



Morning Alert - Friday, September 29, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

All TV networks and national papers led with the effective start of the general election campaign, portraying the race as a showdown between the ruling coalition headed by Prime Minister Abe and the Tokyo Governor Koike-led Party of Hope.

## POLITICS

### Voters asked to choose between Abe and Koike in upcoming election

All papers reported extensively on Prime Minister Abe's dissolution of the House of Representatives on Thursday. A general election will be held on Oct. 22 and the official campaign period will start on Oct. 10. The papers wrote that the election will be a de facto showdown between PM Abe and Tokyo Governor Koike as the leader of the Party of Hope, which is expected to absorb most of the members of the largest opposition Democratic Party (DP). Abe stressed during a stump speech in Tokyo on Thursday that only a coalition government of the LDP and the Komeito Party can defend the nation and build a bright future for the next generation. According to Asahi, the ruling coalition, which currently holds 322 seats in the Lower House, aims to secure a simple majority of 233 seats in the election. The papers wrote that attention is focused on whether Koike will run in this election, speculating that she will make a decision after gauging the public's expectations for her to return to national politics and whether they would criticize her resigning as governor.

### Democratic Party to effectively disband

The Democratic Party approved at a meeting of party lawmakers on Thursday President Maehara's proposal to join forces with the Party of Hope in the upcoming general election, effectively disbanding to form a united front against the ruling LDP. The papers wrote that although some DP

members expressed concern, none of them indicated clear opposition to the proposal. Koike welcomed Maehara's decision during a news conference held at the Japan National Press Club on Thursday by saying that it is a momentous decision. However, Koike added that she is not thinking of a "merger" of the two parties and will individually select DP members who should run on the ticket of her party depending on their views about constitutional revision and national security. Asahi wrote that 62 of the 81 DP lawmakers have expressed their intention to run in the upcoming election on the ticket of the Party of Hope. Yomiuri wrote that although the Party of Hope plans to expedite drawing up its party platform, it will probably run into difficulty deciding on specific policies.

Meanwhile, Japanese Communist Party (JCP) leader Shii criticized the DP's decision to join forces with the new party, saying that the DP has forsaken the existing coalition between the DP and the JCP.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Abe hopes to visit China, invite Chinese leader to visit Japan**

Asahi, Yomiuri, and Sankei wrote that at a ceremony held at a Tokyo hotel on Thursday to celebrate China's national day and the 45th anniversary of diplomatic normalization with Japan, Prime Minister Abe expressed eagerness to visit China and invite President Xi to visit Japan next year. This was the first time in 15 years for a Japanese prime minister to attend such an event. Saying that he will make preparations to invite Chinese Premier Li to attend a trilateral summit between Japan, China, and South Korea in Japan by the end of this year, Abe added that he would like to visit China afterward and hopes that President Xi will visit Japan.

### **Seoul district designates comfort women memorial as "public object"**

Thursday evening's Nikkei and Yomiuri reported on an announcement made by a district authority in Seoul that it has designated the comfort woman statue in front of the Japanese Embassy a "public object," speculating that the move is intended to make the relocation or removal of the controversial memorial impossible.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Toshiba seals chip unit sales deal with Japan-U.S.-South Korean consortium**

All papers wrote that Toshiba Corp. signed a deal on Thursday to sell its chip unit to a Japanese-U.S.-South Korean consortium for 2 trillion yen. Japanese entities will hold a controlling stake in Toshiba Memory Corp., with Toshiba and Hoya Corp retaining 50.1% of voting rights, while Bain Capital, which leads the consortium, will have 49.9%. Yomiuri wrote that there is concern over whether the deal will move forward smoothly because of opposition from Western Digital.

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