

Shake-up targets Abe faction members

PM axes key Cabinet officials amid scandal

ERIC JOHNSTON
AND KANAKO TAKAHARA
STAFF WRITERS

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Thursday attempted to contain the worst crisis of his administration yet, replacing nearly a dozen ministers and officials in political posts in the government who were caught up in the scandal over unreported political funds.

Former Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi replaced Hirokazu Matsuno as chief Cabinet secretary. Hayashi is the No. 2 man in a party faction headed until recently by Kishida. The other replacements are:

- Former Justice Minister Ken Saito replacing Yasutoshi Nishimura as trade minister.
- Former rural revitalization minister Tetsushi Sakamoto replacing Ichiro Miyashita as farm minister.
- Former internal affairs minister Takeaki Matsumoto returning to the post, replacing Junji Suzuki.

Matsuno, three other Cabinet ministers and eight political appointees in the administration — all members of the 99-member

Liberal Democratic Party faction named after former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe — resigned Thursday morning.

In addition, LDP policy chief Koichi Hagiuda and two other Abe faction party executives tendered their resignations. Kishida, however, asked Hagiuda to stay on until the government finishes drafting the budget for the next fiscal year later this month — something that needs interparty coordination.

The Abe faction is at the center of a scandal involving unreported funds from sales of tickets for events hosted by the party's factions. A faction is a group within the LDP consisting of lawmakers who share a similar policy vision. Factions typically aim to promote their leaders to the role of party president, the holder of that title being most likely to then become prime minister and thus be better positioned to promote the careers of the faction members.

The Abe faction is suspected of offering unreported kickbacks from party ticket sales to members who sold more tickets than their assigned quota — to the tune of ¥500 million over the past five years.

On Wednesday, Hiroyuki Miyazawa, who



Incoming Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi arrives at the Prime Minister's Office on Thursday. REUTERS

resigned as deputy defense minister, said he had been told previously by someone in the Abe faction leadership, who he did not name, that the kickbacks did not need to be reported as political funds.

"I wondered, 'Is that okay?' But I figured it was probably legal if it's been going on for years," he said.

With the parliament session having ended Wednesday, Tokyo prosecutors are now expected to step up their investigation into the scandal. That could lead to further allega-



SPORTS:
EDDIE JONES BACK IN CHARGE
Plenty to prove for Brave Blossoms returnee | **PAGE 7**



SPOTLIGHT:
BOX-OFFICE HITS KEPT COMING
Japan's auteurs and anime triumphed in 2023 | **PAGE 10**

IN TODAY'S NYT:
AS RUSSIA GAINS CONFIDENCE, NEW URGENCY GRIPS UKRAINE
PAGE 1



'Many will die': Scientists slam COP28's limited scope

ISSAM AHMED
WASHINGTON
AFP-Jiji

A U.N. climate deal that approved a call to transition away from fossil fuels has been hailed as a major milestone, and a cause for at least cautious optimism.

But many climate scientists said the joyful sentiments of world leaders did not accurately reflect the limited ambition of the agreement.

Michael Mann, a climatologist and geophysicist at the University of Pennsylvania, criticized the vagueness of the fossil fuel statement, which has no firm, accountable boundaries for how much countries should do and by when.

"The agreement to 'transition away from fossil fuels' was weak tea at best," he said. "It's like promising your doctor that you will 'transition away from donuts' after being diagnosed with diabetes. The lack of an agreement to phase out fossil fuels was devastating."

Mann called for a substantial reform of the COP rules, for example permitting supermajorities to approve decisions over the objections of holdout petro states like Saudi Arabia, and barring oil executives such as COP28 president Sultan Al Jaber from presiding over future summits.

"Mend it, don't end it," he said. "We still need to continue with the COPs. They are our only multilateral framework for negotiating global climate policies."

"But the failure of COP28 to achieve any meaningful progress, at a time when our window of opportunity to limit warming below catastrophic levels is closing, is a source of great concern."

Kevin Anderson, a professor of energy and climate change at the University of Manchester, concurred.

"No doubt there will be lots of cheer and back-slapping ... but the physics will not care," he said.

