

# Japan to inspect cargo on N Korean ship

Yomiuri Shimbun/ANN

TOKYO, Dec. 6. — The Japanese government plans to inspect the cargo on a North Korean cargo-passenger ship that runs between Japan and North Korea on an irregular basis after suspicions that the vessel is engaged in drug trafficking, Mr Yasuo Fukuda, chief Cabinet secretary, said on Wednesday.

The possible government action is thought to be intended as a show of strength toward Pyongyang, which has been making repeated demands that Tokyo send back five Japanese abductees who are now in Japan.

"We've learned from our examination of many of the stimulants seized in Japan that they were made in North Korea," National Public Safety Commission chief Mr Sadakazu Tanigaki said at a Cabinet meeting this morning. Construction and transport minister Mr Chikage Ogi said the government should inspect the ship, given it has never been checked despite calling at Niigata port

about 25 times a year. "The appropriate ministries and agencies should work together as the matter is related to illegal drugs."

Korean foreign Minister Mr Yoriko Kawaguchi said the government would not do anything about the vessel other than check its documents. Mr Fukuda said the government will look into the matter.

**Seven on trial for helping N Korean migrants:** An American, a South Korean missionary and five other people have been put on trial on charges of smuggling North Koreans into China, court officials said today, AP adds from Beijing. The trial began yesterday in Yanji, a city in China's northeast on the North Korean border, said officials of the Yanji Intermediate Level People's Court.

Thousands of North Koreans fleeing famine and repression have slipped across the border into China in recent years. Beijing has rejected appeals to treat North Koreans as refugees, insisting they are illegal economic migrants.

7 DEC 2002

THE STATESMAN

# Koizumi leaves key posts unchanged in reshuffle

By P. S. Suryanarayana

**SINGAPORE, SEPT. 30.** The Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, today effected a Cabinet shuffle, the first since he assumed office in April last year, to emphasise the sustainability of his new foreign policy initiatives in the region and to underscore the importance of economic reforms which might rejuvenate the long-ailing economic superpower.

The Japanese Government notified the Cabinet line-up without any formal comment. However, political observers and analysts in the Asia-Pacific region interpreted the changes as a message to the international community, more specifically the Group of Seven industrialised nations, that Japan was now ready

to address serious problems at home such as bad loans in a manner that would be responsive to the mood in the world financial markets. While the Foreign Minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi, and the Finance Minister, Masajuro Shiokawa, retained their positions, the key change pertains to the Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy, Heizou Takenaka, who has now been given the additional post of Financial Services. As a result, Hakuo Yanagisawa has been stripped of the Financial Services portfolio. Like Ms. Kawaguchi, Mr. Takenaka is not a member of Diet or Japan's bicameral Parliament.

This is a change that has occurred at the relatively junior echelons of the Koizumi administration, but the Prime Min-

ister's move has attracted enormous external attention, especially in the G-7 circles, where Japan is a high-profile member, and in Tokyo's neighbourhood in East Asia.

The reason, according to regional observers, has much to do with the known policy preferences of the new Minister of State for Financial Services. The appointment of Ishiba Shigeru as the Minister of State for Defence and the Defence Agency Chief has also attracted considerable attention in the new context of Japan's dilemma about how to stay on the right side of the U.S. if it launches a military offensive against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq.

Tokyo has been eager to ensure that its non-military logistical support for the

current U.S. anti-terror operations in Afghanistan would not be diverted for any other American operation. Tokyo's Afghan-related exercise was explicitly authorised under a new enactment that was designed to update Japan's pacifist Constitution.

The retention of Ms. Kawaguchi as Foreign Minister is being viewed in the region as not only a vote of confidence in her by the Prime Minister but also a diplomatic signal that he does not want to rock his own boat as he seeks an elusive strategic entente with the Stalinist North Korea.

Mr. Koizumi addressed a late-night press conference to explain the political and economic realities that guided him at this stage.

# North Korea owns Japan abductions

Pyongyang, September 17

IN A stunning confession at a summit with Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il confirmed Tuesday that North Korean spies kidnapped Japanese citizens decades ago, and said at least four are still alive.

Ending years of denials, Kim admitted about a dozen Japanese were kidnapped by North Korean agents, said it was "regrettable and would never happen again," and added that those responsible would be punished.

Kim's comments opened the way for Japan and North Korea to begin long-stalled talks toward establishing diplomatic ties. Kim and Koizumi announced in a joint statement the talks would resume in October.

"I strongly protested the abductions," Koizumi said in a news conference, adding that Kim apologised. "Kim said it was done by elements in the military, and an investigation was under way."

In the joint statement, North Korea promised to continue a moratorium on missile firing through 2003, and Japan pledged economic cooperation. It did not have details.

"This happened over decades of hostile relations and I want to talk about it frankly," Kim was quoted as telling Koizumi by a Japanese delegation official who briefed reporters afterward. "I want to apologise and it will never be allowed to happen again."

Six of the 11 Tokyo has long claimed were abducted were confirmed to be dead, while one never entered the country. North Korea also admitted that two others who disappeared in Europe had also died.

