


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Thursday, November 17, 2016

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that the GOJ is scrambling to establish channels to potential members of the Trump administration. NTV and TV Asahi led with reports on an increase in traffic accidents involving elderly drivers. TBS gave top play to an update on the scandal involving South Korean President Park. Fuji TV reported that Bob Dylan announced that he will not attend the ceremony to accept the Nobel Prize in Literature next month.

Top stories in national dailies included local assemblies' widespread practice of paying members' political expenses in advance (Asahi); the resumption of discussions at the Diet on constitutional amendment (Mainichi); the use of fraudulent Chinese UnionPay cards to



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withdraw a total of 1 billion yen from Japanese banks' ATMs (Yomiuri); a GOJ plan to increase tax credits for research and development in the service sector (Nikkei); and an interview with former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

Abe to stress importance of alliance, TPP during meeting with Trump

Yomiuri front-paged a report on Prime Minister Abe's planned meeting with President-elect Trump on Thursday in New York, speculating that the premier will try to develop a personal relationship of trust with Trump and stress the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance, free trade, and the TPP. Abe will be the first foreign leader to meet with Trump following his victory in the election. Other papers ran similar inside-page reports.

Yomiuri wrote in a separate article that the GOJ is hoping it will become easier for Japan to move forward with territorial talks with Russia after Trump takes office because he has expressed readiness to improve U.S. relations with Russia. However, there is concern within the GOJ that President Putin may lose interest in Japan if he can improve ties with the U.S.

Inada calls for defense cooperation with ASEAN

Asahi wrote that Defense Minister Inada announced Japan's "Vientiane Vision" initiative to promote defense cooperation with ASEAN nations during a meeting with her ASEAN counterparts on Wednesday in Vientiane. With China's maritime advancement in mind, Inada called on her ASEAN counterparts to strengthen cooperation in maritime surveillance and search and rescue operations at sea. Inada told reporters after the meeting that in place of force the rule of law will be firmly upheld through Japan and the ASEAN nations strengthening their defense capabilities and sharing common values.

Yomiuri also reported on Inada's meeting with her ASEAN counterparts, saying that the defense minister expressed Japan's readiness to assist the ASEAN nations in countering cyberattacks and disposing of mines and unexploded bombs. Although Japan's support for the ASEAN nations is intended to strengthen its ties with ASEAN, it probably will not be easy for Japan to win them over to its side because they are taking a wait-and-see stance between Japan and China and it is unclear what kind of policy toward Asia the U.S. will adopt under the Trump administration.

Japanese, Australian leaders agree on need for continued trilateral cooperation with U.S.

Most papers wrote that Prime Minister Abe and his Australian counterpart Turnbull spoke by phone on Wednesday, with Asahi saying that the two leaders agreed on the need for their nations to continue to work closely with the U.S. The two leaders also confirmed the importance of the TPP and agreed to closely work toward effectuating the free-trade pact.

SECURITY

DOD official discusses host nation support with LDP official

Nikkei wrote that Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy David Shear held talks with LDP Policy Research Council Chairman Motegi at the LDP headquarters on Wednesday. Motegi told the Pentagon official that the current level of Japan's host nation support for the U.S. military is appropriate because it was decided through extensive discussions between the two nations. The paper wrote that Shear said in reply that there will be discussions on the matter.

SCIENCE

Secretary Kerry reiterates commitment to Paris Agreement

Asahi reported on remarks made by Secretary of State Kerry at the COP22 meeting in Marrakech on Wednesday, during which he stated that the United States will move toward the international targets set in the Paris Agreement and this will not be reversed. The paper interpreted this as a call for President-elect Trump to change his negative view about the Paris Agreement.

ECONOMY

Nuclear regulator approves operation of Mihama reactor beyond 40-year limit

All papers reported on the Nuclear Regulation Authority's approval on Wednesday for Reactor No. 3 at Kansai Electric Power's Mihama Nuclear Power Plant in Fukui Prefecture to operate for 20 years beyond the mandated 40-year maximum lifespan. The reactor, which began commercial operation in December 1976, is the third reactor to be allowed to operate beyond the 40-year limit following two at the utility's Takahama plant also in Fukui. The utility plans to restart operations at the Mihama reactor in March 2020 or later after completing inspections to meet the enhanced safety requirements introduced after the nuclear accident at the TEPCO Fukushima nuclear power plant in 2011. Asahi, Mainichi, and Tokyo Shimbun wrote that the series of approvals has weakened the enforcement of the 40-year limit.

