



Morning Alert - Thursday, August 25, 2016

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that PM Abe will depart for Kenya today to attend the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development. TBS reported that Tokyo Governor Koike may announce as early as tomorrow a plan to postpone the relocation of the Tsukiji Fish Market originally planned for November 7. Other top news stories included reports that the Japanese Olympic team returned to Japan on Wednesday.

All national dailies gave top play to Japan's foreign ministerial meetings with China and South Korea, and North Korea's launch of a submarine-launched ballistic missile.

INTERNATIONAL

At odds over Senkakus, Japan and China agree to reduce tensions

All papers gave front-page play to talks between Foreign Minister Kishida and his Chinese counterpart Wang on the sidelines of a trilateral meeting with their South Korean counterpart Yun on Aug. 24 in Tokyo. Kishida renewed Tokyo's protest against Chinese activities near the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, while Wang reiterated Beijing's claim over the Senkakus. However, they agreed on the need to make efforts to improve bilateral relations, including launching a maritime and aerial communication mechanism at an early date to avoid unforeseen incidents in the region and prevent the situation there from deteriorating further. The two nations also agreed to make arrangements for a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Abe and President Xi on the sidelines of a G20 summit to be held in China on Sept. 4-5. Both Japan and China expressed willingness to make efforts to improve their ties because they need to cooperate in making the upcoming G20 summit a success and realizing a trilateral summit with South Korea in Tokyo in November or later.

In a related move, the GOJ sent Shotaro Yachi, the secretariat head of the National Security Council, to Beijing on Wednesday for talks with Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi. The two diplomats will discuss arrangements for a meeting between Prime Minister Abe and President Xi on the margins of the G20 summit. NHK aired a similar report this morning, adding that Yachi is expected to call for China's cooperation in holding a trilateral summit between Japan, China, and South Korea by the end of this year, request China exercise restraint in the East and South China Seas, and ask China to play an active role in urging North Korea to refrain from taking provocative actions.

Japan-ROK relations improve after progress on comfort women agreement

All papers front-paged a bilateral meeting between Foreign Minister Kishida and his South Korean counterpart Yun in Tokyo on Aug. 24, during which Kishida officially conveyed Japan's plan to disburse 1 billion yen to a South Korean foundation to support former comfort women in line with the Japan-ROK agreement reached last year. The two nations agreed to provide the families of comfort women who died before the agreement last year with two million yen each and those still living with 10 million yen each.

Threat posed by North Korean missiles growing

All papers reported on North Korea's firing of a submarine-launched ballistic missile on Aug. 24, with the projectile flying about 500 km toward Japan, a distance markedly longer than similar launches in the past. Japan is becoming increasingly concerned about the "new threat" posed by North Korea's SLBM missiles. Yomiuri wrote that technological improvements to North Korea's SLBMs and its readiness to deploy the weapons pose a "new threat" to the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. The papers speculated that Pyongyang launched the missile at this juncture as a display of military power in response to the ongoing U.S.-ROK military drills and the trilateral foreign ministerial meeting in Tokyo.

President Obama's origami crane to be displayed in Nagasaki

NHK reported this morning that one of the origami cranes presented by President Obama when he visited Hiroshima in May will be displayed at the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum from Sept. 3 until the end of November. The network also said since the number of visitors to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum has increased by about 40% since the President's visit in May, the period for the exhibition of the President's cranes will be extended to the end of January 2017. Noting that the city of Hiroshima is also planning to display one of the cranes at an exhibition in Chicago in October, the network said the city is hoping to share with as many people as possible the significance of the first visit to nuclear ground zero by a sitting U.S. president.

Japanese man detained on Kunashiri allowed to leave

Asahi wrote that a Japanese interpreter who was questioned by authorities on Russian-held Kunashiri Island was allowed to return home on Aug. 24. The interpreter had been detained after visiting the island under the bilateral visa-free exchange program.

POLITICS

Shimajiri appointed advisor to Okinawa minister

Asahi and most other papers wrote that the GOJ appointed on Aug. 24 former Minister in charge of Okinawa Affairs Shimajiri, who lost her Upper House seat in the July election, as an advisor to incumbent Minister Tsuruho. Shimajiri will mainly work on economic development in Okinawa and child poverty in the prefecture.



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