Although one of the victims,



REUTERS

Sakie Yokota, 66, whose daughter Megumi was kidnapped by North Korea at the age of 13, weeps during a news conference in Tokyo.

Megumi Yokota, who disappeared when she was 13, had died, her daughter was confirmed to be still alive in Pyongyang, the official said.

Kim acknowledged that in the past some misguided people in his country had carried out the kidnappings to learn the Japanese language and assume their identities, the official said. "I am getting a big shock. When I think of the families' feelings, the pain is unbearable," Koizumi was quoted as telling Kim.

How the people had died was not immediately clear. Japan demanded a thorough investigation of the deaths.

Many other divisive issues — including the North's suspected development of nuclear weapons and alleged spying activities off Japan's shores — loomed over the one-day summit between Kim and Koizumi, the first ever between the two nations. But for the Japanese public — and Koizumi's political career — the most volatile issue was securing the return of the 11 people who were allegedly abducted by North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s.

AP

# 'Japan will adhere to nuclear pacifism'

By P. S. Suryanarayana

**SINGAPORE, AUG. 16.** Japan has committed itself to stay the course of nuclear pacifism on a long-term basis. Tokyo's latest pledge of such political vision forms an intrinsic part of the Japanese leadership's updated anti-war policy. However, China today called upon Japan to prove its pacifism through deeds and not just words.

Outlining the new pledge, the Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, said at a solemn function in Tokyo yesterday that his country would adhere to "three principles of nuclear pacifism with sustained vigour". An authoritative version of his pronouncement is that Japan would maintain "three principles of neither manufacturing nor possessing" nor indeed bringing in nuclear weapons to its soil.

With Mr. Koizumi packaging the "three principles" as an integral aspect of Japan's latest renewal of its anti-war credo, the intended political message was widely noticed across the Asia-Pacific diplomatic circuit. Speculation, if not also strong suspi-

17/8  
cious, had been fuelled in the region by some reported comments in May this year by Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yasuo Fukuda. Those comments were interpreted to imply, if not also openly underline, the possibility that post-imperial Japan might indeed review its long-time policy of not arming itself with atomic weapons or other devices of mass destruction. As the only victim of nuclear bombardment in history, Tokyo does, however, come under the protective nuclear umbrella of the U.S., which maintains a conspicuously powerful military profile in Japan itself and in its neighbourhood.

Significantly, Mr. Koizumi chose a psychologically appropriate moment — the observance of the 57th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II — in order to signal a long-term commitment to a strategy of peace and nuclear pacifism. He also reaffirmed regret over imperial Japan's aggressiveness during World War II, a memory that still tends to scar the psyche of many neighbours of today's struggling yet "post-modern Japan". He expressed a sense of

"remorse" and extended "sincere condolences" to the people of the countries that were affected by Japan's militarism over half a century ago.

Mr. Koizumi said he believed that "passing on a peaceful Japan" to the next generation will repay the war dead. Commenting on Mr. Koizumi's latest words of remorse, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Kong Quan, said in Beijing today that China took note of these sentiments. China hoped that Japan "would show remorse for its wartime aggression through its actions at this time and would draw lessons from history". Hope was also expressed that Japan would continue to keep to the path of peaceful development.

Japan's latest annual observance of the end of World War II was also marked, as before, by popular veneration of the country's war dead at the Yasukuni Shrine. But the shrine itself is viewed by the countries that suffered at the hands of imperial Japan in World War II as a "spiritual prop of Tokyo's" militarism (as paraphrased by China's *People's Daily* in a commentary today).

# Tanaka resigns from Lower House

The Yomiuri Shimbun  
Asia News Network

TOKYO, Aug 9. — The former foreign minister, Ms Makiko Tanaka, resigned today from the House of Representatives, apparently to take responsibility for the alleged misappropriation of her state-funded secretaries' salaries.

Ms Tanaka submitted her resignation from the Diet to the office of the Speaker of the lower house, Tamisuke Watanuki, who approved it.

Ms Tanaka is suspected of misusing the state-paid salaries of her former secretaries and of allowing her family's company in Niigata Prefecture, Echigo Kotsu Co, to manage the salaries.

Her alleged misappropriation were reported by weekly magazines in April. The Liberal Dem-

ocratic Party — the largest partner in the ruling coalition that comprises New Komeito and Hoshuto (New Conservative Party) — decided in June to suspend Ms Tanaka's party membership for two years as a disciplinary action based on party regulations because she had refused to cooperate with an internal LDP probe into the scandal and failed to support a party-backed candidate in an April by-election.

Ms Tanaka voluntarily attended an open meeting of the House of Representatives Political Ethics Council on 24 July and denied the alleged irregularities.

However, Ms Tanaka decided to resign from her Diet seat. Political observers said this probably was because Kiyomi Tsujimoto, chief policymaker of the opposition Social Democratic Party, had resigned in March from the House of Representatives to take responsibility for a similar scandal over the alleged misuse of her state-funded secretary's salary. Ms Tanaka's latest move may also be prompted by feelings that despite her efforts, she has

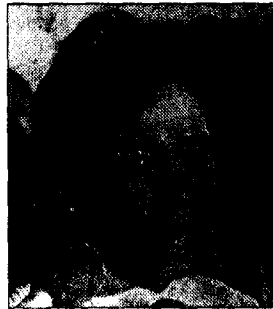
failed to convince the public of her innocence, the observers added.

