



Morning Alert - Thursday, May 24, 2018

The following information reflects the reporting of the cited news media and does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Japan Media Highlights is intended for USG use only and should not be forwarded. Visit the website [here](#). For more information, contact [TokyoMATT@state.gov](mailto:TokyoMATT@state.gov).

## HEADLINES

### Morning news

All networks gave top play to reports on a press conference held yesterday by Nihon University's football team coaches during which they denied allegations that they ordered players to "crush" the Kwansei Gakuin quarterback.

All national dailies other than Nikkei gave top play to reports on the Finance Ministry's submission to the Diet of documents on negotiations on the controversial sale of state-owned land to Moritomo Gakuen. Nikkei led with a report on the results of its survey of 100 major Japanese companies showing that nearly 80% of them are not yet fully compliant with new personal data protection rules to be implemented by the EU on May 25.

## INTERNATIONAL

### President Trump says "we'll know next week" if Singapore summit to be held on June 12

NHK reported this morning that President Trump told reporters at the White House on Wednesday that it will be made known next week whether the U.S.-DPRK summit will be held as planned in Singapore on June 12. The network showed the President saying: "It could well be June 12. We'll see. We'll know next week." The network said that according to the White House, senior USG officials will visit Singapore this weekend in preparation for the summit, adding that several media outlets are reporting that the U.S. officials are expected to discuss with North Korean officials detailed plans for the meeting.

### President Trump hints at possible postponement of U.S.-DPRK summit

All national dailies reported on remarks made by President Trump at the White House on Tuesday. He reportedly said that his planned meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore on June 12 may not take place as scheduled if certain conditions are not met. Asahi speculated that the President was displeased by the DPRK's sudden change of posture on May 16 when it hinted at the possibility of calling off the summit. The paper also wrote that the President expressed displeasure with China by reportedly saying that North Korea changed its attitude after Kim Jong Un met with Chinese President Xi in China earlier this month. But Asahi conjectured that the President is probably not thinking of cancelling his meeting with Kim, pointing out that Secretary Pompeo told reporters on Tuesday that Washington is still making preparations for the summit to take place on June 12. Mainichi and Yomiuri wrote that the tug-of-war between Washington and Pyongyang appears to be escalating ahead of the planned summit, as the President expressed an unyielding posture toward North Korea. Nikkei conjectured that the USG is becoming increasingly wary of the DPRK's moves, and may be seeing a hardening in North Korea's stance after gaining the backing of China.

Yomiuri quoted Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga as commenting on President Trump's remarks by telling reporters on Wednesday that Japan welcomes his efforts to urge the DPRK to take concrete actions and will convey its opinions to the United States. Sankei quoted Suga as adding: "Holding a meeting in and of itself is not important. The important thing is that the meeting will provide the opportunity to make progress in resolving the issues of North Korea's nuclear and missile development and abductions."

### **U.S., DPRK officials to hold preparatory meeting in Singapore over weekend**

Yomiuri and Mainichi wrote from Washington that the Washington Post reported on Wednesday that a team of U.S. officials, including Deputy Chief of Staff Hagin, is planning to travel to Singapore this weekend for preparatory discussions with North Korean officials on the details of the planned U.S.-DPRK summit. According to the Washington Post, a similar working-level meeting was planned for about two weeks ago, but the North Koreans failed to show up.

### **North Korea may begin dismantling nuclear site today**

All national dailies wrote that North Korea may begin dismantling the Punggye-ri nuclear test site as early as today, and will hold a ceremony marking its closure today or tomorrow. The papers wrote that journalists from the United States, the UK, China, Russia, and South Korea who were invited by North Korea to cover the event apparently left for the test site from the eastern coastal city of Wonsan on Wednesday and will require more than 16 hours to reach the Punggye-ri nuclear facility.

### **Russian foreign minister to visit North Korea**

Sankei ran a Kyodo report from Moscow saying that RBK, a Russian economic newspaper, reported on Wednesday that according to a Russian diplomatic source, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov will

travel to North Korea on May 31. Although the paper said that the details of the trip are unknown, Lavrov might meet with his North Korean counterpart Ri Yong Ho and leader Kim Jong Un.

---

