



Morning Alert - Monday, August 29, 2016

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HEADLINES

Morning news

All broadcasters gave top play to reports on Typhoon Lionrock, saying that the powerful typhoon is expected to approach the Kanto region on Tuesday, bringing strong winds and heavy rain.

All national papers gave front-page coverage to the conclusion of the sixth TICAD in Nairobi, Kenya. Other major items included a GOJ estimate on additional spending of some 600 billion yen for restarting and operating for 10 years the Monju sodium-cooled fast reactor in Fukui Prefecture that has been suspended due to various mishaps.

INTERNATIONAL

PM Abe announces 3 trillion yen investment in Africa

Sunday morning's Nikkei and Yomiuri gave top play to reports that PM Abe announced during his keynote speech at the opening of the TICAD on Saturday that Japan will mobilize a total of 3 trillion yen in private- and public-sector funds to invest in Africa from 2016 to 2018 to promote high-quality infrastructure development. Japan will also be engaged in the training of about 10 million people, including engineers and experts on infectious diseases. Nikkei wrote that since there is a limit to the amount of investment Japan can provide, Japan will highlight the quality of its infrastructure and human resource development in order to compete with China. The paper said Japan has shifted its focus from providing aid to promoting investment in Africa.

In follow-up reports, all Monday morning papers wrote that in concluding the two-day conference on Sunday, the participants adopted the [Nairobi Declaration](#), highlighting greater collaboration between

Japan and Africa for realizing “sustainable economic diversification” on the continent and combating Ebola and other diseases. The declaration also underscored the importance of maintaining the maritime order based on international law and the need to overhaul the Security Council and other UN entities.

The dailies explained that PM Abe trumpeted the “high quality” of Japanese economic and technological assistance to mark a sharp contrast with the “sheer volume” of aid offered to Africa by China. A number of Japanese business leaders accompanied the premier to display Japan’s commitment to mobilizing public and private resources for African development. Some 20 Japanese firms and organizations signed a total of 73 memoranda of understanding for business investment. Tokyo’s pro-Africa policy also reportedly reflected its desire to enlist support for reforming the UNSC to obtain permanent membership. Abe held meetings with the leaders of 12 African nations on the margins to call attention to Japan’s interest in the region.

PM Abe announces new diplomatic strategy

Sunday’s Yomiuri reported on page 1 that in his keynote speech at TICAD, PM Abe announced Japan’s new diplomatic strategy of pursuing “free and open” Indian and Pacific oceans. The paper said this strategy is apparently aimed at countering China’s increasing influence in Africa. PM Abe reportedly called on other nations to make the region connecting Asia and Africa “a major artery of growth and prosperity.” He also said that Japan does not resort to coercion and will play a role in fostering and enriching the region as a place that honors freedom, rule of law, and market economics. According to the paper, PM Abe was trying to emphasize the difference between Japan and China, which continues to pursue aggressive maritime advancement.

UNSC releases press statement on DPRK

Sunday morning’s Yomiuri reported that the UN Security Council released a press statement on Friday strongly condemning North Korea’s missile launches since July. The paper wrote that while China asked for an extension of the period for examination of the draft statement distributed to each member state by the U.S. with the apparent intention to express displeasure over the decision to deploy the U.S. THAAD system to South Korea, it decided to accept the press statement in light of the possibility that international criticism against China will increase if China continues to tolerate North Korea’s repeated provocations.

U.S., Japanese foreign ministers speak by phone on North Korea

Sunday morning’s Yomiuri reported on page 4 that Secretary Kerry and FM Kishida spoke by phone on Saturday and agreed to further strengthen the bilateral alliance and promote security cooperation between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea following North Korea’s SLBM test. The officials reportedly welcomed the press statement issued by the UNSC condemning North Korea. According to the paper, Kishida expressed the view that the threat against regional security has further

increased in the wake of the missile launch and the Secretary agreed with him. Asahi carried a similar story.

Japan, South Korea to resume currency swap agreement

All Sunday morning papers reported that Japan and South Korea agreed on Saturday to begin discussions on resuming their currency swap deal. Nikkei wrote that South Korea made the proposal during a meeting between Finance Minister Aso and South Korean Strategy and Finance Minister Yoo Il Ho in Seoul, adding that the move will help improve economic relations between the two nations. Asahi wrote that rapprochement between the two nations has extended to the economic arena eight months after the comfort women agreement was reached.