Among the alleged irregularities that the Political Ethics Council addressed on 24 July

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were: that state-paid salaries were channeled through Echigo Kotsu instead of being given directly to the secretaries, that the amount of state-paid salaries sent to the company was not the same as the amount of salaries paid to the secretaries by the company and that most of the salaries were disbursed among her secretaries as allowances.

Ms Tanaka and her lawyer responded to these allegations by saying that all the state-paid salaries eventually ended up in the hands of her secretaries, that Echigo Kotsu did not pay her secretaries' wages and that Ms Tanaka did not misappropriate any of the salaries.

However, they presented no evidence, and ruling and opposition parties became even more suspicious about her part in the alleged acts.



Tanaka addresses the press on Friday. — AFP

# Japan okays defence white paper

The Yomiuri Shimbun Asia News Network

revitalising the nation's economy from the perspective of maintaining security.

TOKYO, Aug 2. — The cabinet today approved the 2002 defence white paper, which stresses the need to increase security against possible large-scale terrorist activities and to expand the role of the Self-Defence Forces, government officials said.

Referring to situations that do not necessarily lead to defence activities, the paper said, "The most important thing is for the SDF to act swiftly and appropriately."

The white paper, describing the economic disparities in the Asia-Pacific region as one of the root causes of terrorism, said: "The status of Japan's economy, which has great influences on other economies in this region, is important. The longer Japan's economy remains stagnant, the more negative impact it will have on the security of the Asia-Pacific region."

This is the first time that a defence white paper has ever mentioned the importance of

## BA cancels third of 9/11 trans-Atlantic flights

LONDON, Aug 2. — British Airways has cancelled one-third of its trans-Atlantic flights on 11 September as thousands of passengers choose not to fly on the first anniversary of the terrorist hijackings in the USA, it said today.

BA said it had cancelled 26 of its 80 transatlantic flights on September 11, 2002 — 24 between London and the USA and two between London and Barbados. "Booking were low understandably, because people are choosing not to fly that day," a spokeswoman said.

She added: "We will fly thousands of people around the world." Rival carrier Virgin Atlantic, which plies routes to New York, Washington DC, Boston and Miami among others, said it had no plans at present to cancel flights on 11 September.

"Bookings around the time of 11 September seem to be in line with normal," she said. "Obviously on the day of September 11 they are slightly less than we would traditionally expect. We will continue to review the situation," she added. — AFP

Turning to the 11 September terrorist attacks in the USA, the white paper said that the international community now regards international terrorism as "a new form of threat," and people of today are living in "an age of fear."

The paper says a change has taken place since the terrorist attacks in the security system of the international community, in that allied nations now cooperate with one another to solve problems by exercising their military powers.

According to the paper, Japan "should be united with other nations in the world to make every effort to combat international terrorism."

The report said that the anti-terrorism fight led by the USA had entered its second stage. It also pointed to the possibility that Iraq and North Korea, both of which President George W. Bush named as part of an "axis of evil," possess biochemical weapons or continue the production of such arms.

3 AUG 2002

THE NATIONAL

# Japan to help ease tension in Korea

YOMIURI SHIMBUN / ANN

## Japan-N Korea talks

SEOUL, July 13 — The foreign minister, Mr Yoriko Kawaguchi, reaffirmed today at a meeting with South Korean President Mr Kim Dae Jung that Japan would work closely with South Korea and the USA to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula, a foreign ministry official said.

In separate meetings with Mr Kim and the South Korean foreign affairs and trade minister, Mr Choi Sung Hong, in Seoul, Mr Kawaguchi discussed policies concerning North Korea in the wake of the fatal exchange of gunfire between North and South Korean naval vessels in the Yellow Sea at the end of June, the official said.

According to the official, the foreign

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SEOUL, July 13. — Foreign minister Mr Yoriko Kawaguchi is likely to have talks with the North Korean foreign minister, Mr Paek Nam Sun, at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum later this month, ministry sources said yesterday — **Yomiuri Shimbun/ANN**

minister reaffirmed that Japan would continue to cooperate with South Korea and the USA in engaging North Korea through continued dialogue with Pyongyang on such occasions as the foreign ministerial talks of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum. North Korean foreign minister,

Mr Paek Nam Sun, reportedly plans to attend the ARF talks, which will be held in Brunei at the end of this month.

Mr Kawaguchi made reference to the recent naval battle between North and South Korea during the meeting with Mr Kim at the Blue House, saying it was a disturbing incident, the official said. "Under the circumstances, the most important thing now is to have trilateral cooperation among Japan, South Korea and the USA on policies toward North Korea," Mr Kawaguchi was quoted as saying.

Mr Kim agreed to maintain the current trilateral cooperation on the issue, the official said, while Mr Kawaguchi said Tokyo would continue to support South Korea's "sunshine policy" of engagement with the North.

