



Morning Alert - Wednesday, January 24, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that Prime Minister Abe is making final arrangements to attend the PyeongChang Winter Olympics and meet with ROK President Moon in South Korea. Abe is expected to call on Seoul to thoroughly implement the Japan-ROK agreement on the comfort women and confirm close cooperation over North Korea. All commercial networks led with reports on the eruption of Mount Kusatsu-Shirane in Gunma Prefecture on Tuesday.

Asahi, Mainichi, and Yomiuri gave top play to reports on the volcano eruption in Gunma, while Sankei led with its interview with Prime Minister Abe in which he expressed his intention to visit South Korea to attend the opening ceremony of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics and hold talks with President Moon. Nikkei led with a report on Japanese automakers' plans to sell electric vehicles in China.

SECURITY

U.S. military helicopter makes precautionary landing in Okinawa

Asahi, Mainichi, and Tokyo Shimbun front-paged reports saying that an MCAS Futenma-based AH-1 attack helicopter made a precautionary landing at a municipal heliport on Tonaki Island, which is located about 60 kilometers northwest of Naha, at around 8:05 p.m. on Tuesday. The helicopter's crew were not injured and there are no reports of injuries or property damage in the local community. According to Japanese government sources, the U.S. military told the GOJ that the aircraft made a precautionary landing in response to a warning light indicating a malfunction in the hydraulic system. The three papers wrote that this is the third incident involving a U.S. military helicopter in Okinawa this year following one on Ikei Island on Jan. 6 and another in Yomitan on Jan. 8. Yomiuri, Nikkei,

and Sankei ran similar reports in their inside pages. NHK and all commercial broadcasters aired similar reports this morning.

ECONOMY

11 TPP members agree to sign new pact in March

All national dailies ran front- or inside-page reports saying that the 11 member states discussing the TPP finalized at their chief negotiators' meeting in Tokyo on Tuesday the text of a new accord and agreed to hold a signing ceremony on March 8 in Chile. Although Canada had expressed reluctance to sign the accord at an early date, it eventually agreed to act in concert with the other members.

INTERNATIONAL

South Korean minister expresses intention to dissolve comfort women foundation

All national dailies wrote that South Korea's Gender Equality and Family Minister Chung Hyun-back said during a recent interview with a South Korean media outlet that the ROK intends to dissolve within the year the foundation set up under the 2015 Japan-South Korea agreement on comfort women. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented on the remarks by the ROK minister on Tuesday by reportedly saying: "We are not thinking of shifting the agreement even one millimeter." MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director General Kanasugi told a minister counselor at the South Korean Embassy in Tokyo that the statement runs counter to Japan's position that the accord should be implemented steadily.

However, Asahi added that a spokesperson for South Korea's Foreign Ministry told reporters on Tuesday that the Moon administration has made no decision on the disposition of the 1 billion yen that Japan contributed to the foundation.

Komeito chief holds talks with ROK envoy to Japan

Yomiuri wrote that Komeito Chief Representative Yamaguchi held talks with South Korean Ambassador to Japan Lee Su-hoon on Tuesday. Concerning South Korea's dialogue with North Korea, the ambassador reportedly said that the Moon administration is hoping that the dialogue will lead to the denuclearization of the DPRK. Yamaguchi reportedly called on Seoul to maintain the trilateral coordination with the United States by saying that although the inter-Korean talks are important, it is also important for South Korea to act in unity with the international community.

