



Morning Alert - Wednesday, January 17, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK and TV Asahi led with stories on a ministerial meeting in Canada where Foreign Minister Kono reportedly said in a speech that nations “should not be blinded by North Korea’s charm offensive.” NTV led with a report on a fire that broke out in a factory in Tokushima, while Fuji TV reported that professional shogi players Sota Fujii and Yoshiharu Habu will officially face off next month. TBS led with a report on the award of the Akutagawa and Naoki literature prizes.

Asahi, Mainichi, and Yomiuri gave top play to reports on a Justice Ministry panel’s draft reform plan for Japan’s Civil Code that would favor the spouse in inheritance. Nikkei and Sankei led with reports on a GOJ plan to offer pension recipients the option of starting to receive their pension at the age of 70 or later.

INTERNATIONAL

Presidents Trump, Xi speak by phone

All national dailies wrote that the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced on Tuesday that President Xi spoke by phone with President Trump on Tuesday. According to a Chinese briefing, Xi told the U.S. leader that some positive changes are emerging in the Korean Peninsula situation and that all parties should strive to maintain this rare momentum to create a positive environment for dialogue with North Korea. Yomiuri and Nikkei wrote that President Trump reportedly told his Chinese counterpart that he values the important role to be played by China.

Foreign ministers from 20 nations gather in Vancouver to discuss DPRK

Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri, and Nikkei reported on the Vancouver Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on Security and Stability on the Korean Peninsula co-hosted by the United States and Canada on

Tuesday. Foreign Minister Kono reportedly stated at a welcome dinner held on the eve of the meeting that talks for the sake of talks would be meaningless and that Japan supports the United States' position of putting all options on the table. Asahi wrote that the focus of attention will be what message the participants will send North Korea at the multilateral conference. Mainichi wrote that whether the participants will be able to come up with effective measures to prevent the North's suspected smuggling of refined oil products at sea to evade UNSC sanctions will be the focal point of discussion. Nikkei wrote that although China and Russia are suspected of involvement in North Korea's illicit oil trade at sea, these nations are absent from the meeting in Vancouver.

Abe expresses Japan's support for Serbia's efforts to join EU

All national dailies on Tuesday evening reported on Prime Minister Abe's talks with Serbian President Vucic in Belgrade on Monday. Abe reportedly expressed Japan's support for Serbia's efforts to join the EU and Japan's support for reform efforts by the six western Balkans nations, including Serbia. The two leaders confirmed their nations' cooperation in dealing with North Korea. Mainichi added that Abe and Vucic also agreed to support Japanese firms' efforts to make inroads into Serbia.

Abe confirms with Romanian leader cooperation against DPRK

Sankei, Mainichi, and Nikkei reported on Prime Minister Abe's meeting with Romanian President Iohannis in Bucharest on Tuesday, saying that the two leaders agreed that their nations will increase their pressure on North Korea to the maximum extent and enhance their economic relations and people-to-people exchanges.

SECURITY

NHK issues erroneous online bulletin on North Korean missile launch

All national dailies wrote that on Tuesday evening NHK erroneously issued an online bulletin saying that North Korea had fired a missile. At around 6:55 p.m. the broadcaster issued on its news website and app a news flash stating in Japanese: "North Korea appears to have launched a missile. J-Alert. The government urges people to shelter inside buildings or underground." Several minutes later, NHK posted a message saying that the bulletin was a mistake and no J-Alert warning had been issued. An NHK announcer also acknowledged the mistake during the broadcaster's "News 7" program. According to the broadcaster, an employee erroneously activated a device for sending out a news flash online.

ECONOMY

U.S.-Japan nuclear pact automatically extended

Asahi wrote that the U.S.-Japan nuclear pact will be extended automatically beyond the deadline of July 16 because as of Tuesday neither party had notified the other of its intention to terminate the agreement. The paper explained that according to the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy,

the United States and Japan were required to notify the other party six months ahead of the expiration of the pact if they sought its review, but neither did so. Asahi wrote that the pact will remain in force indefinitely unless one of the parties notifies the other of its intention to terminate it. Yomiuri ran a similar report saying that the extension of the pact will allow Japan to continue its nuclear fuel cycle program.