THE STATESMAN

13 JUL 2002

Hint of ban review irks China

# Japan in nuke row

FROM ELAINE LIES

**Tokyo, June 3** (Reuters): China reacted angrily today after Japan's top government spokesman hinted that the only nation to suffer a nuclear attack could abandon its hallowed ban on nuclear weapons.

The fuss was the latest headache for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, struggling to enact key laws amid a precipitous slide in his public support due to doubts over his leadership and commitment to reform.

The furore threatened to broaden into a diplomatic row after China blasted the comments. Ties between the two Asian neighbours were strained last month over North Korean asylum seekers seized by Chinese police from a Japanese consulate.

Chief cabinet secretary Yasuo Fukuda told a news conference that he was responsible for remarks attributed to a senior official that Tokyo could review its ban on nuclear arms.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan said the comments violated Japan's promises to the international community, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

"At the present time when peace and development have become the main themes of the times and continued progress is being made in international nuclear disarmament, it is shocking to hear remarks like this

from a senior Japanese official," Kong said.

Fukuda downplayed his comments, saying: "I only said there is a chance the government could take another look at the three non-nuclear principles in the future.

"There is absolutely no chance that this Cabinet will discuss revising these principles."

Opposition parties, however, called for Fukuda's head and boycotted parliamentary debate on key legislation.

Conservative politicians have become more outspoken in challenging Japan's post-war pacifism, but fears over domestic and diplomatic fallout have meant they are usually forced to retract suggestions Japan should drop its ban on nuclear weapons. Koizumi said there was no need for the political tempest.

"This whole thing has been blown out of proportion," he told reporters, adding that he had no intention of taking Fukuda to task over the comments. "It is not a question of responsibility."

On Saturday, local media quoted an unidentified senior government official as saying Tokyo could review its self-imposed "three principles", which ban the possession, production and import of nuclear arms.

"The principles are just like the constitution. But in the face of calls to amend the Constitution, the amendment of the principles is also likely," Kyodo news agency quoted the senior government official as saying.

Fukuda told the news conference, however, that media interpretations of the remark were incorrect.

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# Diet okays extradition treaty with Seoul

The Yomiuri Shimbun/Asia News Network

TOKYO, May 29. - The Diet today approved a government proposal to ratify an extradition treaty between Japan and South Korea. The treaty was earlier approved by the House of Representatives. The Diet approval was finalised when a House of Councillors' plenary session approved the proposal unanimously this morning.

The treaty is designed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in criminal investigations. Under the pact, the second of its kind for Japan since a 1980 agreement with the USA, Japan and South Korea will be obliged to hand over suspects wanted for questioning in each other's country. The government is scheduled to ratify the treaty at a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

The two countries agreed to conclude the extradition treaty in view of the need to boost their cooperation in criminal investigations with the month-long soccer World Cup finals to be cohosted by both nations starting Friday, officials said.

Criminal suspects covered by the treaty are those suspected of involvement in crimes that would carry a death penalty, life imprisonment or imprisonment for one year or longer. The agreement will not be applied to those suspected of political crimes, they said. South Korea ratified the treaty in April, and it is expected to take effect late next month in both nations, the officials said. The upper house plenary session also endorsed unanimously an investment promotion agreement between the two countries. The agreement will make it easier for firms in both nations to branch out into each other's market, the officials said.

THE S. 1211

# Japan: N Koreans seized without consent

The Daily Yomiuri  
Asia News Network

TOKYO, May 13. — Following an investigation by a team of Japanese diplomats, the foreign ministry concluded yesterday officials at the Japanese consulate-general in Shenyang, China, hadn't approved the forcible removal of five North Korean asylum-seekers by Chinese police on Wednesday, ministry sources said.

The ministry held a meeting of senior officials to examine the finding of the five diplomats dispatched to Shenyang to probe the incident, according to the sources. The team was led by Mr Masaaki Ono, director-general of the ministry's consular and migration affairs department.

At the meeting, the officials determined that Japanese officials in Shenyang didn't give permission to Chinese police to enter the compound of the consulate-general nor approve the removal of the five asylum-seekers, the sources said.

The ministry is planning to release the details of the inspection team's investigation today, after making a report to Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi.

Based on the team's findings, the ministry is planning to lodge a protest with the Chinese government, which said on Saturday that its investigation of the incident showed that Chinese police removed two of the five asylum-seekers who had entered the building at the consulate-general "with the consent of a (Japa-

## USA, Canada parley

BELJING, May 13. — Western and Chinese officials resumed talks today on five North Korean refugees holed up at the Canadian embassy in Beijing and a US consulate in the country's north-east, officials said.

The presence of the refugees in the foreign compounds is highly awkward for China, a traditional ally of North Korea.

Canadian diplomats expected "movement" today in talks with China on the two North Koreans — a man and a woman in their late 20s to early 30s — who entered the embassy compound on Saturday, a spokeswoman said. — AFP

nese) vice-consul."

