opposition parties are pondering when to submit a no-confidence motion against Mori, whose popularity is in tatters.

Mori was listed as a player on the membership held by a friend's company at the posh Hamano country club in Chiba, near Tokyo, Kyodo news agency quoted Mori's secretary as saying. Mori used the membership since December 1984, after the friend offered to register him as a member using one of two memberships his company owned, paying the annual membership fees of 63,000 yen (\$545) himself, the secretary said.

Mori was the only person qualified to play golf under that membership, Kyodo said, adding that Mori took steps today to end the arrangement. Nobody was available for comment at Mori's office.

# Mori stock dips after downgrade

FROM GEORGE NISHIYAMA

Tokyo, Feb. 23 (Reuters): Embattled Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, under pressure to resign, saw his position further weakened today after Japan lost its top-grade sovereign rating and he lost a key supporter to a bribery scandal.

Mori, beset by his own blunders and the simmering scandal, is struggling to cling to his post amid calls to step down from lawmakers in the ruling camp who fear he will lead them to certain disaster in a July election for parliament's Upper House.

Defeat in July's election would not spell immediate doom for the government, but it could set the stage for legislative deadlock and trigger a snap general election.

Signs that the scandal is developing into a criminal inquiry provided the latest bad news for Mori, one of Japan's least popular Prime Ministers ever with public support ratings of less than 10 per cent.

Domestic media said prosecutors were questioning a veteran lawmaker from Mori's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) over allegations he took bribes from small business insurer KSD.

It is unusual in Japan for prosecutors to take the step of questioning anyone unless they plan to move toward an arrest. Masakuni Murakami announced his resig-

nation from the Upper House of parliament yesterday. Murakami is a key member of an LDP faction that has thrown its weight behind Mori, and his involvement in the scandal has made it difficult for the group to support Mori.

Public impatience with Mori's administration will be fuelled by the blow to Japan's prestige from a decision by Standard & Poor's yesterday to downgrade its sovereign debt rating from the top-notch AAA to AA+, citing rising debt levels, the sluggish pace of fiscal reforms and budgetary constraints.

The rating agency gave a thumbs down to Mori's economic policies, saying there was a lack of political will to address badly needed reforms.

"As everybody knows, Prime Minister Mori has been very re-

luctant to make concrete decisions on various key issues," said Takahira Ogawa, director of sovereign ratings for S&P.

"Diminished fiscal flexibility will likely persist because of political reluctance to address the rigidities in the economy more effectively," Standard & Poor's said in its report.

Most Cabinet ministers reacted testily to the downgrade, saying it was wrong and uncalled-for.

But Mori's top spokesman gave a belated acknowledgement of the need to tackle painful fiscal reforms.



Mori

THE TELEGRAPH

24 FEB 2001

# Mori faces leadership test

By F.J. Khergamvala

TOKYO, JAN. 22. Faced with divisions within the top ranks of the top officials within his ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Japan's Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori faces an important test of his leadership as he must decide whether to force the resignation of a Minister, who is spoken of as a likely successor to him and also has an important role during the upcoming visit of India's Prime Minister.

Mr. Fukushima Nukaga, the Minister in charge of the Economy, Industry and Information Technology, entrusted with overall economic policy direction and budget planning, was widely expected to quit today after allegations that he received over \$125,000 from KSD, a scandal-ridden company that provides industrial accident insurance. Mr. Nukaga, who belongs to the party's largest group, the Hashimoto faction was to accompany Mr. Mori to the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos later this week. The scandal has claimed one Upper House member from the ruling LDP who was arrested last week on suspicion of accepting money from the same insurer. He resigned from the party.

Mr. Nukaga has admitted receiving the money, typically through his political secretary, over two instalments. But last year in May he claimed to have returned the entire sum to the KSD foundation, ignoring questions about what he gave in return for the money. There are two im-

portant issues that make this case potentially explosive. One, that top LDP leaders, including Mr. Mori knew about this episode when Mr. Nukaga was appointed to the new Cabinet in a reshuffle on December 5 last year. This itself suggests contempt for public sentiment against such wrongdoing.



Fukushiro Nukaga

Next, now that matters are out in the open, can Mr. Mori afford to continue to ignore public opinion? In 1998 the same Mr. Nukaga quit as Defence Minister to take responsibility for wrongdoing by his officials. After he barely survived an internal revolt in November 2000, Mr. Mori might have thought all he needed to do to survive was to avoid making more gaffes in public remarks. Mr. Mori must now make an early decision before a new Diet session opens on January 31 and

once again rectitude becomes a top issue. Late last year his top cabinet aide had to quit after a series of scandals involving a drug peddling mistress and contact with right-wing thugs had been revealed. Mr. Mori's judgment at appointing top public people had been called into question. The *Fiji* and *Asahi* have released surveys in the past few days to show that Mr. Mori's approval ratings still remain below 20 per cent and disapproval ratings 63 per cent or above.

