
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Morning Alert - Friday, October 20, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that Typhoon Lan is approaching Japan, saying that it is likely to bring heavy rain over the weekend. All commercial networks led with reports that sumo stable master Nishonoseki was seriously injured after falling off a bicycle in Funabashi, Chiba, on Thursday evening.

Top stories in national dailies included final arrangements for Emperor Akihito to abdicate at the end of March 2019 (Asahi); Nissan's suspension of new auto shipments in Japan due to an inspection scandal (Mainichi, Yomiuri); and projections that the ruling coalition will likely gain close to 300 seats in the Lower House in the Oct. 22 general election (Nikkei).

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump may visit MSDF helicopter carrier during Japan trip

Sankei wrote that it learned from several GOJ sources on Thursday that President Trump is considering the idea of visiting the MSDF's helicopter carrier Izumo together with Prime Minister Abe during his scheduled visit to Japan on Nov. 5-7. The paper speculated that the envisaged visit to the MSDF's largest vessel is aimed at demonstrating at home and abroad the strong unity between the U.S. and Japan amid North Korea's continued nuclear and missile development. If the idea is realized, President Trump will be the first U.S. president to visit the vessel. The paper wrote that although the Izumo is homeported at Yokosuka, it may be moved to Tokyo's Harumi Pier for the President's visit. However, if it is not technically possible for the vessel to moor at Harumi Pier, the President may fly to Yokosuka by helicopter. The paper added that British Prime Minister May and Philippine President Duterte visited the Izumo when they traveled to Japan in August and June,

respectively.

POLITICS

GOJ, ruling coalition eye special Diet session on Nov. 1

Asahi, Yomiuri, and Nikkei wrote that the GOJ and the ruling coalition are making final arrangements to convene a special Diet session on Nov. 1 to hold a vote to select Prime Minister Abe as premier again. The prime minister will likely launch a new cabinet on the same day. The paper wrote that the GOJ and the ruling coalition decided to hold the vote on Nov. 1 in view of the need to launch the new cabinet ahead of President Trump's scheduled visit to Japan on Nov. 5-7.

SECURITY

U.S. Navy invites press to visit USS Ronald Reagan

Yomiuri and Nikkei carried reports from the USS Ronald Reagan, a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier that is involved in the ongoing joint naval exercises with the South Korean Navy in waters off the Korean Peninsula. According to the papers, the ship hosted journalists from the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. The papers reported on carrier flight drills including FA-18 Super Hornets. Yomiuri quoted Commanding Officer Donnelly as saying that the vessel is operating in the region with all possible scenarios in mind.

ECONOMY

Japanese automakers confirm safety of Kobe Steel aluminum in their cars

All papers wrote that Toyota Motor and other Japanese automakers said on Thursday that the aluminum plates provided by Kobe Steel and used in their vehicles satisfy the applicable statutory standards and their own internal standards despite the steelmaker's data fabrication scandal.

However, Mainichi wrote that the impact of the scandal is spreading beyond Japanese manufacturers, as the U.S. Department of Justice has requested Kobe Steel to submit documents related to the data fabrication and the European Aviation Safety Agency has advised aircraft manufacturers to stop procuring materials from Kobe Steel if possible until the safety of its products is confirmed. The paper wrote that the Justice Department may decide to fine Kobe Steel depending on the extent of the fabrication because such U.S. manufacturers as Boeing and General Motors are using materials made by Kobe Steel.

Change of government in New Zealand likely to affect TPP talks

All papers reported on the change of government in New Zealand for the first time in nine years following the general election held there on Sept. 23. The papers wrote that the change is likely to affect the ongoing TPP negotiations because Labor Party leader Ardern, who is expected to become the next prime minister, has openly called for a partial review of the existing TPP agreement. Asahi

wrote that the GOJ has already begun studying the idea of first effectuating the TPP agreement by 10 TPP members, excluding the U.S. and New Zealand, and asking Wellington to sign it later.