The ministry is set to start negotiations with China over demands Beijing deport the five to a third country, the sources said. **S Korea ready to take detainees:** Japan increased pressure on Beijing to release the five suspected North Korean asylum-seekers today, saying South Korea has already agreed to accept the detainees if China lets them go, AP adds from Tokyo.

Japan plans to send a top envoy to Beijing this week to negotiate a possible handover, and today's comments by chief government spokesman Mr Yasuo Fukuda hinted at a possible solution. According to a South Korean aid organisation the five have relatives in the USA and were hoping for asylum there.

THE STATESMAN

2022

# Japan's Cabinet endorses military role expansion

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**Associated Press**

TOKYO, April 16. — Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi's Cabinet endorsed new rules today that expand Japan's military role and give the government new powers in case of foreign attack. Opponents denounced the move as trampling civil rights.

The measures are designed to give a greater latitude to the Prime Minister and the Self Defence Forces in time of military emergency. Debate over the facious issue dates back to the 1970s. Their adoption as law would be a victory for Mr Koizumi, who swept to power last year on pledges to bolster Japan's military. The set of three bills will be sent tomorrow to parliament, which has until mid-June to vote them into law.

"These are important bills for the protection of people's safety and must be considered in times of peace," Mr Koizumi said after winning the Cabinet's endorsement. Japan has no detailed laws outlining how its Self Defence Forces may mobilise in the case of military attack or imminent attack from abroad.

But critics say dictating such guidelines stokes militarism, undercuts civil liberties and runs afoul of Japan's post World War II pacifist constitution.

Hundreds of pacifists and activists protested against the plans at a rally outside parliament today, calling them unconstitutional

and demanding the government scrap them.

The push for the current bills got a major boost by the 11 September terrorist attacks in the USA, as well as a December gun-battle between the Japanese Coast Guard and a suspected North Korean spy boat.

Mr Koizumi insisted those incidents highlighted the need for better home defences.

But Opposition parties attacked the plan, saying it over-emphasises military engagements and doesn't have enough specifics about countering terror and espionage.

The national circulation Mainichi newspaper echoed that concern saying the measures have a "Cold War mentality".

Under the proposed laws, the Prime Minister would have greater power to take steps to counter attacks and order local authorities to implement defensive measures.

A special task force would also be appointed to manage such crises. The country's defence chief would also have greater leeway in deploying troops on private land or demolishing private homes to set up military facilities, local media reported. Restrictions on the military's use of firearms would also be relaxed.

Additionally, ordinary citizens and private entities would be obliged to obey government orders to provide the military fuel or food and face penalties for refusing.

# Do more to make peace with India, Musharraf told

TOKYO, MARCH 14. The Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, today discussed Indo-Pak. relations with the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, and urged him to do more to ease tension with India. The dispute over Kashmir figured in the talks and Mr. Koizumi urged Gen. Musharraf to make further efforts to ease the tension and make peace with New Delhi, the Kyodo news agency said.

In their first face-to-face meeting at the Japanese Premier's official residence here, they also discussed issues relating to security, disarmament and weapons non-proliferation.

Addressing a joint press conference later, Mr. Koizumi praised Gen. Musharraf for his role in the anti-terror campaign and agreed with him on the importance of helping in the reconstruction of war-ravaged Afghanistan for the sake of regional and world stability.

The Japanese Premier urged Pakistan to consider signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) at the earliest.

Gen. Musharraf, on his part, said he was conscious of Japanese sensitivity to the nuclear



**The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, shakes hands with the Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, before talks at the latter's official residence in Tokyo on Thursday. - AP**

He repeated Pakistan's resolve to refrain from proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Koizumi said nothing specific about the possibility of fresh economic assistance or investment in Pakistan. A Japanese Foreign Ministry official said Gen. Musharraf asked Mr. Koizumi to "give considera-

pan to restore the official development assistance back to levels prior to 1998 and to take steps to promote bilateral trade.

In response, Mr. Koizumi said Japan would see what it could do about the interest on loans, taking into account decisions made by the Paris Club of creditor nations, which agreed

THE HINDU

# Japan Bill to curb Press

ROBERT WHYMANT  
THE TIMES, LONDON

## OPPOSITION, MEDIA BLAST GOVT

TOKYO, March 9. — Japan yesterday moved closer to developing a privacy law that critics claim will allow the state to interfere in news coverage and put a straitjacket on the liveliest press in east Asia.

Ignoring protests from newspapers and broadcasters, Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi's Cabinet approved a Bill aimed at outlawing "excessive reporting activities" and "violations of privacy" by reporters.

Japanese media have long been criticised for their aggressive pursuit of crime victims and relatives of suspects. In a society where families carry the stigma of crimes committed by one member, this sort of hounding further ostracises rela-

tives, and in some cases has driven them to suicide. But critics say the main purpose of the government bill is to make it harder for reporters to expose the corruption of Japan's rich and powerful, because it extends protection to the families of public figures.

"Any regulation by law could have a chilling effect on the media. The fear is that politicians or bureaucrats could abuse the system," Kenichi Asano, a former reporter who teaches journalism at a university in Kyoto, said.

