



Morning Alert - Wednesday, June 21, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning News

NHK and NTV led with reports that an earthquake with an intensity of upper 5 on the Japanese scale hit Oita Prefecture on Tuesday evening, saying there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage. Fuji TV and TV Asahi gave top play to reports on Tokyo Governor Koike's announcement yesterday of her decision to relocate the Tokyo fish market to Toyosu but also retain the market function at Tsukiji. TBS carried a follow-up report on the Moritomo Gakuen scandal.

Most national dailies gave top play to reports on Tokyo Governor Koike's announcement of her decision on the fish market relocation. Asahi and Mainichi led with follow-up reports on the Kake Gakuen scandal, including the Education Ministry's release of documents indicating Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hagiuda's alleged pressure on the ministry.

INTERNATIONAL

U.S.-DPRK dialogue unlikely following death of American student

All papers reported on President Trump's condemnation of North Korea over the death on Monday of American university student Otto Warmbier. The papers wrote that it appears unlikely that the U.S. will hold dialogue with the DPRK on Pyongyang's nuclear and missile development under the present circumstances, with Washington calling for the release of three other Americans held by North Korea and growing criticism of the Kim regime in the U.S. Yomiuri speculated that the Trump administration will ratchet up the pressure on Pyongyang because calls for additional sanctions or the re-designation of North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism will grow in Congress.

In a related development, Sankei wrote that LDP lawmakers involved in efforts to bring the Japanese abductees home from North Korea, including former Abduction Minister Furuya, stressed the need for U.S.-Japan cooperation in resolving abduction and human rights issues concerning North Korea.

Japanese, Guinean leaders agree to boost cooperation

Asahi, Mainichi, and Nikkei reported on Prime Minister Abe's meeting with visiting Guinean President Conde on Tuesday, saying that the two leaders agreed on the need to ratchet up the pressure on North Korea and cooperate further on reform of the UN Security Council. Abe told a post-meeting joint press conference that Japan will contribute to Guinea's development in such areas as agriculture, fisheries, road construction, and healthcare. The premier also expressed Japan's desire to increase cooperation with Guinea, which is the chair of the African Union this year.

A-bomb survivors call for abolishment of nuclear arms

Tuesday evening's Asahi front-paged a report on remarks delivered by two survivors of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki at a meeting of nations participating in negotiations on a treaty to ban nuclear weapons held at the UN headquarters on Monday. The survivors called on the participating nations to conclude the treaty at an early date and expressed hope for nuclear weapons to be eliminated under the treaty. Several other papers ran similar inside-page reports.

ECONOMY

Japan, EU seeking early conclusion of EPA

Asahi wrote that political momentum is growing at the ongoing Japan-EU EPA negotiations to seek an early conclusion of the pact. The paper wrote that although major differences still exist over tariff issues, the two sides share a desire to demonstrate the importance of free trade to the Trump administration by reaching a rough agreement ahead of the G20 summit to be held on July 7-8 in Germany. Prime Minister Abe is making arrangements to hold talks with EU President Tusk and other senior EU officials ahead of the G20 summit. Noting that Japan and the EU are holding intensive discussions on tariff issues, Mainichi wrote that the premier expressed his desire to reach a rough agreement at an early date by telling the press on Monday that Japan will work to establish free and fair rules. Sankei wrote that if a meeting between Abe and Tusk is realized on July 6, it may be possible for Japan and the EU to announce a rough agreement there.

Toshiba to negotiate exclusively with consortium of U.S., Japanese, ROK firms

Nikkei and all other papers ran front-page reports saying that Toshiba is making final arrangements to decide to negotiate exclusively with a consortium of Japanese, U.S. and South Korean entities on the sale of Toshiba Memory. Toshiba plans to make a final decision at a board meeting today. The consortium includes the state-backed Innovation Network Corp. of Japan, the state-owned Development Bank of Japan, U.S. fund Bain Capital, and SK Hynix Inc. of South Korea. The papers

speculated that Toshiba chose the consortium led by Japanese entities based on the assessment that this will make it easier for Toshiba to prevent major layoffs and technology transfer to China.

Umemoto tapped as next TPP chief negotiator

Nikkei wrote that the Abe administration has decided to appoint Ambassador to Italy Kazuyoshi Umemoto as the next chief negotiator for the TPP, replacing Keiichi Katakami. Although Katakami has been concurrently serving as deputy foreign minister and TPP chief negotiator, Umemoto will probably work exclusively on the TPP. Umemoto will chair the chief negotiators' talks to be held in Japan in July and take the lead in discussions on the "TPP 11."

Former senior USTR official welcomes Japan's efforts to seek "TPP 11"

Asahi ran an interview with former Acting Deputy USTR Cutler, during which she commented on Japan's efforts to seek a "TPP 11" deal by saying that she welcomes Japan's efforts to lead discussions on the matter, although it will be a challenge for Tokyo to keep the other TPP nations united.

SECURITY

Fitzgerald collision may affect U.S.-Japan response to North Korea

Nikkei wrote that the recent collision involving the USS Fitzgerald may affect U.S.-Japan joint naval operations against North Korea's ballistic missiles because the two nations will lose one of the 11 Aegis vessels operating around Japan. Defense Minister Inada told a news conference on Tuesday that it is very important to ensure the U.S. military's deterrence in missile defense against North Korea. An unnamed senior Defense Ministry official said that the absence of one Aegis vessel will probably have no immediate impact, but an expert commented that the U.S. military may be forced to change its operational plans as a result of the loss.

In a related development, Asahi wrote briefly in its city news section that a 20-member team from the U.S. Coast Guard began investigating the collision on Tuesday. The paper speculated that the team will investigate the cause of the accident by questioning crewmembers of both ships.

SCIENCE

Illegal ivory trade case sent to prosecutors

Tuesday evening's Asahi and Nikkei wrote that the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department sent papers to prosecutors on a dealer and several other individuals on charges of violating the Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora by attempting to trade ivory products without the permission of the Environment Minister. According to the police, the dealer is suspected of trying to purchase 15 unregistered elephant tusks between December 2015 and February 2016 by falsifying documents on channels of acquisition with the help of other suspects.

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