



Morning Alert - Friday, June 16, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning News

NHK, TBS, and TV Asahi gave top play to reports on the announcement by Education Minister Matsuno yesterday that the ministry has confirmed the existence of 14 documents concerning Kake Educational Institution, saying that the Cabinet Office has also decided to announce the results of its investigation today. NTV and Fuji TV led with reports that renowned actress Yoko Nogiwa died at the age of 81 on June 13.

Top stories in national dailies included the Education Ministry's announcement of the existence of internal documents concerning Kake Educational Institution (Asahi, Mainichi); the enactment of the anti-conspiracy bill (Yomiuri, Sankei), and Takata's plan to file for bankruptcy protection in Japan by the end of June or later (Nikkei).

## INTERNATIONAL

### U.S. calls on China to impose sanctions on firms engaged in illegal trade with North Korea

Thursday evening's Nikkei wrote that Secretary of State Tillerson stated at a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on Wednesday that the U.S. has called on China to impose sanctions on Chinese firms that are suspected of having illegal dealings with North Korea. The paper quoted the Secretary as saying that the U.S. has provided China with a list of firms Washington believes Beijing needs to impose sanctions on. The Secretary also said that China's actions have been notable but "uneven." He added that President Trump has told Chinese President Xi that the U.S will impose sanctions on Chinese companies with links to North Korea if Beijing fails to take action.

## **Putin comments on Northern Territories**

Asahi wrote that Russian President Putin commented on Russia's relations with Japan by saying he believes it will be possible for the two nations to conduct joint economic activities in the Northern Territories and it is necessary to create an environment that is conducive to resolving the territorial issue.

However, the Russian leader also expressed the view that the presence of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty is making it difficult to resolve the Northern Territories issue by saying that Japan has security obligation to the U.S. in the region under the treaty. Nikkei interpreted this remark as a call for Tokyo to promise that the U.S. will not deploy its troops on the Northern Territories after the return of the islands.

## **South Korea to conduct exercise to “defend” Liancourt Rocks**

Mainichi wrote that the South Korean Navy announced on Thursday that it will conduct a two-day military exercise to defend the Liancourt Rocks (Takeshima Islands in Japan, Dokdo in South Korea) through Friday, by saying that this is a regular exercise conducted twice a year to prevent external forces from entering Korean territory. MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau director General Kanasugi lodged a protest with a senior diplomat at the South Korean Embassy in Tokyo.

## **SECURITY**

### **Acquisition agency discusses Japan's defense equipment with Southeast Asian nations**

Nikkei wrote that the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) held a meeting on Thursday with representatives from Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam in Chiba about Japan's defense equipment and technology. The meeting was held on the sidelines of an international defense trade show held in the prefecture earlier this week, and was attended by ATLA Commissioner Watanabe. According to the paper, it was the first time for the agency to host such a multinational meeting. During the session, the Southeast Asian nations reportedly expressed expectations for Japan's provision of defense equipment and technology.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Japan, EU engaged in intensive EPA discussions on tariffs**

Nikkei wrote that concerning its EPA negotiations with Japan, the EU is considering the idea of eliminating tariffs on more than 90% of Japanese auto parts immediately after the effectuation of the EPA. If agreed upon, this level would be higher than that agreed on by the U.S. in the TPP negotiations. The paper wrote that the EU is likely to urge Japan to make compromises on cheese

and other dairy products in exchange for its concessions on auto trade, and that the negotiations between Japan and the EU are about to enter a crucial stage.

Meanwhile, Yomiuri wrote that Japan is considering accepting the European request to drastically reduce the tariff on pasta to below the level agreed upon at the TPP. Sankei wrote that Japan and the EU are discussing the idea of gradually reducing tariffs on European wine and eventually eliminating them.

## **POLITICS**

### **Anti-conspiracy bill enacted amid strong protest from opposition parties**

All papers reported extensively on the enactment on Thursday of a controversial bill to penalize the planning of terrorism and other serious crimes with a majority vote by the LDP, Komeito, and Nippon Ishin. Asahi, Mainichi, and Tokyo Shimbun expressed strong concern that the bill will strengthen public surveillance of private citizens and condemned the ruling bloc for steamrolling the bill. While stressing the need for appropriate implementation of the law, Yomiuri focused on the need to prevent potential acts of terrorism. Sankei welcomed the enactment of the new law as a necessary step for Japan to participate in an international convention against transnational organized crime.

### **Several important bills to be carried over to next Diet session**

Nikkei wrote that the current Diet session will be effectively over today ahead of its official ending on Sunday and that such important bills on promoting women's participation in politics, revising the Labor Standards Law for introducing the "white collar exemption" system, revising the Travel Agency Law to restrict "minpaku" private lodging services, and measures to prevent gambling addiction will be carried over to the next Diet session because there was not enough time for deliberation on these bills.

## **SOCIETY**

### **Okinawa activist blasts Japanese government at UN for "oppression"**

Sankei wrote that Hiroji Yamashiro, the head of the Okinawa Peace Action Center, said in a speech at a UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva on Thursday that the Japanese government dispatched a large number of police officers to Okinawa to oppress and forcibly remove civilians. The activist, who had been detained for five months, told the session that he was forced to confess and desist from protest activity during his detention, blaming the GOJ for committing clear human rights violations.

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