

Japan's foreign minister says country to open to foreigners

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workers, at times easing such restrictions but then re-imposing them during economic downturns. Many Japanese are uncomfortable with outsiders who might not speak their language or conform to expectations for how to behave.

Still, there are millions of foreigners living in Japan, including those who work in technical training-related programs or labor-short industries such as restaurants, construction, and elder care.

The country has gradually been loosening restrictions to enable families to hire domestic help. It also has short programs to bring in foreign nurses from Indonesia and other countries. But language requirements have made long-term employment in such jobs difficult.

Kono cited sports stars including tennis sensation Naomi Osaka, the daughter of a Japanese mother and a Haitian father, as an example of the benefits of welcoming

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Cambodian prime minister says "let us fix our own problems"

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen has slammed criticism by outsiders of political issues in the Mekong region, saying it should be left to solve its own problems.

Speaking at a World Economic Forum gathering in Hanoi, Hun Sen heatedly defended Myanmar against accusations its security forces engaged in genocide against its Rohingya minority.

Hun Sen said other countries do not understand the problems that Myanmar and its neighbors face and should not interfere or try to impose conditions on them.

Cambodia's one-party legislature has confirmed Hun Sen for another five-year term, cementing his status as one of the world's longest-serving leaders.

The 66-year-old Hun Sen has been in power for 33 years and declared before the election that he intended to serve two more terms.

outsiders. Osaka, who was born in Japan but raised in the United States, is being lauded by Japanese as the first from the country to win a Grand Slam singles tennis title.

"It's good to have diversity. It's good to have an open policy," Kono said.

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Korean boy bands, soccer stars march to different beats

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Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon also chaired a cabinet committee to look at reducing the period of military service from 21 months to 18 and the size of the army to 500,000, down from 618,000. He also instructed it to review the system of exemption.

At the moment, however, Son Heung-min is preparing to head back to the highest levels of world soccer to continue his career while the clock is ticking for BTS.

X Japan hopes new album will lead to elusive success in west

By Mari Yamaguchi

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Legendary Japanese rock band X Japan is hoping its new album will find success in the U.S. now that there is more interest in the west in music from Asia.

X Japan leader Yoshiki said America wasn't ready for Asian rock music when he moved there 25 years ago, but now the people seem to enjoy pop and rock from Japanese, South Korean, and Chinese artists.

"Of course I had a dream ... we wanted to be the biggest rock stars in the world, but 25 years ago they were not ready at all," Yoshiki said at a Tokyo news conference. In the U.S. map of rock and pop music, Asia didn't exist, he said.

"I'm going to contribute to changing the map of the entertainment industry in the world," said Yoshiki, who uses one name.

The market is already changing. South Korean boy band BTS and some other K-pop groups have already achieved a following in the U.S.

"Finally, after all these years, if there is a wall between the east and the west, the wall has become much thinner and smaller," Yoshiki said.

After debuting in 1982, the group surged to stardom in Japan, and even former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was a big fan. Their U.S. debut a decade later was a disappointment in part because of the language barrier. The group broke up in 1997 after its main vocalist, Toshi, became influenced by a cult and left, and guitarist Hide hung himself a year later. The group reunited in 2007



SUCCESS IN THE WEST? Japanese rock star Yoshiki is seen at a press conference in Tokyo. Legendary Japanese rock band X Japan is hoping its new album will find success in the U.S. now that there is more interest in the west in music from Asia. X Japan leader Yoshiki said America wasn't ready for Asian rock music when he moved there 25 years ago, but now the people seem to enjoy pop and rock from Japanese, South Korean, and Chinese artists. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

with Toshi and new members.

Yoshiki spoke at a news conference promoting the band's first studio album since *Dahlia* in 1996, as well as upcoming concerts. No release date has been set for the still-unnamed album, which took 10 years to complete. "I'd like to compose music that lasts for a hundred years," like Mozart and Beethoven, Yoshiki said.

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