

---



# JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Friday, July 14, 2017

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).

## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that 2010 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Liu Xiaobo passed away on Thursday evening at the age of 61. NTV and Fuji TV led with reports on torrential rains in some parts of the Kanto and Tokai regions on Thursday. TBS carried a speculative report on who will become the head of the LDP's Tokyo chapter. TV Asahi gave top play to a report that Prime Minister Abe will attend special Diet sessions on the Kake Gakuen scandal even though the Diet is adjourned.

Top stories in national dailies included the passing of Liu Xiaobo (Asahi, Sankei); Rengo's agreement on a GOJ plan to introduce an overtime system called "white-collar exemptions" by revising the Labor Standards Law (Mainichi, Yomiuri); and an increase in the number of Japanese companies that are converting contract employees, part-timers, and other "non-regular" workers to permanent status as a way to secure human resources in a tight labor market (Nikkei).

## INTERNATIONAL

### Senate approves Hagerty as ambassador to Japan

Jiji Press reported from Washington that the U.S. Senate approved by a majority on Thursday the appointment of William Hagerty as the next U.S. Ambassador to Japan. Jiji said Hagerty is expected to arrive in Japan as the successor to Ambassador Kennedy sometime in August. According to Jiji, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Chairman Corker said Hagerty is "one of the most outstanding people the President has appointed as ambassador" and "there is no one who is more appropriate for this important post than him." Jiji added that DOS Japan Desk chief Joseph Young is expected to succeed Jason Hyland as deputy chief of mission in mid-August. NHK, TBS, Asahi, and Kyodo News filed similar online stories.

## **ROK leader invites Abe to attend opening ceremony of Winter Olympics**

Asahi wrote that during their bilateral talks held in Germany on July 7, South Korean President Moon invited Prime Minister Abe to attend the opening ceremony for the Winter Olympics to be held in PyeongChang in February 2018. According to the paper, the GOJ is inclined to accept the invitation.

## **Japan expresses support for Jordan**

Mainichi wrote that during a meeting with Prime Minister Mulki of Jordan on Thursday in Tokyo, Foreign Minister Kishida expressed Japan's support for the nation, which has been accepting refugees from Syria. The two officials agreed to work together to achieve stabilization in Syria. Nikkei wrote that Defense Minister Inada held separate talks with Mulki, who doubles as defense minister. The two defense chiefs agreed to promote defense exchanges between their nations and discussed issues related to North Korea and the Middle East.

## **SECURITY**

### **PACOM commander comments on response to North Korea**

Asahi reported on its telephone interview with PACOM Commander Harris on Thursday, during which he commented on the U.S. response to North Korea's provocations. According to the paper, Admiral Harris said we should continue to seek a solution through sanctions and diplomatic efforts, but we are always prepared for all military options. The commander commented that North Korea is apparently approaching its goal of developing a nuclear-armed ICBM capable of reaching the U.S. mainland. Admiral Harris was also quoted as saying that relations between the Pacific Command and the SDF are stronger than ever and that trilateral cooperation with South Korea is indispensable.

### **Saga governor expresses intention to accept GSDF Ospreys**

Thursday evening's Tokyo Shimbun wrote that during a regular press briefing on Thursday, Saga Governor Yamaguchi expressed his prefecture's intention to accept a GSDF plan to deploy Ospreys at Saga Airport. The governor stated that the prefecture's position on the issue has been made clear and that he will make efforts to gain the understanding of the local fishermen who own the land that would be used for the Ospreys. The paper wrote, however, that it remains to be seen how the situation will develop because the prefecture will need to obtain the consent of the local fishermen. The paper noted that the Ministry of Defense plans to construct on the west side on the airport a GSDF garrison for the deployment of a total of 17 Ospreys.

### **Japan to establish public-private organization to deal with cyberattacks**

Mainichi, Nikkei, and Sankei wrote that the GOJ held a meeting of its cybersecurity taskforce on Thursday and approved an interim report on its strategy toward 2018. The GOJ plans to establish a new public-private organization to improve its cybersecurity capabilities in preparation for the Tokyo Olympics in 2020.

## **ECONOMY**

## **TPP nations agree to make minimum amendments to existing accord**

All papers wrote that on Thursday the chief negotiators of the 11 TPP member states wrapped up their two-day conference on the future of the TPP agreement. The papers wrote that the 11 partners agreed to keep revisions to the existing TPP accord to a minimum in order to seek the early effectuation of a new agreement to be approved by the 11 nations. However, the papers also wrote that the participants failed to discuss the details of the possible amendments. Asahi wrote that the 11 nations agreed to aim to effectuate the accord under a new framework by reaching a rough agreement by the APEC summit in November. The paper added, however, that differences remained among the participants over to what extent they will review tariffs and investment rules under the new framework. Nikkei quoted Japan's chief negotiator Umemoto as telling reporters after chairing the two-day meeting that the 11 nations will move forward by upholding their goal of seeking high standards of trade liberalization. The paper speculated that the data protection period for biologic pharmaceuticals may be renegotiated because the U.S. insisted on a longer period in the negotiations on the agreed-upon accord.

### **POLITICS**

## **Abe agrees to appear at Diet committee sessions on Kake Gakuen scandal**

All papers wrote that Prime Minister Abe on Thursday agreed to an opposition demand for him to attend Diet committee sessions to address allegations he showed favoritism toward the Kake Educational Institution, which is run by a close friend of his. The papers speculated that Abe decided to accept the opposition's demand out of concern about the recent sharp plunge in public support for his cabinet. Although the Diet adjourned on June 18, both houses plan to convene budget committee meetings next week or later to directly hear Abe's explanation of the matter.

---