



Morning Alert - Thursday, June 29, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning News

NHK gave top play to a report that Japan and the EU are likely to hold cabinet-level talks this week in an effort to reach a broad accord on an EPA, adding, however, that the two sides are still at odds over tariffs on cheese and automobiles. TV Asahi led with a report on the growing criticism of Defense Minister Inada for her having said that as the head of the SDF she was calling for support for an LDP candidate in the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly race. TBS and Fuji TV reported that a new recording of LDP lawmaker Mayuko Toyoda's harassment of her secretary has been released. NTV led with a report that a large volume of fire extinguishing foam was accidentally discharged at a parking lot in Kanagawa on Wednesday.

Top stories in national dailies included follow-up reports on the recent gaffe by Defense Minister Inada, saying that although Prime Minister Abe dismissed the opposition parties' calls for her resignation, this dealt another blow to the Abe administration (Asahi, Mainichi); a GOJ plan to use cruise ships for visitors' accommodations during the 2020 Olympics (Yomiuri); a plan by China's Huawei Technologies to build its first plant in Japan (Nikkei); and a damage suit filed by Toshiba against Western Digital for blocking of the sale of Toshiba Memory (Sankei).

## INTERNATIONAL

### Japan-China-ROK summit unlikely in July

All papers wrote that an envisaged summit meeting between the leaders of Japan, China, and South Korea in late July is now likely to be postponed. According to several GOJ sources, China has told Japan that it would be difficult for Beijing to accept an invitation to such a meeting in late July and

Tokyo has informed Seoul of the need for rescheduling. The papers speculated that cooled relations between China and South Korea over the deployment of the THAAD missile defense system are behind Beijing's reluctance to hold a trilateral summit, quoting a GOJ source as saying that the deteriorating relations between the two nations are affecting trilateral coordination. Mainichi wrote that the trilateral summit probably will not be held until after China's National Congress of the Communist Party in the autumn.

### **Japan becoming increasingly wary of South Korea's foreign policy**

Nikkei wrote that the GOJ is becoming increasingly concerned about South Korean President Moon's foreign policy, including its tough position on the comfort women issue, reconciliatory approach to North Korea, and negative attitude toward THAAD deployment. Prime Minister Abe is hoping to hold trilateral talks with President Trump and President Moon on the sidelines of the G20 summit to be held in Germany in early July to urge the ROK leader to join forces with them in applying pressure on North Korea.

### **Abe plans to visit India in September**

Mainichi wrote that Prime Minister Abe is making arrangements to visit India in September. The paper speculated that Abe will hold talks with Prime Minister Modi to discuss trilateral defense cooperation with the U.S., including joint exercises. The paper also conjectured that the two leaders will discuss Japan's exports of nuclear power generation technology.

### **Abe, Qatar Emir agree on peaceful settlement of tensions**

Asahi, Nikkei, and Sankei wrote that Prime Minister Abe told Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani over the phone on Wednesday that Japan hopes for the peaceful easing of tensions between Qatar and several major Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt, through dialogue and that Japan supports mediation efforts by Kuwait. The Qatari leader reportedly told Abe that Doha hopes to avoid an escalation of tensions and settle the situation in an amicable way and that its policy of stably providing Japan with LNG has not changed. On Tuesday, Abe spoke by phone with Saudi Arabia's new Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and urged him to exercise leadership in reducing tensions.

### **Lawmakers urge President to investigate DPRK's suspected abduction of U.S. student**

Sankei front-paged a report saying that Senator Mike Lee and Representative Chris Stewart of Utah sent a joint letter to President Trump urging him to launch intensive investigations by the State Department and intelligence agencies into the disappearance of David Sneddon, a Utah student who was last seen hiking in China's Yunnan Province in August 2004 and is suspected of being abducted by North Korea. The paper speculated that the death of Otto Warmbier prompted the lawmakers to take action.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Japan, EU to hold ministerial talks to seek agreement on EPA**

Asahi wrote that the EU's ministers in charge of trade and agriculture will visit Japan on Friday to achieve a breakthrough in the ongoing EPA talks. Arrangements are being made for talks between Foreign Minister Kishida and European Commissioner for Trade Malmström and between Agriculture Minister Yamamoto and Commissioner for Agriculture Hogan. The paper speculated that the talks between Kishida and Malmström may continue until next week. According to the paper, Japan and the EU are still at odds over tariffs on cheese.

### **Toshiba files lawsuit against Western Digital for blocking chip unit sale**

Mainichi, Yomiuri, Nikkei, and Sankei front-paged reports on Toshiba's announcement on Wednesday that it has filed a suit for damages against Western Digital seeking 120 billion yen in compensation for blocking the planned sale of its chip unit Toshiba Memory. The papers wrote that the move has further escalated the dispute between Toshiba and Western Digital because the U.S. company has asked a U.S. court to block the planned sale of the chip unit.

## **SOCIETY**

### **U.S. TIP report takes up coerced engagement in sexual acts for pornographic materials**

Wednesday evening's Asahi reported on the release on Tuesday of the State Department's 2017 Trafficking in Persons report. Concerning Japan, the annual report took up for the first time the issue of model and actor placement agencies using fraudulent recruitment techniques to coerce Japanese women and men to engage in sexual acts for the production of pornographic materials. The report took up the "JK business" as facilitating sex trafficking. The report ranked Japan as Tier 2, the second highest classification in the four-tier list, saying: "The Government of Japan does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking." The paper added that the DOS report placed China among the worst countries for human trafficking, putting it on a par with such nations as North Korea and Syria.

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