Vice President Biden says he acted as “interlocutor” between Abe and Park

Saturday evening’s Nikkei reported on page 3 that Vice President Biden said in an interview with The Atlantic on Friday that he acted as an “interlocutor” between PM Abe and President Park at the request of PM Abe, adding that the Vice President apparently laid the groundwork for the Japan-ROK summit held last December. According to the paper, Biden disclosed that he called President Park after Abe asked him for help dealing with her. Biden also reportedly said that although he didn’t negotiate the agreement, he had a personal relationship with both of them and they trusted him. “I acted like a divorce counselor,” he said, “putting a marriage back together.”

Two former comfort women express opposition to comfort women fund

Saturday morning’s Asahi reported that two former comfort women and South Korea’s opposition party announced their opposition on Friday to the initiative to support former comfort women based on the Japan-ROK agreement, which includes providing about 10 million yen to each former comfort woman through the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation. The daily wrote that the foundation will continue to try to gain the understanding of the former comfort women.

Japan, Russia hold peace treaty talks

Saturday morning’s Asahi and several other papers reported that Japanese Ambassador Harada and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Morgulov met in Moscow on Friday to hold talks on concluding a peace treaty ahead of the planned summit meeting between PM Abe and President Putin on the sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok next month. Asahi wrote that while Harada did not disclose to reporters after the four-hour meeting the details of the talks, Japan is apparently coordinating with Russia on how to deal with the Northern Territories issue during President Putin’s expected visit to Japan later this year.

Economic Minister Ishihara to visit New Zealand

Sunday morning’s Nikkei reported that Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Ishihara will visit New Zealand on Aug. 30-31 and meet with Deputy Prime Minister English and Minister of Trade McClay to exchange views on the early ratification of the TPP.

SECURITY

DM Inada to visit Okinawa next month

Saturday morning's Asahi and several other papers reported that Defense Minister Inada is making arrangements to visit Okinawa on Sept. 10 to meet with Governor Onaga. Noting that a ruling on the lawsuit over Futenma relocation will be made on Sept. 16, Asahi wrote that the defense chief is hoping to call for local understanding on the issue by expressing her intention to work to reduce the base-hosting burden on Okinawa. Today's Sankei wrote that Inada may tour Camp Schwab and hold talks with Nago Mayor Inamine and the leaders of the two municipalities where the new U.S. military helipads for the Northern Training Area will be located.

Cabinet Office cuts budget request for Okinawa development by 14 billion yen

Saturday morning's Asahi wrote that the Cabinet Office has decided to request 321 billion yen to promote Okinawa's economy in the new budget for FY2017, which is about 14 billion yen less than in FY2016. The paper said the decrease is apparently aimed at keeping Okinawa Governor Onaga in check on account of his opposition to the plan to relocate the Futenma base to Henoko.

Okinawa Minister Tsuruho to visit Okinawa on Aug. 29-30

Sunday morning's Nikkei reported that Okinawa Affairs Minister Tsuruho will visit Naha on Aug. 29-30. This will be his second visit to Okinawa since taking office on Aug. 3. The paper said Tsuruho will tour Okinawa IT Shinryo Park, the international distribution zone, and other places designed to promote local industry.

POLITICS

Poll: Over 60% support Abe cabinet

Nikkei front-paged the results of its latest public opinion survey that put support for the Abe administration at 62%, up 4 points from three weeks ago, and nonsupport at 27%, down five points. The daily attributed the improvement to growing public expectations for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as a result of Japanese athletes' outstanding performance and the prime minister's attendance at the closing ceremony of the Rio Olympics.

Some 55% called for the GOJ to take a tough line toward the Chinese over the Senkakus. Almost half expressed opposition to Japan's decision to contribute 1 billion yen to the ROK Reconciliation and Healing Foundation because the Park administration has not yet removed the comfort women statue from in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul.

PM Abe to return to Japan earlier than planned due to approaching typhoon

All papers wrote that the GOJ has decided that PM Abe will return from Kenya to Japan on Monday, a day earlier than originally planned, due to approaching Typhoon Lionrock.

ECONOMY

MRJ test flight to U.S. aborted twice

All papers wrote today that a test flight to the U.S. by Mitsubishi Regional Jet (MRJ) was aborted on Sunday for the second consecutive day due to problems with the plane's air-conditioning system. The aircraft, which is Japan's first domestically developed passenger plane in more than half a century, returned to Nagoya on Sunday afternoon after a two-hour flight. The dailies expressed concern that the mishap will raise doubts among potential customers about the plane's reliability.

Japan anxious to develop regulatory standards for automated driving

Mainichi said the MLIT plans to draft regulatory criteria for automated driving in collaboration with domestic automakers with the goal of making them global standards. The transportation ministry is expected to allocate funds in the FY2017 budget to collect and analyze data on foreign self-driving technology and criteria as reference materials for creating regulatory standards and technical specifications of its own.



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