

---



# JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Monday, November 7, 2016

The following information reflects the reporting of the cited news media and does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Japan Media Highlights is intended for USG use only and should not be forwarded. Visit the website [here](#). For more information, contact [TokyoMATT@state.gov](mailto:TokyoMATT@state.gov).

Please fill out our short online [Readership Survey!](#)

## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK and most commercial networks gave top play to reports on a fire that broke out inside an art installation at an exhibition in the outer garden of Meiji Jingu Shrine on Sunday, killing a 5-year-old boy. TBS led with a report on FBI Director Comey's announcement that the agency has not changed its opinion that Hillary Clinton should not face criminal charges after a review of her emails.

Major front-page items in today's national papers included a GOJ plan to reduce the corporate tax for small businesses to encourage them to increase salaries; Toyota's plan to increase the production of electric vehicles; an idea by the Transportation Ministry to use a smartphone app to inform taxi customers of fares before taking rides; and a Sankei



estimate that the ruling coalition would lose a large number of seats in the Lower House if four opposition parties fielded common opposition candidates in single-seat constituencies in the next general election.

## **POLITICS**

### **Opposition reacts strongly to passage of TPP bills by Diet committee**

All Saturday morning papers reported heavily on the Lower House special committee vote on the TPP legislation on Friday, noting that the ruling coalition joined hands with the opposition Japan Innovation Party to pass it despite strong protests from the Democratic Party and the Japan Communist Party. Ahead of the vote, Agricultural Minister Yamamoto officially apologized for his latest gaffe “having caused great inconvenience.” However, he dismissed the opposition’s calls for his resignation by saying he will fulfill his duties. Due to the turmoil in the committee, Diet authorities chose not to convene the day’s plenary session to enact GOJ-sponsored legislation to approve the Paris Agreement on climate change. Although the Abe administration and the ruling coalition are looking to enact these two sets of key legislation at a plenary session on Tuesday, the opposition bloc led by the DP plans to thwart the move by submitting a no-confidence motion against the farm minister. The papers added that the current Diet session will probably be extended to pass the legislation.

### **Kantei desperate to pass TPP bills in Lower House ahead of U.S. presidential election**

Asahi wrote that the GOJ chose to hold a committee vote on the TPP legislation on Friday to ensure that it will be passed in the Lower House on Nov. 8 prior to the general election in the U.S. The GOJ is concerned that depending on the outcome of the U.S. race, the momentum for the regional free trade initiative may be lost. The Kantei is reportedly confident that the damage from the “forced vote” on Friday will be minor, with a senior official saying that “more people are talking about Tokyo Governor Koike than Agriculture Minister Yamamoto.”

As for a possible Diet extension, Mainichi conjectured that the administration may consider a substantial extension of more than a few weeks through the end of December with a possible dissolution of the Lower House for a snap election in mind in order to counter the opposition bloc, which is playing up the gaffes by the agricultural minister, based on the assessment that many opposition lawmakers are apparently not prepared for an election.

In a Sunday article, Asahi explained that motivation is apparently waning in Congress for approving the TPP legislation during the “lame duck” session, as some Republican TPP proponents have recently become reluctant to pass it on account of Donald Trump’s strong opposition. The paper quoted Democratic Congressman Butterfield from North Carolina as saying: “The public has become extremely critical of trade deals. There will probably be no political will in Congress to endorse the TPP even after the general election on Nov. 8.”

### **Public divided over enactment of TPP bills during current session**

Monday’s Yomiuri published the results of its nationwide public opinion survey that put support for enacting the TPP legislation during the current Diet term at 43% and nonsupport at 39%. Pointing out that the gap between proponents and opponents narrowed by 7 points from last month, the daily speculated that more people have become cautious about the bills in response to the “forced” committee vote on Friday. Cabinet approval rose by 1 point to 58%.

### **Nippon Ishin growing closer to Abe administration**

Yomiuri wrote on Saturday that Nippon Ishin (Japan Innovation Party) voted for the TPP legislation, explaining that the third-largest opposition party appears to be emphasizing a conciliatory line toward the LDP administration to obtain the central government’s cooperation for the Osaka-based party’s idea of holding a World Expo in Osaka in 2025.

### **Japan to provide large patrol boats to Malaysia**

Saturday morning’s Tokyo Shimbun wrote that the GOJ is set to provide Malaysia with two large used patrol boats as part of Japan’s efforts to assist countries around the South China Sea in countering China’s militarization of the area. PM Abe will make an official pledge when his Malaysian counterpart Najib visits Japan in mid-November.

## **SECURITY**

### **Northern Training Area to be reverted in December**

Monday’s Sankei asserted that arrangements are being made between the USG and the GOJ to hold a ceremony on Dec. 20 to return a sizable portion of the Northern Training Area. Foreign Minister Kishida and Ambassador Kennedy are expected to attend the event. Construction work is almost finished at two of the four planned helipads. The daily claimed that local residents near the training area are upset over disruptions to their daily lives by the ongoing protests staged by base opponents.

