

Japan emperor leaves hospital after heart bypass
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TOKYO, March 4 — Japan's Emperor Akihito was discharged from hospital today following successful coronary bypass surgery, media reported.

Akihito, 78, wants to attend a state memorial service to mark the anniversary of the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, although doctors have told him that he should not return to official duties for at least a week, newspapers said.

Akihito became emperor after the death in 1989 of his father, Hirohito, in whose name Japan fought World War Two. Akihito is credited with working to close the gap between the imperial family and the people.

His hospital stay follows an operation in 2003 for prostate cancer. He also suffered stress-related health issues in late 2008, prompting the Imperial Household Agency the following year to cut back on his public engagements.

Five days after the 2011 earthquake, Akihito made an unprecedented televised address urging people to lend each other a helping hand in difficult times.

In April he and his wife, Empress Michiko, travelled to the region to meet people who had lost their homes in the disaster. — Reuters

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