Editors and publishers say they may end up in court charged with invasion of privacy if Parliament passes the Bill.

Under the proposed law, a committee to determine hu-

man rights violations will be overseen by the justice ministry, raising concerns about government interference.

"There's no way this body will be independent from the government," Ryu Otomo, a freelance journalist, said. "Newspapers will think twice before publishing stories about politicians and civil servants with their hand in the till."

The largest opposition party, the Democratic Party, has said that it will fight the bill, and the Japanese media industry is readying for battle.

A joint statement by the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, the National Association of Commercial Broadcasters, and public broadcaster

NHK said: "Such a system can lead to improper interference in news reporting by government institutions. We cannot accept the bill in its current form."

Persistent phoning or doorstepping someone in an attempt to interview them are human rights violations under the terms of the bill.

It does not prescribe fixed penalties, but the privacy committee will make public instances of media intrusion — a process of naming and shaming likely to be effective in Japan, where losing face is especially painful.

Investigative journalism in Japan — which raised awkward questions about former Prime Minister Mr Ryutaro Hashimoto's friendship with a female Chinese official — is likely to be further discouraged by a provision in the bill.

10 MAR 2002

# Bush backs Koizumi's reform route

Yomiuri Shimbun/ANN

TOKYO, Feb. 18. — US President George W Bush today promised his full support for Japan Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi's anti-deflationary policy and the leaders affirmed their countries would further reinforce the bilateral alliance.

In their talks here, Mr Koizumi outlined his progress toward enacting structural reforms centering on the disposal of non-performing loans held by financial institutions and efforts to combat deflation.

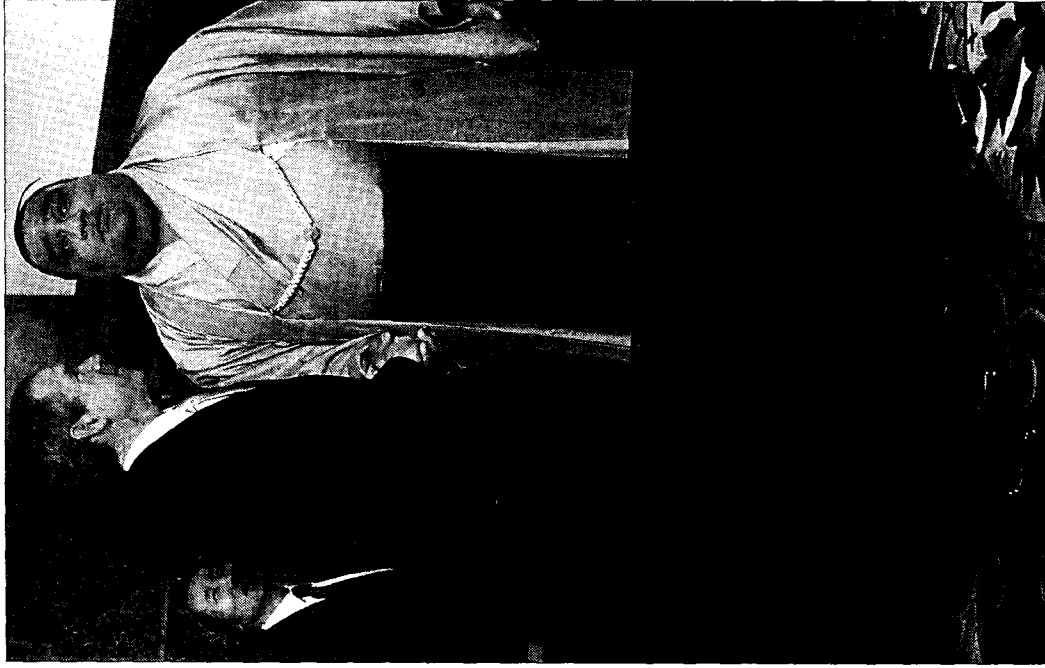
"I'll resolutely promote structural reforms even if we face short-term difficulties," Mr Koizumi said.

With apparent high expectations for Japan's economic recovery, Mr Bush reportedly told the Japanese Prime Minister a strong Japanese economy was important for the global economy and promised his full backing for Mr Koizumi's reforms.

The two leaders and other top officials, including US national security adviser Ms Condoleezza Rice participated in the talks. They were joined later by US secretary of state Gen Colin Powell, US Ambassador to Japan Mr Howard Baker, chief cabinet secretary of Japan Mr Yasuo Fukuda and Japanese foreign minister Mr Yoriko Kawaguchi.

By explaining Japan's resolve to tackle deflation, Mr Koizumi apparently tried to dispel mounting US distrust of Japan's slow implementation of structural reforms and reiterate his determination to prevent Japan from triggering a global recession.

They said their US President's backing for Mr Koizumi would boost the implementation of his much-touted reforms and also



Heavyweight meets heavyweight: President Bush enjoys a conversation with Sumo grand champion Musashimaru much to the amusement of Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi (seen in the background).  
At Mr Koizumi's residence in Tokyo on Monday. — AP/PTI

help stabilise his administration. Last week, Mr Koizumi told Mr Hakuo Yanagisawa, state minister in charge of financial policy, to tighten the Financial Services Agency's special inspections of banks' lending policies and make public the results of the inspections.