### **GOJ to purchase island in Kagoshima for landing drills by U.S. military**

Saturday morning’s Sankei led with a speculative piece claiming that the GOJ is holding negotiations with a Tokyo-based real estate firm to purchase Mageshima Island in Kagoshima with the goal of transferring field carrier landing practice (FCLP) by aircraft aboard the USS George Washington.

The two sides are reportedly very close to concluding a deal possibly in late December at the earliest. The GOJ is hoping to also use the uninhabited island as a platform for training by Futenma-based MV-22 Ospreys in order to reduce the base burden on Okinawa. The local municipality, however, is reportedly opposed to the use of the islet by military planes.

In an accompanying piece, the paper said the negotiations are picking up momentum lately as U.S. carrier-borne squadrons plan to move from NAF Atsugi to MCAS Iwakuni next year. There are already two runways in place on Mageshima.

### **U.S., Japan to carry out military training on Tinian**

Sunday's Mainichi reported that the U.S. military and the SDF plan to conduct joint amphibious training on Tinian Island on Nov. 8 for the first time ever. The paper noted that since the U.S. planes that dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the final days of WWII took off from Tinian, the planned drill to be performed as part of the "Keen Sword" exercise will symbolize bilateral reconciliation and the strength of the alliance.

### **Government spokesman comments on PKO in South Sudan**

Several Saturday morning papers took up press remarks on Friday by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, who commented on Kenya's decision to withdraw its peacekeepers from South Sudan. Suga said he doesn't think the decision will have an immediate effect on the SDF mission because the area of operations covered by Kenya's troops is different from that of Japan.

In a related story, Sunday's Mainichi wrote in a front-page article that the GOJ plans to provide an "extra hardship allowance" to SDF personnel in South Sudan engaged in "rush-to-the-scene" rescue operations. About \$60 to \$80 will be offered per rescue operation in addition to the allowance of \$150 per day paid to members stationed in the African nation.

### **U.S. flexible about Japan's participation in Nuclear Weapons Convention negotiations**

Sunday's Tokyo Shimbun printed a Kyodo piece from Washington explaining that the Obama administration apparently condones Japan's possible attendance at a UN conference in March next year to draft an international treaty to outlaw the use, possession, and development of nuclear arsenals. An unnamed high-ranking USG official reportedly said that whether or not Japan participates in the meeting is "a domestic matter for Japan and the U.S. would not oppose it." Noting that the USG strongly pressed Japan and other allies to oppose the adoption of a UN panel motion on adopting the Nuclear Weapons Convention, the article said Washington may have become somewhat flexible about the GOJ's position on the proposed treaty amid strong criticism from the Japanese public.

### **MOD to conduct test flights of prototype aircraft to examine stealth capabilities**

Monday's Nikkei wrote that the Defense Ministry plans to conduct several test flights of a prototype stealth airplane codenamed "X-2" through March 2017 to verify its stealth capabilities with the goal of deciding by FY2018 whether to develop a domestic stealth fighter or join hands with foreign partners. The ministry hopes to obtain and analyze data on the model's stealth capabilities, such as the effectiveness of special materials in absorbing radio waves.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Japanese parliamentarian to meet with Donald Trump**

Saturday evening's Mainichi said independent Diet member Shizuka Kamei plans to hold talks with Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump in New York on Monday. Kamei said he hopes to exchange views on world affairs and U.S.-Japan relations with the presidential candidate, adding that he will meet with not as a GOJ envoy but an independent Japanese politician. Other papers ran similar stories, adding that it is unclear whether the veteran legislator will actually be able to meet with Trump on the eve of the general election.

### **Japan, India to seal nuclear cooperation agreement**

Sunday's Yomiuri led with an article on a summit in Tokyo between Prime Minister Abe and his Indian counterpart Modi planned for Nov. 11, during which they will sign a civil nuclear cooperation agreement making it possible for Japan to export Japanese nuclear energy technology to India. This will be the first time for Tokyo to seal such a pact with a non-NPT member. According to several sources, the two governments plan to incorporate in an accompanying document language saying in effect that nuclear energy cooperation would be suspended in the event that India conducted a nuclear test. The daily wrote in a separate article that the Abe administration, which views exports of nuclear plants as a key tool for reinforcing the Japanese economy, has been anxious to conclude the accord so as to deepen ties with India and to counter China. The paper added, however, that doubts may be raised about whether India will refrain from conducting nuclear tests as a result of the agreement.

