



The Weekly Observer

March 16-20

YOUR WEEKLY RECAP OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN JAPAN!

THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

Takaichi Meets Trump in DC

Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae visited the United States from March 18-20 for the first time as Japan's leader and held a **summit meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump** on Thursday.

In the opening remarks, **Trump reiterated his support for Takaichi**, praising her as a **"very popular, powerful woman, and [a] great woman,"** and stated that she is doing a fantastic job in a large nation with a great reputation. Takaichi conveyed **her appreciation of Trump's unwavering commitment to the alliance** and stated that she would like to deepen discussions to make both countries strong and prosperous.

Takaichi explained Japan's position on the situation in Iran, including the importance of international cooperation towards early de-escalation and the realization of peace and stability in the Middle East. She said that Japan aims to **initiate a joint initiative for stockpiling crude oil** procured from

the United States. She explained that **Japan has legal barriers** to sending the JSDF to the Strait of Hormuz.

The two leaders agreed to elevate the alliance to further heights, including advancing security cooperation through the **co-development and co-production of missiles**. Three bilateral documents were signed to deepen economic cooperation. The investment projects were said to have helped avoid pressure from Trump to commit troops to the Hormuz.

- Second round of projects under the **Strategic Investment Initiative**, including **small modular reactors and natural gas generation facilities** in Pennsylvania and Texas
- Action plan for **critical minerals** supply chain resilience
- Memorandum of cooperation regarding **deep-sea mineral resource** development

Cabinet Approval



61% (-2 pts.)

26% (+2 pts.)

[Asahi Shimbun](#) (March 15)

State of the Economy

Trade Balance (Feb.):

¥57.3 billion trade surplus

1st surplus in 2 months

Doesn't account for oil price surge yet

GDP Gap (Oct.-Dec. 2025):

+0.2% or ¥1 trillion excess demand

Gap for 2025 was +0.3%, the first positive value in 2 years

Tourism Statistics (Feb.):

3.46 million (+6.4% from Feb. 2025)

Highest in Feb. and 1st increase in 2 months from same month in the previous year

Machinery Orders (Jan.):

¥982.4 billion (-5.5% from Dec. 2025)

1st decline in 2 months