On Sunday night, the Prime

Minister also discussed with chief cabinet secretary Mr Yasuo Fukuda and finance minister Mr Masajuro Shioyama on the possible injection of public money into financial institutions that are heavily saddled with bad loans.

Before the talks on Monday, Mr Bush told reporters Mr Koizumi was a great reformer and he was confident Mr Koizumi was a leader people could trust.

Regarding security, Mr Bush expressed gratitude for Japan's dispatch of Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels to the Indian Ocean as part of its logistic support for US-led strikes on Afghanistan.

The US President also expressed his appreciation for Japan's hosting of an international conference on rehabilitating Afghanistan late last month.

Mr Bush stressed the US fight against terrorism would continue and the USA would continue to consult and cooperate with Japan. He asked for Japan's cooperation in his administration's efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles by North Korea, Iran and Iraq, which the USA says support terrorism.

As for the Korean Peninsula, the two leaders agreed their countries, together with South Korea, need to cooperate in coordinating policies toward North Korea.

On global warming, the two leaders also agreed to discuss measures and cooperate closely by setting common targets for developing countries.

The Bush administration withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol last year because it said the pact would sacrifice US economic growth and lacked the participation of developing countries.

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Reuters

SEOUL, Feb. 18. — Radical South Korean students occupied an office of the American Chamber of Commerce today in one of several protests on the eve of US President Mr George W Bush's visit.

Mr Bush is scheduled to arrive in South Korea late on Tuesday from Japan and hold talks with President Kim Dae-jung the following day before flying on to China on Thursday.

South Koreans have held small but noisy protests since last week against Mr Bush's tough policies toward communist North Korea. Security, already visible, will be exceptionally tight in the city centre while Mr Bush is in town.

A Reuters photographer witnessed 30 members of the Leftist Hanchongryon group's five-hour sit-in at the American Chamber of Commerce in southern Seoul. Police ejected them from the office which was closed on Monday.

The USA keeps 37,000 troops in South Korea to

deter aggression by the North. The two Koreas are still in a technical state of war since their 1950-53 war ended in an armed truce.

The conservative Free Citizen's League said they would hold three days of rallies at the main US army base in Seoul from tomorrow to welcome Mr Bush and support his stance on North Korea. At a protest in Seoul, activists who called themselves the Democratic Labour Party said Mr Bush was seeking war with North Korea.

"The USA is no longer the guarantor of world peace, it is the 'core of evil' threatening world peace," they said.

Other Leftist groups which rallied in Seoul said in a joint statement they opposed the visit by "Bush, a death merchant who forcibly sells weapons and missile defence".

In a warning to Mr Bush on Monday, North Korea's Rodong Sinmun newspaper said: "The US bellicose forces should know that it would be a big mistake if they regard the option to strike as their patent."

## 'Axis of evil' critics snubbed

Agence France-Presse

TOKYO, Feb. 18. — US President George W Bush today said "nations will come with us" if the US-led war on terrorism moved beyond Afghanistan, as he dismissed critics of the "axis of evil" label he has struck to Iran, Iraq and North Korea.

During a joint press conference with Japanese Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi, Mr Bush renewed his pledge to

thwart terrorist groups who want to "mate up" with those re-armed in hopes of acquiring weapons of mass destruction. "People who love freedom understand that we cannot allow nations that aren't transparent, nations with a terrible history, nations that are so dictatorial they're willing to starve their people, we can't allow them to mate up with terrorist organisations," said the US leader.

Asked about French foreign minister Mr Hubert Vedrine's criticism that the "axis" remark was "simplistic," Mr Bush referred reporters to US secretary of state Gen Colin Powell's recent suggestion that the official was suffering from the "vapours." "The secretary of state had, I thought, an interesting reply to the French foreign minister. And you might want to ask him afterwards what he meant by vapours," the US President said with a grin.

# Koizumi sacks feisty Foreign Minister

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, JAN. 30. The sacking of Japan's feisty Foreign Minister, Makiko Tanaka, by the Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, may well mark a watershed in contemporary Japanese politics.

After dithering for months, Mr. Koizumi acted yesterday to dismiss not just Ms. Tanaka but the Foreign Ministry's top bureaucrat, Vice-Foreign Minister, Yoshiji Nogami, who was involved in a public quarrel with Ms. Tanaka. Mr. Koizumi took the position that Ms. Tanaka continuing in office was holding up the passage of a supplementary budget, the objective of which was to inject life into a flaccid Japanese economy.

"Although (Parliament) was thrown into confusion as a result of problems in the Foreign Ministry alone, it is the responsibility of the entire Government...and considering that this situation has caused problems in the Diet, I take my responsibility seriously. As head of the Government, I took action to resolve the situation," he said in Tokyo today.

Ms. Tanaka, who is hugely popular in Japan, helped Mr. Koizumi's election to the country's top job, but has since encountered stiff resistance from Foreign Ministry mandarins and ruling party conservatives in her efforts at reform. At the same time, many considered her to be a poor Minister, who was moody and unable to handle the pressures of office.



