


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Thursday, April 12, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK, NTV, and Fuji TV gave top play to a report that a 19-year-old police officer was arrested early this morning on charges of fatally shooting a police sergeant at a police box in Hikone, Shiga, on Wednesday. TBS and TV Asahi led with reports that one person has been found dead and five are still missing following a major landslide in Nakatsu, Oita, yesterday.

Top stories in national dailies included the Moritomo land deal scandal (Asahi, Mainichi); Prime Minister Abe's denial that he instructed his staff to favor Kake Gakuen in the veterinary school project in Ehime (Yomiuri); a GOJ plan to allow foreigners to continue working in Japan for up to five years after finishing technical intern programs (Nikkei); and a police officer's fatal shooting of a colleague (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

Asahi claims U.S. plans to raise abduction issue at summit with DPRK

Asahi claimed in a Washington-dated report that an unnamed USG official told the paper on Wednesday that President Trump is planning to raise the issue of North Korea's abductions of Japanese nationals during his talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that are expected to take place by early June. The paper quoted the official as reportedly saying that the United States stands with Japan one hundred percent on the abduction issue and will raise the issue at the planned U.S.-DPRK summit. The paper speculated that the Trump administration may be planning to use human rights issues as a bargaining chip in its talks with the DPRK. However, the paper also quoted another USG official as reportedly saying that although President Trump will probably accept Prime Minister Abe's request for the U.S. to raise the abduction issue in the summit with North Korea because Japan is an important ally, Washington's priorities are different from Tokyo's.

FM Kono asks ROK President Moon to raise abduction issue at inter-Korean summit

All national dailies reported on Foreign Minister Kono's meeting with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha in Seoul on Wednesday. The papers wrote that although Kono asked ROK officials to put the abduction issue on the agenda of the inter-Korean summit slated for April 27, the South Koreans stopped short of making a commitment. Yomiuri wrote that Kono and Moon agreed to maintain maximum pressure on Pyongyang and work closely with the United States.

Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri, and Nikkei wrote that although the two nations agreed to cooperate in policy toward North Korea, there remain differences between them, with Tokyo attaching importance to pressure and Seoul giving priority to dialogue.

Japan, China to hold economic dialogue on April 16

All national dailies reported on MOFA's announcement on Wednesday that Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will visit Japan on April 15-17 for talks with Foreign Minister Kono on the first day of his visit. MOFA also announced that Japan and China will resume their high-level economic dialogue in Tokyo on April 16 after a hiatus of about eight years.

Japan, China seek early implementation of military communication mechanism

Mainichi wrote that defense officials of Japan and China held a working-group meeting in Beijing on Wednesday and agreed to accelerate discussions on the early implementation of their maritime and air communication mechanism to prevent accidental clashes. Yomiuri ran a similar report.

Japan, Bhutan confirm economic cooperation

Asahi reported on a meeting between Prime Minister Abe and Bhutanese Prime Minister Tobgay at the Kantei on Wednesday, saying that the two leaders agreed to promote economic cooperation between their nations, including people-to-people exchanges. Nikkei, Mainichi, and Sankei added that the two leaders also agreed on the need to put maximum pressure on North Korea.

CCS Suga comments on UN Security Council's failure to pass U.S.-drafted resolution on Syria

Yomiuri and Sankei wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented at a press briefing on Wednesday on the UN Security Council's failure to pass a U.S.-drafted resolution calling for a new inquiry into the Assad regime's suspected use of chemical weapons because of a Russian veto. Yomiuri quoted Suga as saying the failure to pass the resolution very regrettable and that Japan will continue to cooperate with the international community in determining the facts, while Sankei quoted him as saying that it would be unacceptable if chemical weapons were indeed used and that Japan strongly condemns their use and will work closely with the United States and other relevant nations.

SECURITY

U.S. military to resume parachute drop drills at Yokota today

Asahi wrote that concerning an incident in which a parachute was discovered on a junior high school tennis court in Hamura in Tokyo on Tuesday, Colonel Mark Mullarkey of Yokota AB visited Hamura City Hall and the school to apologize for the incident. The colonel explained that parachute drop drills, which have been suspended since the incident, will be resumed on Thursday. Nikkei wrote that Yokota AB also announced on Wednesday that the drills will be resumed on Thursday. The base also reportedly said that its investigation has found that the parachute was dropped in accordance with the proper procedures. The paper quoted Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga as saying at a press briefing on Wednesday that the U.S. military has told the Japanese government that it would suspend parachute drop drills until the cause of the incident had been determined.

U.S. Marine sentenced to 4-year prison term for fatal drunk driving accident in Okinawa

Wednesday evening's Asahi and Yomiuri wrote that the Naha District Court sentenced on Wednesday an Okinawa-based U.S. Marine to four years in prison for causing the death a 61-year-old man in an auto accident while driving under the influence of alcohol last November. According to the ruling, the Marine, who was driving an official U.S. military truck, ran a red light and entered an intersection in the city of Naha at a speed of 88 kilometers per hour, hitting a light pickup truck and killing its Japanese driver at around 5:25 a.m. on Nov. 19, 2017. The presiding judge said the Marine's behavior was extremely dangerous and his negligence is serious.

