



Morning Alert - Wednesday, October 26, 2016

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that visiting Philippine President Duterte will meet with Prime Minister Abe today. All commercial networks led with reports that former actress Saya Takagi was arrested on Tuesday for possession of marijuana.

Top stories in national dailies included survey results showing that 58% of universities think it will be difficult to introduce written tests for a new standardized university entrance exam starting in 2020 (Asahi); a METI proposal on spinning off TEPCO's nuclear power business (Mainichi); the LDP's plan to extend the party president's maximum time in office to nine years (Yomiuri); a planned tie-up between Coca-Cola and Kirin (Nikkei); and Philippine President Duterte's meeting with Foreign Minister Kishida (Sankei).

## INTERNATIONAL

### Duterte meets with Kishida

All papers reported on Philippine President Duterte's arrival in Japan on Tuesday and meeting with Foreign Minister Kishida over dinner at a Japanese restaurant in Tokyo. The Philippine leader expressed his appreciation for Japan and its people in supporting his nation's economic development. The foreign minister did not disclose the details of his conversation with Duterte, but the papers conjectured that Kishida and Duterte discussed China and other regional issues during their meeting.

Yomiuri and Nikkei wrote that Prime Minister Abe plans to stress during his meeting with Duterte today the importance of the U.S. presence in the Asia-Pacific and trilateral cooperation between the

U.S., Japan and the Philippines. Asahi wrote that Abe will be tested over whether he can ascertain the true intention behind Duterte's remarks on "separation from the U.S." and confirm the importance of the trilateral alliance with the U.S. during his talks with the Philippine leader. Abe and Duterte plan to hold a joint press conference after their meeting, and the Philippine leader will have an audience with the Emperor on Thursday.

### **Duterte calls U.S. "bully" in response to criticism of his war on drugs**

Mainichi wrote that during a meeting with some 1,000 Filipinos living in Japan on Tuesday, Philippine President Duterte called the U.S. a "bully" for criticizing his handling of drug dealers. Sankei wrote that Duterte called the U.S. and the EU "idiots" who know nothing about his efforts.

### **Duterte not planning to forge military alliance with any country other than U.S.**

Most Tuesday evening papers reported on the Japanese media's interview with Philippine President Duterte in Manila on the eve of his visit to Japan on Tuesday, during which he said that he has no plan to forge a military alliance with any country other than the United States and that a trade alliance with China might be possible but not a military alliance.

### **GOJ mulls sanctions on Chinese firms over North Korea**

Asahi and Yomiuri wrote that the GOJ has begun studying the idea of imposing sanctions on Chinese and other companies that have business relations with North Korea as part of Japan's unilateral sanctions. Foreign Minister Kishida stated at a news conference on Tuesday that it is important to apply strong pressure on the DPRK together with the international community and that the GOJ is studying various ideas including sanctions on third country companies. If sanctions are imposed on such companies, their business activities in Japan will be limited and their assets in Japan will be frozen. Japan plans to act in concert with the U.S. in deciding on the details and timing of the sanctions. However, Tokyo will carefully consider the idea while closely watching China's reaction and progress in discussions on a new sanctions resolution at the UN Security Council. Asahi wrote that the issue may be discussed at the U.S.-Japan-ROK trilateral vice foreign ministerial meeting to be held in Tokyo on Thursday.

## **POLITICS**

### **LDP eyes extending party president's maximum time in office to nine years**

Most papers wrote that the LDP plans to extend its term limit for party presidents to three consecutive terms for a total of nine years from the current two terms totaling six years. LDP Vice President Komura, who chairs the party taskforce on party and political system reform, will propose the plan to a taskforce meeting on Wednesday. Prime Minister Abe's current term as LDP president will expire in September 2018, but he will be able to stay in office until September 2021 if he is elected again in the next election for party president. The LDP plans to amend the relevant rules at its general convention next March following approval by its General Council. Yomiuri wrote that the

change would help Abe work on long-term issues such as constitutional amendments and fiscal reform.

## **ECONOMY**

### **METI proposes spinning off TEPCO's nuclear power business**

Yomiuri and most other papers gave front-page play to reports on METI's proposal to a meeting on Tuesday of an experts' panel discussing reform of the management of Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc. (TEPCO). Based on the estimate that the cost of decommissioning the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant will balloon to hundreds of billions of yen annually from the previously projected 80 billion yen, the ministry proposed that the company carry out drastic reform, including spinning off its nuclear power business and realigning with other utilities.

### **Australian Trade Minister Ciobo rejects renegotiation of TPP**

Nikkei carried a recent interview with Australian Trade, Tourism and Investment Minister Steven Ciobo, during which he expressed his nation's clear position of rejecting any renegotiation of the TPP agreement by saying that further discussions are unnecessary. Ciobo expressed Australia's intention to make utmost efforts to gain parliamentary approval of the agreement and welcomed Japan's efforts to seek the early effectuation of the accord.

## **EDUCATION**

### **TV personality Mari Sekine attends ACJ event**

Fuji TV reported this morning that TV personality Mari Sekine attended an "A Broader View" event held at the American Center Japan on Tuesday. The network said the project, which aims to double the number of exchange students between the U.S. and Japan by 2020, was proposed by Ambassador Kennedy, adding that a video of Sekine interviewing Ambassador Kennedy was aired during the event. Sekine said about her interview with the Ambassador: "She had a great smile, and was friendly and gentle. We had a really candid discussion and she talked about her private life as well. The time went by fast because I was having so much fun."