

A1 Chronology 2005

January

- 01 The Car Recycling Law goes into force.
- 17 The tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake in Hyogo Prefecture, which killed over 6,400 people, is marked.

February

- 01 The four-year-long evacuation order for all residents of volcanic Miyakejima Island, about 200 km south of Tokyo, is lifted.
- 04 The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare confirms the first case of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in Japan.
- 08 The Internet firm Livedoor Co. becomes the top shareholder of Nippon Broadcasting System Inc. while Fuji Television Network Inc. tries to obtain a controlling interest in the radio broadcasting company. Livedoor and Fuji TV later agree on a tie-up, with Fuji TV acquiring all the shares in the radio company.
- 17 Chubu International Airport opens in Tokoname, Aichi Prefecture.
- 26 The seventh H-IIA rocket is successfully launched and places a multipurpose transport satellite in orbit.

March

- 06 Japan's first commercial operation of a levitated linear motor train, the "Linimo," starts operating in Aichi Prefecture.
- 16 Shimane Prefectural Assembly approves a bill designating "Takeshima Day."
- 20 A magnitude 7.0 earthquake strikes the west coast of Fukuoka Prefecture.
- 25 The 2005 World Exposition Aichi opens.

April

- 01 The Japan-Mexico Free Trade Agreement goes into effect.
- A law to protect personal information becomes fully effective.
- The freeze on the deposit payoff system, which caps guarantees payments for individual accounts in the event of bank failures at ¥10 million yen plus interest, is lifted.
- 09 About 10,000 people join anti-Japan demonstrations in Beijing, followed later by demonstrations in Shanghai and other cities in China.
- 15 The Research Commission on the Constitution of the House of Representatives submits its final report. The Research Commission of the House of Councillors also releases a final report on April 20.

- 25 A JR West train derailed on the Fukuchiyama Line and crashes into a condominium in Amagasaki, Hyogo Prefecture; 107 people are killed and about 550 injured.

May

- 01 North Korea launches a missile aimed at the Sea of Japan.

June

- 22 The revised Long-term Nursing-care Insurance Law is approved.
- 23 The 60th anniversary of the end of the Battle of Okinawa is marked.
- 26 The government announces that the fifth case of bird flu in Japan has been detected at a poultry farm in Mitsukaido, Ibaraki Prefecture.
- 27 The Emperor and Empress start a two-day visit to Saipan to pay respects to the Pacific War dead.

July

- 14 Shiretoko Peninsula in Hokkaido is registered as a world natural heritage site.
- 26 The space shuttle *Discovery*, with Soichi Noguchi, a Japanese astronaut, on board, is successfully launched. The shuttle returns to Earth on August 9.

August

- 06 The 60th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima is marked.
- 08 A bill for the privatization of the postal services is rejected in the House of Councillors. Prime Minister Koizumi dissolves the House of Representatives.
- 09 The 60th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki is marked.
- 15 The 60th anniversary of the end of World War II is marked.
- 16 An earthquake of magnitude 7.2 occurs off Miyagi Prefecture, injuring over 80 people.

September

- 11 The Liberal Democratic Party claims a landslide victory in the 480-member lower house election, winning 296 seats. Along with its coalition partner, the New Komeito, the governing camp captures more than a two-thirds majority of seats.
- 17 Seiji Maehara is elected leader of the Democratic Party of Japan.
- 21 The third Koizumi cabinet is inaugurated.
- 25 The 2005 World Exposition Aichi ends; it attracts a total of 22 million visitors over 185 days.

October

- 01 Four public highway corporations—Japan Highway Public Corporation, Metropolitan Expressway Public Corporation, Hanshin Expressway Public Corporation, and Honshu-Shikoku Bridge Authority—are privatized.

Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute and Japan Nuclear Cycle Development Institute are merged into the Japan Atomic Energy Agency.

- 13 Rakuten Inc., a major online shopping mall operator, announces that it has 15.46% stocks of Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS), becoming the largest shareholder of TBS.
- 14 The Diet passes bills on privatization of the postal services.
- 17 Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visits Yasukuni Shrine for the fifth time since his assumption of the premiership.
- 22 The 18th Tokyo International Film Festival opens.
- 29 Japan and the United States issue an interim report on US military realignment in Japan.
- 31 Prime Minister Koizumi reshuffles his third cabinet and appoints a new executive team for the LDP.

November

- 01 Failures occur in the buying and selling system of the Tokyo Stock Exchange. Morning trade is shut down for three hours, and the afternoon session is delayed.
- 15 Princess Nori, the only daughter of the Emperor, marries Yoshiki Kuroda and leaves the Imperial Family.

The LDP marks the 50th anniversary of its founding.
- 17 The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport announces that an architect forged quake-resistance data on buildings that may collapse in the event of a level 5 earthquake; more defective buildings are discovered later.
- 24 A government panel on imperial succession submits a final report proposing that females and their descendants be allowed to ascend the throne.
- 25 Kabuki is registered in the world intangible cultural heritage of UNESCO.
- 26 At the Grand Sumo Tournament, Asashoryu, a Mongolian *yokozuna* grand champion, wins for the seventh time in a row; his 84 victories in a year is record-breaking.

December

- 08 The Cabinet Office Food Safety Committee submits a report recommending the resumption of beef imports from the United States and Canada.
- 22 The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's annual survey shows that the balance of domestic births minus deaths in 2005 is estimated to be minus 10,000, marking the first "natural decline" since data were first compiled in 1899.
- 25 An East Japan Railway Co. express train derails while crossing a bridge over the Mogami River on the Uetsu Line in Shonai, Yamagata Prefecture. Five people die, and 32 are injured.