

Japan’s Emperor Akihito to abdicate on April 30, 2019

By Mari Yamaguchi
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan’s much admired Emperor Akihito is set to abdicate on April 30, 2019, at age 85, in the first such departure from the Chrysanthemum Throne in about 200 years, according to the government.

Akihito’s elder son, Crown Prince Naruhito, will ascend the throne a day later, beginning a new as yet unnamed era.

The decision was made at a meeting of the Imperial House Council, which was chaired by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and included parliamentary leaders, supreme court judges, and imperial family members.

Akihito expressed his apparent wish to abdicate in August 2016, citing his age and health.

“I feel deeply moved that the decision was made smoothly by the Imperial House Council, marking a major step toward an imperial succession,” Abe said.

Suga said the timing was chosen so Akihito can abdicate after reaching his 30th anniversary on the throne, a milestone. Late April is also more appropriate for many Japanese to embrace the change of an era after settling down from a busy period of travel and job transfers around April 1, the beginning of a new fiscal year.

The events also mean longer Golden Week holidays — up to 10 straight days for those who can take May 2 off.

Legislation allowing Akihito to abdicate within three years was enacted earlier this year.

There will be more preparations to come, including deciding a new era name and a new home for the emperor and the empress, Suga said.

Kim visits factory that produced tires for missile truck

By Kim Tong-Hyung
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un thanked workers during a visit to a factory that built the tires for a huge vehicle used to transport a new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that was recently test-launched, the country’s media reported.

The launch of the Hwasong-15 ICBM in violation of international sanctions was celebrated with a massive public rally and fireworks in the capital of Pyongyang.

At the tire factory, Kim complimented workers for manufacturing the large-size tires for the nine-axle missile truck without relying on imported equipment and called for efforts to raise production to “satisfy the daily-increasing needs in developing the country’s economy and beefing up national defense capabilities,” the North’s official Korean Central News Agency said.

Kim in September tasked the Amnokgang Tire Factory to make the tires for the “great event in November,” the agency reported.

South Korea’s military believes the latest missile, which flew 600 miles before splashing down in waters

German intelligence warns of more Chinese cyberspying

By Kirsten Grieshaber
The Associated Press

BERLIN — The head of Germany’s domestic intelligence agency has warned that China allegedly is using social networks to try to cultivate lawmakers and other officials as sources.

Hans-Georg Maassen said his agency, known by its German acronym BfV, believes more than 10,000 Germans have been targeted by Chinese intelligence agents posing as consultants, headhunters, or researchers, primarily on the social networking site LinkedIn.

“This is a broad-based attempt to infiltrate in particular parliaments, ministries, and government agencies,” Maassen said.



ROYAL RETIREMENT. Japan’s Emperor Akihito waves with Empress Michiko to Luxembourg’s Grand Duke Henri after their meeting at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, in this November 27, 2017 file photo. Japan’s much admired Emperor Akihito is set to abdicate on April 30, 2019, at age 85, in the first such departure from the Chrysanthemum Throne in about 200 years, according to the government. (Kimimasa Mayama/Pool Photo via AP/File)

“We would like everyone to celebrate an abdication of the emperor and succession of the crown prince,” he said.

Akihito’s desire to leave the throne revived a debate about the country’s 2,000-year-old monarchy, one of the world’s oldest, as well as discussion about improving the status of female members of the shrinking royal population. The current male-only succession rules prohibit women from succeeding to the Chrysanthemum Throne and female members lose their royal status when they marry a commoner.

Akihito was 56 years old when he ascended the throne in January 1989 after the death of his father, Emperor Hirohito, beginning the Heisei Era. Naruhito will be 59 when he becomes emperor.

Naruhito has no son, and only two other men — his younger brother

Akishino and his son — are left as eligible successors.

Naruhito’s only child, Princess Aiko, recently turned 16 — the age women are allowed to marry under Japan’s constitution. One of Akishino’s two adult daughters is marrying a commoner next year, when the royal family would lose all three female members of the younger generation unless the law is revised. Conservative lawmakers oppose allowing female royals to succeed the throne or head the household.

The emperor and his wife, Empress Michiko, who was born a commoner, are an elegant, stately pair often seen making visits to disaster victims and carrying out other official duties.

The legislation for Akihito’s case was needed because the 1947 Imperial House Law does not provide for abdication. The last emperor to abdicate was Kokaku in 1817.



FACTORY VISIT. In this undated photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspects a local tire factory in Chagang Province, North Korea. Kim thanked workers at the factory that built the tires for a huge vehicle used to transport an intercontinental ballistic missile. Independent journalists were not given access to cover the event depicted in the image distributed by the North Korean government. The content of the image is as provided and cannot be independently verified. The Korean language watermark on the image, as provided by the source, reads “KCNA,” which is the abbreviation for the Korean Central News Agency. (KCNA/Korea News Service via AP)

near Japan, is potentially capable of striking targets as far as 8,100 miles, which would put Washington within reach.

In addition, Chinese hackers increasingly are launching attacks on European companies through trusted suppliers, he alleged.

The BfV established a task force early this year which examined the use of fake profiles on social networks over nine months. The agency provided journalists with what it said were eight of the most prolific fake profiles on LinkedIn used by alleged Chinese spies.

Using names such as Lily Wu, Laeticia Chen, or Alex Li, the profiles sport impressive résumés, hundreds of contacts, and attractive pictures of young professionals.

The agency also named six organizations it alleged Chinese spies use to cloak their approaches, including one called the Association France Euro-Chine and another

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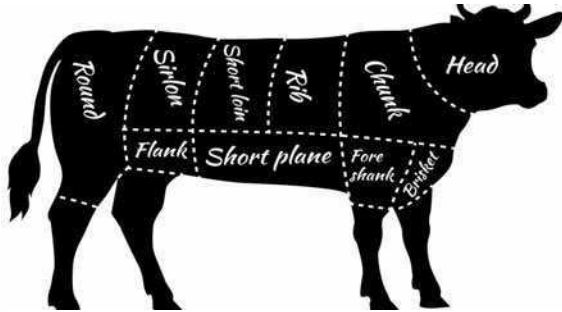
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