

JAPANESE INDUSTRY AND POLICY NEWS

November 2015

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LEGISLATION AND POLICY NEWS

Whitepaper Urges More Childrearing Support

A Japanese government report released on October 27 urged increased childrearing support and a reform of the work culture to prevent the country's population from shrinking.

The white paper by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare called on all citizens to share a sense of urgency in coping with the stagnating birthrate.

Japan's birthrate stood at 1.42 in 2014, recovering gradually from the lowest record of 1.26 registered in 2005. The government aims to raise it to 1.8 by 2030.

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/wp/hakusyo/kousei/15-1/dl/gaiyou.pdf> (Japanese language only)

SURVEY AND BUSINESS DATA

Japan's Job Availability improves to its Best Level in 23 Years

Japan's job availability continued to improve for the third straight month in September to reach the highest level in over 23 years, according to the statistics released by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare on October 30.

Job availability in September was calculated at 1.24, which means that one job seeker can have 1.24 job offers on average. September's result was an improvement of 0.01 point from the previous month.

Actual situation of improvement differs according to the region. In September, job availability indice was highest in Tokyo at 1.83 while lowest in Kagoshima at 0.86.

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/houdou/0000102367.html>

Moderate Increase of Starting Salary

According to a survey of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare which was released on November 19, starting salary (all sizes of enterprise) for fresh university graduates in 2015 was 204,500 yen per month for male and 198,800 yen per month for female, up 0.8% from a year earlier respectively.

As compared to an annual rise of consumer prices of 0.6% in April which generally is the first month of work for fresh graduates, the rate of starting salary increase can be said moderate in this year.

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/database/db-l/starting-salary.html>

Kansai Airport Sees Record Number of International Passengers

The number of international flight passengers who used Kansai International Airport (KIX) from January through October has surpassed the previous record high for the entire year of 2014, as more tourists arrived from China amid the yen's depreciation, the airport operator announced on November 17.

According to its preliminary report, the figure for the 10-month period stood at 13.43 million, surpassing 13.05 million recorded in 2014, New Kansai International Airport Co. said. Including passengers on domestic flights, the total reached 19.36 million in the reporting period, expected to top the previous annual record of 20.49 million passengers in 2000.

For the period of April-August, the share of KIX as regards to foreign travelers was 26%, second only to Narita's 32%.

<http://www.nkiac.co.jp/news/2015/2294/gaikyou1510.pdf> (Japanese language only)

Japan Registers 1st Trade Surplus in 7 months in October

According to a preliminary report by the Ministry of Finance (MOF) dated November 19, Japan posted a goods trade surplus of 111.5 billion yen (\$903 million) in October, its first in seven months. As exports turned sluggish, imports of crude oil and liquefied natural gas fell sharply. The value of imports dropped 13.4 percent from a year earlier to 6,432.5 billion yen, while that of exports fell 2.1 percent to 6,544.0 billion yen, down for the first time in 14 months.

Japan had a trade surplus with the United States and Asia, although it marked a deficit with China. Trade with the European Union became a deficit due mainly to a surge of imports of pharmaceuticals and scientific/optical apparatus.

http://www.customs.go.jp/toukei/shinbun/trade-st_e/2015/201510ce.xml

COMPANY NEWS

Japan's 1st Passenger Jet Plane Makes Maiden Flight

Japan's first domestically produced passenger jet made its first test flight on November 11, an important step toward reviving the country's aviation industry.

The Mitsubishi Regional Jet, a small narrow-body aircraft for 80-100 passengers, has become the first domestically produced airliner since the YS-11 turboprop was rolled out half a century ago.

After a series of delays in development, the jet took off from Nagoya airport in central Japan. It landed about 90 minutes later, welcomed by a cheering crowd, including personnel from the plane's developer Mitsubishi Aircraft Corp., a unit of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd.

The flight tests in the US are scheduled to start in the second quarter of 2016. Commercial service is expected to begin in 2017

http://www.mrj-japan.com/press_releases/news_151111.html

H-IIA Rocket Successfully Puts Commercial Satellite into Orbit

An H-IIA rocket launched from Tanegashima Island in southwestern Japan on November 24 successfully detached a Canadian communications satellite into orbit, becoming the first commercial satellite that has been put into space by the Japan-built platform.

According to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, manufacturer of the rocket it was the 28th consecutive success of H-IIA/H-IIB launch vehicle and its success rate reaches 97%, marking a strong boost in Japan's bid to enter the global satellite launch market.

<http://www.mhi-global.com/news/story/1511241941.html>

Sharp's Air Purifying Technology Found Effective against Bird Flu

Sharp Corporation announced on November 17 that it has found its air purifying technology is effective to inhibit bird flu virus.

Sharp plans to develop air cleaners and air conditioners using the "Plasma cluster Ion" technology to help prevent infections of the disease to humans.

Sharp conducted a joint research with Pasteur Institute in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. They found that highly concentrated ions generated using the technology can decrease the infectiousness of H7N9 virus by 99 percent in a container box of 1 cubic meter for about 47 minutes.

<http://www.sharp.co.jp/corporate/news/151117-a.html> (Japanese language only)

GPS Shoes to Help Track Elderly People with Dementia

A Kyoto-based company has started selling shoes with the global positioning system to help track down dementia-suffering seniors who wander off and often get lost.

The company which runs nursing homes experienced their inhabitants were getting lost for a short period of time. That was the reason for the company deciding to develop a special apparatus to prevent similar incidents.

The GPS terminal is implanted in the left heel of the "GPS *Dokodemo* (everywhere) Shoes," and enables family members and caretakers to monitor the wearer by using smartphones or computers.

<http://docodemo.shoes/> (Japanese language only)