



# The Weekly Observer

Jan. 30-Feb. 3

YOUR WEEKLY RECAP OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN JAPAN!

THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

## Kishida-Stoltenberg Meeting

On Tuesday, **Prime Minister Kishida Fumio** met **NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg** in Tokyo.

The two reaffirmed their commitment to **deepen ties and to share strategic interests and common values** including the rule of law.

In the joint statement, the two shared the view that **unilateral changes to the status quo by force or coercion is not acceptable** anywhere in the world, including in **Ukraine**.

The two reaffirmed the **importance of cooperation** in areas such as cyberspace, outer space, disinformation and strategic communications, critical and emerging technologies, and innovation to address emerging challenges in new domains.

## Diet Debates Policies Addressing the Declining Birth Rate

This week, a major issue of contention between the ruling and opposition parties was the debate over policies addressing the declining birth rate.

It started with **LDP Secretary General Motegi Toshimitsu's** questions to the prime minister's policy speech on Jan. 25, in which he proposed **abolishing household income restrictions** on the child allowance program.

This **contradicts past LDP policy** which emphasized "self-help" over "public assistance" on issues relating to children. The LDP had advocated for income restrictions in the past.

The **opposition and Komeito** want the GOJ to end the income restriction. The GOJ will consider but are **cautious** of its effects.

## Cabinet Approval



**39%** (+ 4 pts.)

**54%** (-3 pts.)

Nikkei (Jan. 30)

## COVID-19 Cases (NHK, Feb. 4)

**Total Cases:** 32.71 million

**Total Deaths:** 69,289

**Daily (Japan):** 38,581 (-16,201)

**7-Day Ave.:** 43,249 (-17,687)  
(0.71x from last week)

**Deaths:** 256 (-82)

**Daily (Tokyo):** 2,992 (-1,523)

**7-Day Ave.:** 3,365 (-1,621)  
(0.67x from last week)

## Vaccination Progress (Feb. 3)

**First dose:** 81.4%

**Second dose:** 80.3% (-0.1%)

**Third dose:** 68.1% (+0.1%)

**Omicron dose:** 42.1% (+1.1%)