



The Weekly Observer

April 28-May 2

YOUR WEEKLY RECAP OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN JAPAN!

THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

Second Round of Japan-U.S. Tariff Talks Held

On Thursday U.S. time, Japan's chief tariff negotiator Akazawa Ryosei met with U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent, Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick, and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer for the second round of tariff negotiations in Washington, D.C.

Akazawa reiterated that the tariffs are "extremely regrettable" and strongly urged a reconsideration of the series of measures. He once again emphasized the important contributions Japan made to the U.S. economy.

The two governments agreed to 1) engage in consultations in a candid and constructive manner and made progress towards reaching an agreement at an earliest possible opportunity; 2) deepened discussions including on expanding trade between the two countries, non-tariff measures, and economic security; and 3) coordinate towards holding the next ministerial-level

consultations from mid-May after intensive consultations at the working-level set to start on May 2.

Nikkei reported that the GOJ reportedly refused a deal framework proposed by the U.S. side around its reciprocal tariffs and Japan lowering non-tariff barriers around auto and expanding imports of U.S. agricultural products. The two countries look to strike a deal on the framework by the G7 Summit in Canada next month.

On Friday, Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru commented that while there were deep, constructive talks, Japan and the United States have not found a point of agreement yet. On the possible June agreement, Ishiba said that the GOJ has no plans to sacrifice national interest for a speedy deal.

Akazawa told reporters that Japan cannot accept a negotiated deal without the reconsideration of all tariff measures, including the automobile and steel and aluminum tariffs that the U.S. side reportedly is not considering as part of a deal.

Cabinet Approval



34% (+4 pts.)

54% (-2 pts.)

[Asahi Shimbun](#) (May 3)

State of the Economy

Consumer Confidence Index (April):

31.2 (-2.9 pts.)

5th consecutive month in decline

Job Statistics (March):

Jobs-to-applicants ratio: 1.26x (-0.02 pt.)

Unemployment: 2.5% (+0.1 pt.)

Ave. Unemployment in 2024: 2.5% (+0.1 pt.)

Industrial Production Index (March):

101.1 (-1.1%)

First time in 2 months index fell

Company Earnings in 2025:

-¥2 trillion due to yen appreciation from ¥150s to ¥143 expected in March 2026