


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Monday, November 27, 2017

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Morning news

NHK led with a report that the Yokozuna Deliberation Council will hold a meeting today to discuss the alleged assault by sumo grand champion Harumafuji. All commercial networks also reported on Harumafuji as well as the closing day of the Kyushu Grand Sumo Tournament.

Top stories in national dailies included a GOJ estimate that temporary housing for at least 2.05 million people will be needed if there is a major quake along Nankai Trough (Asahi); the expanding use of Financial technology (Fintech) in Sweden (Mainichi); planned talks between Japan and Britain on a visiting forces agreement (Yomiuri); an assessment of labor productivity in Japan (Nikkei); and Russian hacker groups' cyberattacks on the Democratic National Committee beginning in 2015 (Sankei).

AMBASSADOR

Ambassador Hagerty says U.S.-Japan relationship is "stronger than ever"

The Sunday edition of the Nagoya-based Chunichi Shimbun front-paged its recent one-on-one interview with Ambassador Hagerty. The paper wrote that the Ambassador highly praised President Trump's recent visit to Japan by saying that the relationship between the United States and Japan is now stronger than ever. Concerning the United States' response to North Korea, the Ambassador stated that the leaders of the U.S. and Japan are in agreement on ratcheting up the diplomatic pressure on the DPRK.

Concerning the U.S. trade deficit with Japan, the Ambassador was quoted as saying that there have been serious imbalances in the agricultural sector and that it is necessary to maintain efforts to support innovation in pharmaceuticals and medical devices, expressing hope that Japan will continue to support research and development in the sector through its pricing structure.

Regarding Japan's planned purchase of defense equipment from the U.S., the Ambassador stated that the President's primary focus is national security. The Ambassador added that although the trade deficit with Japan may be reduced as a result, strategic collaboration is the

primary goal and that the President believes that advanced U.S. technologies will help Japan enhance its defense capabilities.

Concerning Japanese automakers' investment in the United States, the Ambassador was quoted as saying that Toyota's and Mazda's recent announcements on their construction of new plants in the U.S. are very encouraging.

INTERNATIONAL

Russian foreign minister expresses concern about Japan's Aegis Ashore plan

All Saturday morning papers reported on Foreign Minister Kono's meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in Moscow on Friday. Mainichi wrote that Lavrov expressed opposition to Japan's plan to procure the Aegis Ashore land-based missile defense system by saying that it violates the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty between the U.S. and Russia. However, Kono stated in reply that the deployment will not pose a threat to Russia because it is intended to defend Japan from North Korean threats. Yomiuri wrote that the Russian foreign minister expressed at a post-meeting joint press conference his nation's concern about the possibility of Washington taking military action against the DPRK by saying that it is worrisome that Prime Minister Abe said Japan stands 100% with the United States. Kono and Lavrov also discussed the planned joint economic activities on the Northern Territories and agreed to apply further pressure on North Korea to urge Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear and missile programs. However, Lavrov added that dialogue is the best way to resolve the North Korean issues.

South Korean parliament passes "comfort women day" bill

All Saturday morning papers wrote that the South Korean parliament passed on Friday a bill to officially designate Aug. 14 as a day to commemorate the former comfort women. This is the date in 1991 when Kim Hak-soon became the first victim to give testimony about the hardships of the former comfort women. The bill will revise the existing law on providing support to the victims. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented on the passage of the bill by saying that he feels very uncomfortable about it and that Tokyo is concerned that it will throw cold water on the bilateral ties between Japan and South Korea at a time when the two nations are making efforts to develop a forward-looking relationship. Suga also said that the GOJ has lodged a fresh protest with the South Korean government over the bill's passage.

Secretaries general of LDP, Komeito to visit China

Monday's Nikkei and Sankei wrote that LDP Secretary General Nikai and his Komeito counterpart Inoue have decided to visit China in late December to attend a regular meeting of the ruling parties' exchange with the Chinese Communist Party. The Japanese politicians will seek to meet with President Xi and other senior officials during their visit to Beijing.

Foreign Minister Kono to visit U.S., UK, France, Middle East

Sunday's Yomiuri wrote that Foreign Minister Kono is making arrangements to visit the U.S., the UK, France, Bahrain, and the UAE from early to mid-December. The foreign minister plans to attend the climate summit to be held in Paris on Dec. 12 and participate in a 2+2 meeting with the UK in London on Dec. 14 before heading to New York where he will take part in a UNSC ministerial meeting. Ahead of his planned European and U.S. trip, Kono will visit the UAE to urge the nation to fully implement UNSC sanctions resolutions restricting the acceptance of North Korean workers and attend a Middle East security meeting to be held in Bahrain.