Meanwhile, Sunday's Nikkei wrote in its top story that in his meeting with Modi, Abe is expected to propose that New Delhi adopt Japan's shinkansen technology for the country's high-speed rail projects, as well as a program for training local engineers to operate the trains. The paper also said the two leaders are likely to sign a memorandum on exporting 12 Japanese rescue aircraft worth about \$1.5 billion for the Indian military.

### **Senior DPRK diplomat underscores necessity of nuclear weapons for national defense**

Saturday morning's Asahi reported that during a meeting with former USG officials in Kuala Lumpur in late October, the North Korean vice foreign minister conveyed Pyongyang's rejection of international calls for denuclearization by saying that "nuclear weapons are necessary in view of

national security concerns.” The DPRK diplomat at the same time disclosed the Kim regime’s intention to seek to communicate with the next U.S. administration.

In a related story, several Sunday papers took up an announcement by the Treasury Department on Friday on the enhancement of financial sanctions on the DPRK. Under the new regulations, North Korean financial entities are prohibited from accessing U.S. bank accounts via third countries.

### **Concern growing about Japan’s relations with Seoul following Park’s scandal**

Saturday morning’s Yomiuri wrote that many Japanese officials are apprehensive about the prospects for Tokyo’s ties with Seoul amid growing public disapproval of the scandal-hit President Park. Some of them are pessimistic about the planned conclusion of a bilateral general security of military information accord (GSOMIA) and the feasibility of a proposed Japan-ROK-China summit in Japan in December.

Mainichi ran a similar story, noting that Japanese lawmakers who visited Seoul on Friday for an annual meeting with their Korean counterparts were not able to pay a courtesy call on President Park on account of the ongoing scandal. The paper added that Japan is afraid that the implementation of the comfort women pact may become difficult. According to Sunday’s Nikkei, FM Kishida underscored on Saturday that it is important for both sides to implement the agreement faithfully.

### **Asian comfort women voice opposition to Japan-ROK pact**

Several Saturday morning papers took up a press conference in Tokyo on Friday by four former comfort women from South Korea, the Philippines, and two other Asian countries who emphasized their opposition to last year’s Japan-South Korea agreement on the matter. They took issue with the pact being concluded without consulting the victims or involving non-Korean women.

### **Poll shows majority feel Japan should be flexible about Northern Territories**

According to the results of a public opinion survey published in Monday’s Mainichi, 57% of Japanese said the GOJ should not insist on the return of all four islands in the Northern Territories negotiations with Russia, while 25% said Tokyo should pursue the return of all four islands.

### **Japan, Russia to draft plans for economic cooperation this month**

Sunday’s Nikkei reported from Moscow that Japan and Russia are set to draw up by mid-November concrete plans for Japan’s proposed economic assistance in eight sectors, including energy and urban development, so that PM Abe and President Putin can forge a consensus on bilateral economic cooperation when they meet in Yamaguchi in December. METI Minister Seko stressed the importance of deepening economic cooperation with Moscow to stabilize political relations and lay the groundwork for resolving the Northern Territories dispute.

In a related article, Mainichi said on Sunday that Secretary General Yachi of the National Security Secretariat is likely to visit Moscow for talks with his counterpart on Nov. 8-10 to finalize the details of the Abe-Putin summit on Dec. 15.

### **Cuban trade minister to visit Japan**

Nikkei wrote today that the Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment Malmierca plans to visit Tokyo in mid-November to attend a business conference sponsored by the two governments on promoting bilateral trade.

## **ECONOMY**

### **U.S. to cooperate with Japan, Europe in drafting guidelines for self-driving technology**

Saturday morning's Nikkei gave top play to an emerging consensus between the transportation authorities of the U.S., Japan, and Europe to draw up technological and regulatory guidelines to prevent malicious access to self-driving cars. According to the daily, although the U.S. had been hesitant about the idea of establishing regulations for autonomous driving, a fatal accident involving a Tesla car in California this summer has prompted the Department of Transportation to be more flexible about cooperating with Japan and Europe to establish rules for encrypting onboard data communications so that automated cars cannot be hacked.

### **Foreign experts to be able to obtain permanent residency in five years**

Yomiuri reported on Saturday that the Justice Ministry has informally decided to give foreigners with a high-level professional expertise in medicine, IT, and other "pro-growth" sectors special treatment so that they will be able to obtain permanent residency in 5 years instead of 10.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Japan's presence to decline due to delay in ratification of Paris accord**

On the formal effectuation of the Paris Agreement on climate change on Friday and Japan's failure to enact domestic legislation on the landmark pact on the same day, Saturday morning's Nikkei expressed concern that Japan will not be able to exercise leadership on this front since it will not be entitled to take part in the upcoming COP22 in Morocco as a full-fledged member. While noting that such key issues as coal power generation will be taken up in the UN conference, the daily said Japan may not be able to offer input on the establishment of concrete rules on verifying greenhouse gas emissions and reduction goals.

---