On Sunday, one of the ruling party's top officials, the Secretary-General had said on NHK TV that there was a big gap between what the public perceived about the case and what the seniors in the party did. "In such an event," he added, "we have to determine whether the public will accept" the explanation of the Minister that his secretary had kept the illegally obtained money for a while, before returning it. The Secretary-General then said "I assume Mr. Nukaga (the Minister) himself must decide whether to resign."

This was widely taken as the highest level hint for Mr. Nukaga to resign and all dailies on Monday portrayed the resignation as imminent. Then, on Monday, at his regular news briefing at noon, Mr. Mori's chief aide, the Chief Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Yasuo Fukuda let loose a bombshell. In a sign of divisions among the higher echelons, he said the errant Minister need not resign immediately until "we eradicate differences within the ruling party."

THE HINDU

23 JAN 2001

40-16  
8/1

# Japan goes on 'safari diplomacy' for U.N. seat

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By F. J. Khergamvala

**TOKYO, JAN. 7.** Japan is making a big push this week to obtain sub-Saharan African support for its drive to get a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council. This "safari diplomacy" is being undertaken under the cloak of leadership of the Group of Eight Industrialised democracies (G-8).

However, surprising this might sound, on Monday Mr. Yoshiro Mori becomes the first ever Japanese Prime Minister to set foot in sub-Saharan Africa. Only four Japanese Foreign Ministers have travelled to sub-Saharan Africa, which gets just a little less than 10 per cent of all Japanese annual economic assistance. After democracy was restored in Nigeria, a former Prime Minister, Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, attended the inauguration of Gen. Olusegan Obasanjo in May 1999.

So far, Japan's Africa diplomacy has been conducted through the instrument of aid and by inviting African leaders (five in year 2000) to Tokyo. Africa has been critical to the election last year of Japan's Mr. Koichiro Matsuura as the head of the Director General of UNESCO. In 1996, when Japan soundly defeated India in the contest for a rotating seat at the Security Council, the battle was fought mainly on African turf. Forty-seven of the 53 nations in the African continent are sub-Saharan. They receive about \$ 1 billion annually in soft yen loans from Japan, which doles out about \$ 10.5 billions each year, with 60 per cent going to Asian



**The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori, waves to officials at the Tokyo airport on Sunday, as he leaves for a visit to Africa and Greece. — AP**

destinations.

In Johannesburg on Tuesday, Mr. Mori will outline the objectives of the country's "frontier diplomacy", which entails developing ties with countries with which there has been scarce direct contact. In South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria, each of them with their own ambitions at the U.N., Mr. Mori will dovetail Japan's role as head of the G-8 with its own interests by offering to contribute to reducing the digital divide, conflict prevention and arresting the spread of infectious diseases, such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, malaria and tuberculosis.

Mr. Mori's journey is one of the many foreign missions being undertaken by his Cabinet colleagues in this coming week with the single common purpose being to seek a big push this year at the U.N. for its

quest to be seated at the top table.

The Foreign Minister, Mr. Yohei Kono, is off to the Arab Gulf nations and his predecessor, Mr. Masahiko Koumura, too is being sent on a mission.

It is not too well known abroad that Japan rejected a European suggestion to pool into a common fund all aid it intends to give Africa. Certain European nations which have enjoyed traditionally strong ties with sub-Saharan Africa, do fear Japanese ingress.

Japan had invited leaders of South Africa and Nigeria, from among sub-Saharan nations, to an informal dialogue between G-8 nations and developing countries, before the G-8 Okinawa Summit in July 2000. The purpose was to appear as being representative of developing nations' concerns. This time, Mr. Mori is likely to announce the concrete step of hosting the third meeting of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development. Tokyo had hosted similar meetings in 1993 and in 1998. This meeting brings together not just the aid recipients but also aid donors to Africa. He will also offer to host a few thousand students over the next three years.

Accompanying Mr. Mori throughout the eight-day trip, to some refugee camps will be the outgoing U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms Sadako Ogata. Last week, Japan announced a \$-550,000 grant for Angolan refugees and over \$ 1.3 millions to Eritrean victims in the conflict with Ethiopia.

THE HINDU

8 JAN 2001