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Photo: AFP

Journey's end

As the High Court decides the fate of more than 150 asylum seekers held on the high seas, the journey of 41 others ended with a court appearance in Sri Lanka – the country they had fled. **News, Page 6**

Mothers try to end lives to aid children

Sarah Whyte
Immigration

Nine mothers who are asylum seekers on Christmas Island are believed to have attempted suicide on Tuesday in the expectation that their then orphaned children would be settled in Australia.

Fairfax Media has confirmed with three independent sources that the women tried to end their lives after being told they would be taken to Nauru or Manus Island. A further three women are believed to have attempted suicide for the same reason in the past week.

Jacob Varghese, who is a principal at Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, and who is representing 72 asylum seeker babies, said the mothers had become extremely distressed when they were told by immigration officials this week that they would never be resettled in Australia because they had arrived after July 19, 2013.

People who arrived after this date will not be settled in Australia, as enacted by Labor prime

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Historic address Choice of words likely to irritate Beijing

Japan pushes for closer ties

Mark Kenny, David Wroe, Philip Wen

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has used a historic address to the Australian Parliament to move the two countries closer to a strategic defence alliance in a development certain to anger Beijing.

Declaring a new Japanese "determination" to behave as a normal nation in the international sphere following a period of being "self-absorbed" on security matters, the hawkish Prime Minister

Australia and Japan continue to hope for the best from China, but they are putting in place mechanisms to deal with the worst.

Peter Hartcher, Page 4

stopped short of directly criticising Chinese territorial expansion.

But his speech left little doubt as to Tokyo's new activist defence posture – ditching its postwar pacifist stance – and its related desire

for closer strategic co-ordination with Australia and the US.

That will no doubt fuel suspicions in Beijing that western powers are pursuing a containment strategy regarding China.

"There are many things Japan and Australia can do together by each of us joining hands with the United States, an ally for both our nations," he told the special joint sitting of Parliament.

"Japan is now working to change its legal basis for security so that we can act jointly with other countries in as many ways as possible."

In a subsequent press conference after the two leaders signed a new Economic Partnership Agreement, Mr Abe went further, however, describing the Tokyo-

Beijing relationship as "one of the most important bilateral relationships" but then blaming China for a deterioration.

"The door for dialogue is always open from the Japanese side, so I do sincerely hope that the Chinese side will also take the same posture," he said.

"The fundamental position of Japan that we are keen to improve our relationship with China has been fully explained to Tony, the Prime Minister, but, however, we

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Dr Who in a spin Furore as scripts leak

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A striking debut Aussie star dazzles in Dior

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Why James Packer is courting Shinzo Abe

BusinessDay

