



Morning Alert - Thursday, February 22, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

All broadcasters led with reports on the Japan women's team winning a gold medal in pursuit skating at the PyeongChang Olympics on Wednesday.

Asahi, Yomiuri, and Sankei gave top play to the Olympics, while Mainichi led with a report on flaws in Labor Ministry data on overtime performed by Japanese workers and Nikkei gave top coverage to Seven & i Holding's planned introduction of flextime.

INTERNATIONAL

North Korea cancelled meeting with Vice President Pence at last minute

Yomiuri reported on remarks on Tuesday by State Department Spokesperson Nauert, in which she reportedly disclosed that the North Korean delegation to the PyeongChang Olympics cancelled a meeting with Vice President Pence at the last minute. Sankei cited a Washington Post report saying that North Korea cancelled the meeting due to the Vice President's reference to strengthened sanctions and his meeting with North Korean defectors. Meanwhile, Nikkei quoted Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga as saying at a news conference on Wednesday that Prime Minister Abe had close discussions with Vice President Pence on how to respond to the North Korean delegation and received sufficient information from the United States.

Ambassador Sugiyama underscores U.S.-Japan coordination against DPRK

Mainichi wrote that concerning reports on a planned meeting between Vice President Pence and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's sister Kim Yo Jong in Seoul earlier this month, Ambassador to the U.S. Shinsuke Sugiyama reportedly stated in a speech in Tokyo on Wednesday that there is no difference between the United States and Japan in their policies of not holding dialogue for the sake

of dialogue and increasing the pressure on Pyongyang to the maximum extent. Sugiyama reportedly added that ultimately the problem will not be resolved without negotiations, but neither Japan nor the United States believe that now is the time for dialogue.

ROK foreign minister criticizes comfort women accord with Japan

Asahi wrote that South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha criticized the 2015 comfort women agreement with Japan during a parliamentary session on Wednesday by reportedly saying that the negotiations on the accord failed to address the essence of the issue – the victims' human rights. However, Kang reportedly added that she acknowledges that the governments of South Korea and Japan concluded the agreement.

Japan decides to continue providing support to Cambodia

Asahi wrote that MOFA announced on Wednesday that Japan authorized grant assistance worth 800 million yen for the government of Cambodia to support its general election in July. Japan plans to provide ballot boxes and other items to help the nation carry out the election smoothly. The paper wrote that the EU and the United States expressed their intention to suspend assistance for the election following the Cambodian Supreme Court's ruling in November last year to dissolve the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party. The paper quoted a Japanese diplomatic source as saying that if Japan ended its support for Cambodia, China would likely increase its assistance to the nation.

Japan to host 2019 G20 meeting in Osaka

Mainichi and Sankei wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga officially announced during a regular press briefing on Wednesday that Japan will host the 2019 G20 summit in Osaka. Suga also said that a G20 meeting of financial ministers and central bank governors will be held in Fukuoka.

SECURITY

Okinawa prefectural assembly calls for suspension of Futenma operations

Wednesday evening's Asahi, Mainichi, and Tokyo Shimbun wrote that in response to the incident in which a part fell from a Futenma-based Osprey and washed up on the shore of Ikei Island in Okinawa, the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly unanimously adopted a protest resolution and written opinion on Wednesday. Mainichi and Tokyo Shimbun wrote that the local assembly called for an immediate halt to MCAS Futenma operations and flights by Futenma-based aircraft over non-military land.

MSDF to clean up oil leak from U.S. military aircraft's fuel tanks

Mainichi wrote that a unit of 25 personnel of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force was dispatched to Lake Ogawara in Aomori Prefecture on Wednesday at the request of the prefectural government to survey the leakage of oil from two tanks that were jettisoned by a U.S. fighter jet on Tuesday. The paper quoted Defense Minister Onodera as reportedly telling the press on Wednesday that although

the oil leakage is an issue that the U.S. military should deal with, the U.S. side has asked the SDF to address the issue.

ECONOMY

GOJ announces document on new TPP agreement

Mainichi wrote that the governments of Japan and New Zealand on Wednesday finalized and announced the text and annexes of a new TPP accord agreed upon by 11 nations that will be signed in Chile on March 8. According to the paper, the document says that other nations are welcome to participate in the accord. The paper also said that although the new accord is based on the agreement signed by 12 nations including the United States, a total of 22 items from the original accord have been frozen. Yomiuri ran a similar report saying that the new accord upholds the tariff elimination and reduction that was agreed on by the 12 nations in the original TPP accord, but modifies some conditions for effectuation. According to the paper, Japan plans to exchange 14 side letters with the other TPP nations.

