



Morning Alert - Tuesday, March 6, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met with South Korean envoys in Pyongyang yesterday, saying that the Blue House announced this morning that the North Korean leader hosted a banquet for them. Fuji TV and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that Kazuhiro Tsuji became the first Japanese to win an Oscar for makeup and hairstyling. NTV led with a report on the stormy weather in the Tokyo region last night. TBS reported that Prime Minister Abe was grilled at the Diet over the Moritomo Gakuen scandal.

Asahi, Mainichi, and Sankei led with reports on an announcement by the office of the South Korean president on Monday that special envoys of President Moon held talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang on Monday. Yomiuri and Nikkei led with reports on the first day of the National People's Congress of China on Monday.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Kim Jong Un meets with South Korean envoys

All national dailies front-paged reports on an announcement by the office of the South Korean president on Monday that special envoys of President Moon held talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang on Monday. However, the ROK government has not yet given a detailed briefing on the talks. This was the first time for Kim Jong Un to hold direct talks with South Korean officials since he became North Korea's supreme leader in 2011. The dailies speculated that the envoys probably delivered a letter to Kim from Moon and urged the DPRK leader to hold dialogue with the United States for denuclearization.

Yomiuri quoted Foreign Minister Kono as telling reporters on Monday that Japan will receive a briefing from South Korea after the envoys return and that there will be no change in the policy agreed on by the United States, Japan, and South Korea to apply maximum pressure on Pyongyang. Mainichi quoted Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga as telling a press briefing on Monday that past talks with the DPRK have achieved no progress in denuclearization and that Japan hopes South Korea will keep this in mind when dealing with North Korea.

Nikkei wrote in an analytical piece that there is concern within the GOJ that the talks between Kim Jong Un and the South Korean envoys could lead to U.S.-DPRK dialogue that will not necessarily be premised on denuclearization. The daily speculated that Tokyo is concerned that the pressure on the DPRK to denuclearize will weaken if Washington agrees to hold dialogue with Pyongyang following Seoul.

### **Japan releases photos of suspected ship-to-ship transfers involving DPRK**

Mainichi wrote that the GOJ's recent release of photos showing suspected ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum and other goods to North Korean vessels was probably aimed at closing loopholes in the international coalition against North Korea by sending a warning not only to the DPRK but also to other nations involved in this trade.

### **U.S. aircraft carrier makes port visit to Vietnam**

Asahi, Mainichi, Nikkei, and Sankei reported on a port call made by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Carl Vinson at Danang, Vietnam, on Monday. This was the first time for a U.S. aircraft carrier to visit Vietnam since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Asahi and Sankei speculated that the port call was intended to send a warning to China over its construction of artificial islands and military bases in the South China Sea. Asahi quoted U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Daniel Kritenbrink as reportedly telling the press in Danang on Monday that the United States will ensure prosperity and freedom of navigation in the region.

### **Japan calls for transparency in China's military buildup**

Mainichi and Nikkei reported that in response to China's announcement on the first day of the National People's Congress on Monday that it will increase its defense budget by 8.1% in 2018, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told a press briefing on Monday that Tokyo will call on Beijing to increase transparency in its defense policy and keep a close eye on further developments.

## **SOCIETY**

### **Memorial held in New York for 3/11 victims**

Monday evening's Asahi and Yomiuri reported on a memorial held at a New York church on Sunday for the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake ahead of the seventh anniversary of the disaster on March 11. This is an annual event organized by a local volunteer group, and about 440 people,

including students from Futaba Future High School in Fukushima, participated in the memorial. Nikkei, Mainichi, and Tokyo Shimbun ran a similar Kyodo story.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Japan to discuss FTA with Faroe Islands**

Mainichi wrote that it has learned from a GOJ source that Japan has agreed with the Faroe Islands, an autonomous country within the Kingdom of Denmark in the North Atlantic, to launch talks on a bilateral FTA. The paper wrote that this is the first time for Japan to discuss an FTA with an autonomous country.

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