



The Weekly Observer

Jan. 16-20

YOUR WEEKLY RECAP OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN JAPAN!

THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

Japan to Lower COVID-19 Threat Level

On Friday, **Prime Minister Kishida Fumio** announced that the GOJ will **lower in the spring** COVID-19's classification under the Infectious Disease Prevention Act from "new infectious disease" to "**category five infection,**" or equivalent to the **seasonal flu**.

This will be followed by the **revision of measures** requiring restraint of outdoor activities for COVID-19 patients and those who come into close contact with them, as well as other measures including public funding for treatment, medical care services, and the **wearing of masks**.

BOJ Maintains Monetary Policy

At its Monetary Policy Meeting on Wednesday, the **Bank of Japan** decided that it will **maintain monetary easing policy**, stating

that these policies are necessary to achieve its **2 percent inflation rate goal** in a stable and sustainable manner.

The BOJ also announced **policies to push down GOJ bond yields**, especially on ten-year bonds. It will **expand the provision of funds to banks** to encourage them to purchase five-year bonds, balancing out a **distortion** that has emerged due to investors selling overpriced bonds to make a profit.

At the press conference, **Governor Kuroda Haruhiko** said that there are **no special risks** involved with the mass purchase of GOJ bonds.

The BOJ also announced its **inflation outlook**: 3 percent in 2022, 1.6 percent in 2023, and 1.8 percent in 2024. **Real GDP growth** was 1.9, 1.7, and 1.1 percent, respectively.

Cabinet Approval



Yomiuri (Jan. 16)

39% (+/-0 pts.)

47% (-5 pts.)

COVID-19 Cases (NHK, Jan. 20)

Total Cases: 31.90 million

Total Deaths: 64,645

Daily (Japan): 82,614 (-25,667)

7-Day Ave.: 103,693 (-30,543)

(0.64x from last week)

Deaths: 425 (+10)

Daily (Tokyo): 6,603 (-1,666)

7-Day Ave.: 8,294 (-2,577)

(0.63x from last week)

Vaccination Progress (Jan. 20)

First dose: 81.4%

Second dose: 80.4%

Third dose: 67.9% (+0.1%)

Omicron dose: 39.6% (+3.4%)