Poll: 53% see no need to hurry rapprochement with China

Monday's Nikkei wrote that in its nationwide public opinion survey conducted on Nov. 24-26, 53% of respondents said that it is not necessary for Japan to hurry to improve relations with China if Tokyo has to make concessions. Some 32% said that Japan may have to make concessions if doing so serves to improve ties with Beijing. Asked how the international community should deal with North Korea's continued nuclear and missile development, 53% chose strengthened economic sanctions and 31% favored dialogue as a means of resolving the issue, and 9% said military action should be considered. The same poll showed that the approval rating of the Abe cabinet stood at 52%, down 2 points from the previous survey on Nov. 1-2. Disapproval remained almost flat, up 1 point to 39%.

SECURITY

Chinese student investigated for exporting camera for military use to China

All Saturday morning papers wrote that the Metropolitan Police Department announced on Friday that it has arrested a Chinese student living in Tokyo on suspicion of violating the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Law by exporting a U.S.-made infrared camera used by the SDF to China via Hong Kong without permission from the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. The camera in question is on a Japanese list of items that require GOJ permission for export given that their technology could be used for military purposes. The student bought the Star Sapphire III infrared camera after placing a bid of about 550,000 yen on Yahoo Japan's auction site in February 2016, and sold it to a Chinese company in Guangzhou dealing in military equipment in May 2016 for about 2.5 million yen. The camera was originally mounted on a transport ministry relief helicopter used to respond to disaster situations and was supposed to have been dismantled and destroyed after the ministry decided to equip its helicopters with an upgraded model in 2015.

Sunday's Yomiuri and Asahi ran follow-up reports saying that the student has bought a number of cameras and other sensitive equipment on Internet auction sites and exported about 10 of them to China since arriving in Japan in 2015.

Foreign Minister Kono to visit Okinawa

Monday's Asahi wrote that Foreign Minister Kono is making arrangements to visit Okinawa on Dec. 1-2 for the first time since he took up his current post in August. Kono plans to discuss Futenma relocation and other issues with Governor Onaga. The paper added that MOFA is considering the idea of asking American schools on U.S. military bases in Okinawa to accept Japanese students to help them improve their abilities with the goal of facilitating their finding employment.

Okinawa Marines modify liberty policy

Saturday morning's Mainichi and Sunday's Asahi wrote that Okinawa Area Coordinator Nicholson posted a message on the III MEF Facebook site on Nov. 22 saying that he will relax part of the strengthened discipline measures imposed on Marines in Okinawa following the arrest of a Marine over his alleged involvement in a recent fatal traffic accident. Following the announcement on Nov. 22 off-base liberty for Okinawa Marines was authorized from 5 a.m. to midnight.

Japan, UK to launch talks on visiting forces agreement

Monday's Yomiuri gave top play to a report saying that the governments of Japan and the UK have decided to launch talks on a visiting forces agreement (VFA), which will stipulate the legal status of SDF and British military personnel visiting each other's nation, to facilitate their reciprocal activities. The two governments plan to confirm at their 2+2 meeting to be held on Dec. 14 in London the promotion of joint training between their forces and the launch of talks on a VFA by the end of next year. The paper speculated that Japan is hoping to expand defense

cooperation with the UK, a quasi-ally, in preparation for a possible deterioration in the situation on the Korean Peninsula or in the East and South China Seas.

60% of Japanese worried about cyber terrorism

Sunday's Yomiuri and Mainichi reported on the results of a nationwide survey conducted by the Cabinet Office gauging public opinion about the impact of scientific technology on society. When asked what kind of issues make them concerned about the development of scientific technology, 61% of respondents cited cyber terrorism and crimes using information technology. Noting that the number of people expressing concern about IT-related crimes rose by 17.2 points from the previous survey conducted seven years ago, Yomiuri wrote that the recent increase in cyber terrorism in the world has affected the views of the Japanese public.

SCIENCE

Japan aims to participate in manned mission to Moon

Sunday's [Yomiuri](#) gave top play to a report saying that the GOJ has decided to aim to conduct manned exploration on the Moon by participating in NASA's Deep Space Gateway project, in which the United States plans to put a space station in lunar orbit in the late 2020s. A GOJ panel discussing Japan's space policy will put together a report on the issue in the near future. The paper wrote that Japan is hoping that it will be able to obtain scientific data and strengthen its competitiveness in the field of space utilization by joining an international space probe.

SOCIETY

Okinawa Marine indicted for using fake credit card

Saturday evening's Asahi wrote that a Marine stationed at Camp Kinser was arrested on Oct. 29 when he tried to use a fake credit card at a department store in Tokyo and indicted on Nov. 17 on the charge of attempted fraud. Saturday's Sankei ran a similar report.

