

Reports say prime minister to resign

TOKYO -- Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita has decided to resign as soon as Parliament passes the budget for fiscal 1989, the mass circulation Mainichi Shimbun newspaper and the Japan Broadcasting Corp. reported Tuesday.

The reports said Takeshita planned to make the announcement after a Cabinet meeting later Tuesday.

Takeshita has chosen to resign because of low support ratings in opinion polls due to a widening political scandal and an unpopular new

sales tax, the reports said. Passage of the budget for fiscal 1989, which began April 1, has been blocked by an opposition boycott of deliberations in Parliament, but is expected to come late this month or soon after several national holidays end early in May.

The reports said Takeshita, who became prime minister in November 1987, has also decided to cancel a trip to five southeast Asian nations. He was scheduled to leave Saturday for the nine-day tour.

Masayoshi Ito, chairman of the

party executive council and an eight-time member of the lower house, has been cited as a possible successor to Takeshita. However, political analysts say poor health may keep Ito, 75, from accepting the post. Ito is diabetic.

At least 17 politicians or their aides, including those of Takeshita, reportedly received large profits from 1986 discount sales of stocks in a subsidiary of Recruit Co., an information-publishing conglomerate. The transactions generated hefty

profits when the share prices soared after the stocks were made available for over-the-counter trading. Takeshita has denied wrongdoing.

Recruit also paid millions of dollars to influential politicians or their aides as contributions, raising suspicions that it was seeking favors in return.

In all, more than a dozen people have been arrested on bribery and other charges, and three Takeshita-appointed Cabinet members have resigned in connection with the scandal.

A recent poll by the Kyodo News Service put Takeshita's support at only 3.9 percent, the lowest ever recorded by Kyodo for a prime minister.

Political analysts say that along with the scandal and low popularity ratings, the premier has been pressured by dissent within the party. Younger party members fear they will not be able to win elections with Takeshita as their leader.

Elections for half the seats in the upper house are due later this summer.

Students begin class boycott for reforms

BEIJING -- Students marched on campuses Monday to proclaim the start of a class boycott, one of a series of protests to press demands for democratic reform. Leaders claimed total participation in the boycott.

At Beijing Normal University, students waved flags and paraded around campus chanting "boycott class." Students said they were trying to contact schools nationwide to persuade them to join.

"There are no students in my classroom. I wonder if I will get a rest today," a forlorn-looking professor in the Chinese language department said.

Protest leaders claimed all students participated. The students said the boycott would be a peaceful, legal attempt to force communist authorities to meet with them and discuss demands for a free press, an end to official corruption and other reforms.

On Sunday, the students took their appeal for democracy to the

streets, making speeches to passers-by and plastering walls and sidewalks with posters.

Many passers-by contributed to a student fund set up to cover strike organization costs and set up a student-run newspaper.

School authorities made no attempt to interfere Sunday. No police or soldiers were seen.

The protests in Beijing were organized and generally peaceful, in contrast to marches Saturday in Xian and Changsa, where rampaging mobs looted stores, burned cars and seized a government building. Scores were reported hurt.

The unrest was perhaps the most violent since demonstrations began April 15, when the death of reformer Hu Yaobang stirred anti-government sentiments and an organized protest campaign by university students.

Many students also called for Premier Li Peng's resignation and hung posters on campus mocking him.

Supreme Court refuses Nader's plea for revival of Alar lawsuit

WASHINGTON -- The Supreme Court today refused to revive a lawsuit by consumer activist Ralph Nader, environmentalists and others seeking a government ban on the pesticide Alar.

The court, without comment, let stand a ruling that threw out the suit. Alar, sold by Uniroyal Chemical Co., is used primarily to enhance the color and uniform ripening of apples.

Some studies have shown it can cause cancer in animals, and may be a serious health risk to humans, particularly children.

But the Environmental Protection Agency on Jan. 6, 1987, rejected a plea by environmentalists and others to ban Alar. The agency said it lacked sufficient evidence to order the pesticide off the market.

Instead, 10 days later the EPA lowered, one-third the allowable amounts of the chemical that may remain as residues in apples. The new rule was designed as an interim measure to permit more time for the agency to study Alar's effects.

Nader and the others whose petition was denied by the EPA filed a federal suit aimed at forcing the

agency to ban Alar.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last October threw out the suit for procedural reasons.

The appeals court said the EPA could be exposed to a barrage of lawsuits if forced to go to court every time it denied a petition like the one submitted for Alar.

In other action, the court:

• Turned away an appeal by deposed Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos and his wife, Imelda, aimed at overturning a court order freezing their assets.

• Agreed to review a judge's order raising property taxes to help pay for racially desegregating public schools in Kansas City, Mo.

• Let stand a ruling that a federal judge may overrule federal environmental officials and permit use of an allegedly dangerous pesticide.

The justices, without comment, rejected an appeal by environmentalists and organized labor in a case involving the pesticide dinoseb, of particular importance to farmers in Idaho, Oregon and Washington state.

• Left intact a \$101 million refund

the nation's telephone companies were ordered to pay customers for excessive charges in 1978.

