

INTERNATIONAL Herald Tribune

THE WORLD'S DAILY NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED BY THE NEW YORK TIMES NEWSSTAND PRICE: 150 YEN (TAX INCLUDED)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2006

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Aso praises Japan's
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The Asahi Shimbun

Japan's Leading National Newspaper | English Edition | No. 16,868



Soul-searching
Japanese skipper blames
himself for death
of crew member

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昭和29年1月23日第3種郵便物認可

In recourse to outsider, a gauge of Ford's woes

By Micheline Maynard

DEARBORN, Michigan: The decision by William Clay Ford Jr., great-grandson of the founder of Ford Motor, to bring in an outsider to help run the company is an acknowledgment that its turnaround effort needs strong new leadership.

Ford on Tuesday took the highly unusual step, for Detroit, of turning to an executive with no experience in the auto industry. He gave up the titles of chief executive and president to Alan Mulally, the executive vice president of Boeing; Ford remains chairman.

Ford, 49, said he would remain the public face of the company — he has been the star in Ford's ads for years — but would give Mulally responsibility for solving Ford's many problems, including falling sales, slumping profit and loss of market share to Asian rivals.

The hiring of Mulally "is another admission that the challenges the company faces are much tougher than initially envisioned," said Craig Hutson, a senior investment grade analyst at Gimme Credit, an independent research service.

Although his family's name is on the building, Ford's prominent role at the company has been something of an anomaly in recent decades. He took over as chief executive in 2001, after a 22-year stretch in which the company was run by nonfamily members after his

For Japanese, their prince has finally come

Baby boy assures male succession

By Norimitsu Onishi

TOKYO: Princess Kiko, the wife of the emperor's younger son, gave birth to a boy on Wednesday morning, securing the succession of Japan's imperial throne for another generation.

In an event that had been anticipated for months, the princess gave birth by Caesarean section to a boy weighing 2.5 kilograms — or 5 pounds, 10 ounces — and measuring 49 centimeters, or 19.2 inches, at 8:27 a.m., the Imperial Household Agency reported. Newspapers here scrambled to print extra editions to mark the birth of the still-unnamed child, the first male born in the royal family in 41 years.

The birth of a male heir will shelve for the foreseeable future a politically explosive debate over whether women should be allowed to ascend the throne. It has solved for now a succession crisis that had taken its most direct human toll on Crown Princess Masako, 42, the Harvard-educated former diplomat whose inability to bear a boy contributed to her depression and withdrawal from the public.

Under the current succession system, only men in a direct line to the emperor can inherit the throne. So Kiko's child will become third in line to the throne, after Crown Prince Naruhito, 46, and the child's own father, Prince Akishino.

The crown prince and crown princess have a daughter, Aiko, 4; Prince Akishino, 40, and Kiko, 39, have two daughters, Mako, 14, and Kako, 11. But none are eligible to ascend the



Robert Gilhooly

Japanese on Wednesday, above, at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo celebrating the birth of the yet-unnamed prince; below left, Princess Kiko, the mother of the first male heir born in 41 years, and Japanese taking copies of a newspaper reporting the birth.



Australians sentenced to death in Indonesia

Ruling against 4 in drug case is likely to strain relations

By Peter Gelling

JAKARTA: Four Australian citizens imprisoned on the island of Bali for trafficking heroin have been sentenced to death, the Australian government confirmed Wednesday, in a surprise decision likely to raise tensions between the two countries.

The four men, part of a group known as the "Bali Nine," had originally received life sentences after a local court last year found them guilty of trying to smuggle more than eight kilograms, or 17.6 pounds, of heroin through Bali to Australia.

On appeal, the Bali High Court in April reduced the sentences to 20 years. But in a subsequent appeal, the Supreme Court chose to impose the death penalty.

It was not immediately clear when the decision had been handed down. A spokesman for the attorney general's office said that the Bali High Court had not yet been informed of the decision.

The Supreme Court upheld life sentences for two other members of the Bali Nine group. The only female among them did not appeal and is serving a 20-year term in Bali.