**Makiko Tanaka**

Diplomats in Tokyo have preferred to deal with the well-entrenched bureaucracy rather than deal with Ms. Tanaka, described as unpredictable and hyper. Her sacking may well have a bearing on Mr. Koizumi's ratings, which have remained high despite the months in office that he has put in.

The latest clash between Ms. Tanaka and Mr. Nogami related to the decision not to invite two Japanese NGOs to the international conference on aid to Afghanistan held in Tokyo earlier this month. In the meantime, Mr. Koizumi has himself taken on the job of Foreign Minister, but expects to name a replacement by the weekend. A probable choice is Sadako Ogata, the Prime Minister's special envoy on Afghanistan, who chaired the recent international conference on aid to Afghanistan.

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# Koizumi dismisses foreign minister



Mr Junichiro Koizumi

Associated Press

TOKYO, Jan. 29. — The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Junichiro Koizumi, today fired his flamboyant foreign minister and her top deputy over a feud that has stalled parliamentary proceedings, officials said.

The foreign minister, Ms Makiko Tanaka, has consistently been rated as the most popular member of Mr Koizumi's cabinet for her promises to fight status quo politics and corruption in the elite foreign ministry. She

has been key to Mr Koizumi's high public approval ratings.

But she has also been engaged in a highly public squabble with top aides that has delayed parliamentary proceedings, most recently the passage of a crucial supplementary budget to lift Japan's moribund economy.

"She was summoned to the residence and told to take responsibility for the confusion," said ruling Liberal Democratic Party secretary-general Mr Taku Yamasaki. "The replacement has not been decided." The most recent feud broke out when Ms

Tanaka accused a ruling Liberal Democratic Party lawmaker of applying pressure to bar two NGOs from last week's Afghan reconstruction conference.

The lawmaker, Mr Muneo Suzuki, and vice-minister Mr Yoshiji Nogami have denied her claims. A parliamentary debate on the supplementary budget was delayed by questioning over the conflicting claims.

Shortly before midnight today, Mr Koizumi called Ms Tanaka to his house and told her that he intended to replace her and Mr Nogami, Ms Tanaka said.

30 JAN 2002



# Japan for bigger role in region: Koizumi

By Amit Baruah

**SINGAPORE, JAN. 15.** The Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, has signalled that his country is ready to play a bigger role in South-East and East Asia in line with what it calls its "international obligations".

Delivering the Singapore lecture on Monday, Mr. Koizumi said Japan and ASEAN must tackle the issues of terrorism, piracy and energy security together. The Prime Minister called for the creation of a larger East Asian community, which would include Australia and New Zealand, but played down the role of India in creating such a grouping. "Instability is not always elsewhere. Sometimes it is at home. Factors for instability are also in the region...in South-East Asia, Japan would like to actively participate in reducing poverty and preventing conflicts, in such cases as Mindanao, Aceh and East Timor. In particular, by the spring of this year, Japan will dispatch a self-defence force engineer unit to peace-keeping operations in East Timor," he said. "In recent years, Japan has begun to fulfil its international obligations, such as peace-keeping missions. We have dispatched self-defence forces to help in Cambodia, Mozambique, Zaire and the Golan Heights. And, in co-operation with the countries of ASEAN, we intend to make an even more active contribution to ensure regional stability here in South-East Asia," he said.

Mr. Koizumi stressed that Japan-ASEAN co-operation must extend its reach globally. "I believe we should increase our co-operation on such issues as peace and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan, measures for disarmament and non-proliferation and reform of the United Nations." Calling for a "drastic" intensification of Japan-ASEAN security co-operation, he said: "I believe we need an agreement for

regional co-operation on piracy, and I will promote consultation to achieve that end." Proposing an initiative for Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the Prime Minister maintained that co-operation between the two should be linked to all of East Asia. "While recognising our historical, cultural, ethnic and traditional diversity, I would like to see countries in the region become a group that works together in harmony. Our pasts may be varied and divergent, but our futures can be united and supportive of each other. The realisation of such a group needs strategic considerations in order to produce positive consequences."

Praising the "active role" of China in regional co-operation, he referred to the trilateral meetings between Japanese, Chinese and South Korean leaders (on the sidelines of the ASEAN+3 meetings). "I can confirm that the three leaders...are resolved to co-operate with each other..." Apart from the Japan-ASEAN partnership, Mr. Koizumi referred to the proposed free trade area between ASEAN and China and moves towards ASEAN tie-ups with Australia and New Zealand as strands of a larger partnership. Saying that he expected China, Japan, ASEAN countries, Australia and New Zealand to be the "core members" of a larger East Asian/Pacific community, the Prime Minister hastened to add that he was not proposing an "exclusive entity". "In particular, the role to be played by the United States is indispensable because of its contribution to regional security and the scale of its economic interdependence with the region. Japan will continue to enhance its alliance with the United States. Cooperation with South-West Asia, including India, is also of importance, as is co-operation with the Pacific nations through APEC..." Mr. Koizumi added.

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