• Agreed to decide whether the government may tax as income the deposits that utility companies demand from customers to ensure payment of future bills.

The court said it will hear a Bush administration appeal in a case involving an Indiana electric utility.

• Agreed to decide whether an Indian tribe can prosecute members of other tribes for crimes on its reservation.

The court said it will review a ruling that gives the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Community in Arizona Maricopa to prosecute a California man accused in the fatal shooting of a 14-year-old boy.

• Agreed to judge the validity of a federal law allowing the use of abandoned rail line rights-of-way for nature trails.

The court said it will decide in a case from Vermont whether the law unconstitutionally deprives some property owners of the use of their land without providing "just compensation."

Rock 'n' roll brings Keith, Pete, Mick, Roger together

NEW YORK -- Three months ago The Who's Pete Townshend, inducting the Rolling Stones into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, took a swipe at the mercenary side of the Stones' upcoming reunion tour.

"It won't be easy for the Stones the next time around, and if it wasn't for the vast sums of money they can make, they might not bother at all," Townshend jibed. "... At least, Mick probably wouldn't. It's lucky for us fans that he has such expensive tastes."

Now it's Mick Jagger's turn.

'I'm still very nervous about how I can work on stage without further damage to my hearing.'
--Townshend

Two generations after "My Generation," Townshend, Roger Daltrey and John Entwistle announced Monday they were reuniting for a 25th anniversary tour - their first since 1982-83's "Farewell Tour." The band also appeared in a one-shot reunion at Live Aid.

Daltrey said they had decided against making an album to be released while they're touring.

"We felt like we weren't trying to resurrect the band. This is a celebration of the music we created, after all these years," he said. "One of the reasons we stopped is we were on that album-tour-album-tour rat race of the rock 'n' roll industry. To come back and do all that again we thought was

a mistake."

The British band last performed the rock opera "Tommy," by Townshend, in its entirety 17 years ago in Chicago.

The tour will include two full-length performances of "Tommy," with guest stars, in New York City and Los Angeles. The latter will be videotaped. Those concerts and the video will be benefits for the Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Foundation for autistic children.

Townshend acknowledged he has suffered a hearing loss, saying he has a "ringing in the ears at the kind of frequencies at which I play guitar. If I expose myself to loud electric guitar, particularly my own, my hearing suffers."

"I'm still very nervous about how I can work on stage without further damage to my hearing," he said, but then drew a laugh by adding: "We're going to play very, very quietly."

The return of the Stones and The Who to the stage highlights what seems to be a trend in rock 'n' roll today. Jefferson Airplane and The Stray Cats are reuniting. In recent months David Crosby has taken part in a pair of reunions, with ex-bandmates the Byrds and with Stephen Stills, Graham Nash and Neil Young.

As Townshend indicated, such get-togethers are lucrative: Rolling Stone magazine reported the Stones are guaranteed more than \$65 million for a 50-date North American tour. Ticket sales for their 1981 tour hit \$54 million.

Or maybe the reasons are more friendship than financial: Stray Cats leader Brian Setzer says he just missed bandmates Lee Rocker and Slim Jim Phantom.

Government says guerilla shelling killed 4 while return fire leaves 54 dead

KABUL, Afghanistan -- Guerrilla band and artillery attacks on Jalalabad took the lives of four people, and return fire by government soldiers killed 54 insurgents, the government said Monday.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Nabi Amani also reported fighting in three other provinces during the previous 24 hours. He gave the casualties as 32 dead and six wounded.

At the United Nations in New York, Afghan Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil on Monday said his government will retaliate against Pakistan if it does not stop supporting Afghan rebels.

He told the Security Council in a 90-minute speech, "If the Security Council fails to adopt necessary measures for defusing the present tense situation, and if Pakistani aggression and intervention against our country is continued, we will have no choice but the firm and patriotic defense of our country."

Wakil said the Pakistani side must understand that its territory was as vulnerable to rocket attacks as Afghanistan, bombed by Aftghans transported across the Afghan-Pakistan border.

None of the casualty figures reported Monday could be verified. Both the Marxist government and Moslem guerrillas generally exag-

gerate the other side's losses.

Amani said guerrillas fired from two directions on Jalalabad, which they have besieged for seven weeks. He said four civilians were killed and 12 wounded.

Soldiers returned the fire, the spokesman said, and he gave enemy casualties as 54 killed and 35 wounded. Amani claimed Pakistani and Saudi advisers were among the dead.

Two soldiers were wounded and three houses and a market destroyed by the guerrilla shelling, he said.

Jalalabad is a provincial capital 75 miles east of Kabul and once had a population of 64,000. It has been under heavy rocket and artillery attack since the siege began March 6.

Capturing it would give the insurgents a base for the exile government they formed in Pakistan two months ago and help them gain momentum for an attack on the capital. Jalalabad is near the Afghanistan end of the Khyber Pass, about 45 miles from the Pakistan frontier.

When the offensive began, guerrilla leaders predicted Jalalabad would fall within days, but the Afghan army is equipped with sophisticated Soviet weapons and has repulsed the attacks. Diplomats in Kabul say both sides have suffered heavy casualties.

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