

Japan PM Signals Snap Election Amid Budget and Coalition Strains



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Tokyo, January 15 — Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has informed senior leaders of ruling coalition parties of her intention to dissolve the House of Representatives at the opening of this year's ordinary parliamentary session and call a snap election, a move that has triggered wide political debate and criticism.

The government had initially planned to prioritize passage of the fiscal 2026 budget when the Diet

convenes on January 23. However, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lacks a majority in both chambers, forcing reliance on opposition cooperation to advance key legislation and constraining the prime minister's policy agenda.

Political observers say Takaichi also faces mounting pressure following controversial remarks on Taiwan during a Diet session in November 2025, which strained China-Japan relations. A snap dissolution could allow the government to avoid prolonged questioning when the session opens.

Economic concerns have further complicated the situation. Parliament approved an 18.3 trillion-yen supplementary budget for fiscal 2025 last December, largely financed through bond issuance despite Japan's heavy debt burden. Analysts warn this could push up bond yields, weaken the yen and fuel inflation, potentially eroding public support.

Uncertainty within the ruling camp has also grown due to loose cooperation between the LDP and the Japan Innovation Party, which could withdraw support if policy disagreements persist.

If the lower house is dissolved, elections could be held in early or mid-February, likely delaying passage of the fiscal 2026 budget and forcing adoption of a provisional budget. Opposition leaders warn the timing may create a political vacuum and harm people's livelihoods.