Humanity has between five and eight years of emissions at the current level before blowing through the "carbon budget" required to hold long-term warming to the 1.5 degrees Celsius needed to avert the worst impacts of long-term planetary heating, he said.

Even if emissions begin to go down in

Japan's next-generation fighter project with U.K., Italy, reaches milestone

GABRIEL DOMINGUEZ
STAFF WRITER

Japan's plans to co-develop a next-generation fighter aircraft with the United Kingdom and Italy reached a key milestone Thursday, with the three countries agreeing to establish an intergovernmental organization to manage the Global Combat Air Program (GCAP), divide up work share and set out the roles of each partner.

At a meeting in Tokyo, the countries' defense ministers signed a treaty envisaging the creation of the GCAP International Gov-

ernment Organization (GIGO), a body that will "lay a solid basis not only for delivering a next-generation fighter aircraft by 2035 but also for further enhancing the defense industrial base of each country," according to a joint statement.

Made up of government officials from all three countries, GIGO will set out the aircraft's overall capability requirements while overseeing a joint business construct — an industry counterpart of GIGO expected to be led by Britain's BAE Systems, Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) and Italy's Leonardo — that will be tasked with meeting

those requirements in a timely and affordable manner.

Both organizations will be based in Britain, with rotational leaderships that will see a Japanese national become the first to lead GIGO and an Italian to head the industrial joint venture.

The treaty marks a key stage in the GCAP project, whose development phase is slated to start in 2025.

"As we face the most complex security environment since World War II ... securing aerial superiority continues to be a crucial challenge that we must achieve," Defense

Minister Minoru Kihara said alongside his Italian and British counterparts, Guido Crosetto and Grant Shapps.

As for work distribution, the ministers said it will be "proportionate to each country's contribution by financial and technical means under the spirit of equal partnership."

An industry source familiar with the multibillion-dollar program said GIGO, which will comprise a steering committee and implementation agency, will likely draw lessons from the experiences of similar organizations set up for multinational fighter projects, including the Eurofighter

Typhoon and Panavia Tornado, which Britain and Italy previously participated in.

"Their key mission will be to manage the project, allowing for national requirements to be addressed and implemented through an empowered industrial consortium," the source said.

Experts say the decision to set up GIGO, whose creation must be ratified by legislators in each country, highlights how serious the partners are about the joint defense project amid an increasingly volatile security environment both in Europe and the Asia-Pacific.

Continued on page 2 →

ASIAN TIGERS

Worldwide Moving Services

03 6402 2371
sales@asiantigers-japan.com

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL	2	OPINION	8
BUSINESS	3	BILINGUAL	9
INSIGHTS	4	SPOTLIGHT	10
WORLD	5, 6		
WEATHER	6		
SPORTS	7		

+

'A key to deterring invasion'

Acquiring counterstrike capabilities is no simple matter | **INSIGHTS, PAGE 4**

ISSN 0289-1956 © THE JAPAN TIMES, LTD., 2023

Consumption tax included
(本体価格¥273) **¥300**

4910856471533
00273

Japan and ASEAN to unveil 'new vision' for relations

GABRIEL DOMINGUEZ
STAFF WRITER

Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plan to unveil a "new vision" for cooperation when their leaders meet in Tokyo this weekend for a commemorative gathering as Japan seeks to align the 10-member bloc with its strategy for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," amid concerns over China's growing assertiveness.

The three-day special leaders' summit, meant to mark 50 years of bilateral relations, will see the two sides launch a wide range of cooperation initiatives in the diplomatic, security, economic, cultural and social fields.

Co-chaired by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Indonesian President Joko Widodo, the gathering is expected to result in both a joint statement and an implementation plan underlining three main cooperation pillars: Regional peace and stability, people-to-people exchanges and the "co-creation" of a future economy and society, the latter of which will prioritize areas such

WELCOME! Kitaa

2023 11.20 MON 2024 2.21 WED

See the sights and enjoy your stay in Kitakyushu with our money-saving campaign

Tourist Coupon

5,000 yen

Good at about 100 restaurants, stores and other commercial establishments.

Hotel Coupon

ONLY WITH Reservations

5,000 yen OFF

Discount applies only when booked via the dedicated website.

Please visit the website for more details about our tourism coupons.

Read me!