



The Weekly Observer

Dec. 26-30

YOUR WEEKLY RECAP OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN JAPAN!

THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

MSDF Captain Fired Over State Secret Leak

On Monday, four current and ex-MSDF officials were penalized for violating the SDF Act. One of the two current officials was **fired for leaking “designated secrets”** to his superior (former SDF official).

This is the **first punishable case** of state secrets being leaked. **Captain Inoue Takashi**, Commander of the Information Services Group handling confidential information, leaked state secrets to his **former superior** during a situation briefing for the ex-superior’s own speech (outside event).

Fourth Cabinet Minister Replaced

On Tuesday, **Prime Minister Kishida Fumio** replaced Minister for Reconstruction **Akiba Kenya**

with former Reconstruction Minister Watanabe Hiromichi.

Kishida explained to reporters that he made the personnel change to **ensure smooth sailing** in the upcoming ordinary session of the Diet, which will deliberate the **FY 2024 budget** among other critical legislation.

Akiba became the **fourth minister** to be replaced since October. He came under scrutiny for allegedly **violating campaign finance law** and his ties to the **Unification Church**.

Japan to Buy LNG from Oman

Mitsui & Co., ITOCHU, and JERA are expected to sign a deal with **Oman** to purchase **2.35 million tons of LNG**.

Japan currently imports 2.96 million tons annually from Oman. This contract will be insufficient to cover amounts beyond 2025.

Cabinet Approval



Nikkei (Dec. 26)

35% (-2 pts.)

57% (+2 pts.)

COVID-19 Cases (NHK, Jan. 1)

Total Cases: 29.30 million

Total Deaths: 57,513

Daily (Japan): 86,924 (-86,412)

7-Day Ave.: 147,372 (-12,169)

(0.90x from last week)

Deaths: 247 (-68)

Daily (Tokyo): 9,186 (-8,146)

7-Day Ave.: 14,858 (-1,780)

(0.87x from last week)

Vaccination Progress (Dec. 28)

First dose: 81.4%

Second dose: 80.4%

Third dose: 67.7% (+0.2%)

Omicron dose: 35.0% (+2.5%)