



Morning Alert - Tuesday, June 12, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

All networks gave extensive top play to reports on the U.S.-DPRK summit slated to begin at 10 a.m. (Japan time) today in Singapore.

Top stories in national papers included previews of the U.S.-DPRK summit and the Tokyo High Court's decision yesterday to overturn a lower court ruling reopening a murder case involving a former professional boxer who was convicted of killing four people in Shizuoka in 1966.

AMBASSADOR

Ambassador Hagerty stresses close U.S.-Japan coordination ahead of U.S.-DPRK summit

Yomiuri published an op-ed by Ambassador Hagerty in which he stressed that in holding talks with DPRK leader Kim Jong Un today, President Trump is "in complete agreement" with Prime Minister Abe on such issues as North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs as well as resolution of the abductions issue. He stated that the two nations' coordination on these items is "excellent." While explaining that the U.S.-Japan summit at the White House last week demonstrated that most aspects of the partnership are in complete harmony, the Ambassador said: "Now is the time to bring our economic partnership to a level that is on par with the strength of our security alliance and diplomatic relationship." He mentioned the President's goal of seeking a trading relationship with Japan that is based on the principle of "fairness and reciprocity," adding that the political prospects of a U.S. reentry into the TPP are nonexistent. Ambassador Hagerty reiterated Washington's desire to move forward with bilateral trade talks swiftly, saying that the two nations will be able to pursue higher standards in a bilateral environment.

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump promises to address abductions in meeting with Kim

All papers reported that President Trump phoned Prime Minister Abe on Monday from Singapore and assured him that he will bring up the abduction issue without fail when he holds talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un today. In reply to the premier's request that he address the matter, the President reportedly said: "I guarantee it 100%." Abe was quoted as telling the press afterward: "The U.S., Japan, and South Korea are completely in sync when it comes to the U.S.-North Korea summit. I expect it to be a historic meeting that will mark a major step toward peace and stability in Northeast Asia." The President separately spoke by phone with ROK President Moon, who said the South Korean people are hoping that the President will "produce a miracle" in the summit.

Meanwhile, Asahi and Nikkei wrote that Secretary General Yachi of the National Security Secretariat and MOFA Asian and Oceanian Bureau Affairs Director General Kanasugi, who are currently visiting Singapore, held meetings with U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim, DOD Assistant Secretary Schriver, and NSC East Asia Director Pottinger yesterday to receive briefings on the ongoing U.S. preparations for today's summit.

Secretary Pompeo reiterates U.S. vow to achieve denuclearization

All papers reported on Secretary of State Pompeo's press conference in Singapore on Monday ahead of the summit between President Trump and Kim Jong Un. The top U.S. diplomat reportedly emphasized that the "ultimate" U.S. objective is still the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization (CVID) of the Korean Peninsula, and that this is "the only outcome that the United States will accept." The Secretary reportedly suggested that the President is willing to ease the DPRK leader's concern about his regime's survival by saying that America is prepared to offer security assurances different from those it "has been willing to provide previously." At the same time, the Secretary underscored that economic sanctions will remain in place "until North Korea completely and verifiably eliminates its weapons of mass destruction programs."

U.S. committed to obtaining from Kim pledge to relinquish nuclear programs

All dailies published various scene-setting reports on today's Singapore summit between President Trump and Kim Jong Un, with Yomiuri asserting that President Trump is determined to have the DPRK leader state the phrase "complete, verifiable, and irreversible" denuclearization. The daily said the word "irreversible" is more critical than the other two words since it would mean that the Kim regime would not be able to resume its nuclear programs even if its security were in peril in the future. The papers said it is crucial for

the U.S. and North Korean leaders to agree on a concrete roadmap for denuclearization that specifies a deadline for the DPRK to give up its weapons of mass destruction programs, including the nuclear weapons in its possession.

The dailies also wrote that attention will also be focused on whether the two leaders will issue a joint declaration ending the Korean War, with Nikkei explaining that Pyongyang considers such a statement indispensable to its survival since it would mean that the U.S. would stop being hostile toward the Kim regime.

As for the logistics of the U.S.-DPRK summit, the dailies wrote that according to the White House, the President and Kim will first hold a one-on-one meeting at 9 a.m. (Singapore time), followed by a session with additional officials. Secretary Pompeo, National Security Advisor Bolton, White House Chief of Staff Kelly, and others will reportedly be present on the U.S. side. The President reportedly plans to hold a press conference on the outcome of the talks this afternoon before departing for the U.S. at 7 p.m. Sankei said the DPRK defense minister, who was appointed only weeks ago, will be part of the DPRK delegation at the larger session, speculating that by having him sit in on the summit, Kim Jong Un is hoping that his army will be supportive of his willingness to denuclearize.

Expectations mounting among abductees' families

All papers reported on a press conference held in Tokyo on Monday by family members of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea, who voiced strong hope that today's meeting between President Trump and Kim Jong Un will finally set the stage for the return of their loved ones after decades of captivity in the reclusive state. The family members, who are reportedly encouraged by the U.S. leader's assurances that he will address the matter in the summit, are hoping that the Trump-Kim meeting will lead to a similar session between Prime Minister Abe and the North Korean leader that will end their suffering.

Doubts emerge about G7 unity after U.S. leader's rejection of communique

All papers claimed that G7 unity has been shaken since the United States declined to sign a joint statement released by the Canadian premier upon conclusion of this year's summit in Quebec on Saturday. Nikkei and Yomiuri opined that the Charlevoix summit exposed the deep rift between the U.S. and the six other member states. Asahi wrote that doubts are emerging about the viability of the G7, which was built on common values, while Mainichi claimed that the G7's raison d'être is being questioned amid paramount challenges confronting the global economy.

POLITICS

Niigata election victory emboldens Abe administration

All papers reported that following the victory of their candidate in Sunday's gubernatorial race in Niigata, the Abe administration and the ruling coalition are becoming increasingly confident that they will be able to pass key legislation on working style reform and casino implementation by extending the current Diet session by several weeks through early July. The administration and the LDP and Komeito party had been concerned that their candidate would be forced to wage an uphill battle against his main opposition rival because of mounting public distrust of Prime Minister Abe over the

Moritomo and Kake Gakuen scandals. The latest election victory is also expected to help boost the premier's bid to seek a third term as LDP president in September.

ECONOMY

New Malaysian leader calls for CPTPP renegotiation

Yomiuri reported that yesterday visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir delivered a speech in Tokyo in which he stressed the importance of opening the CPTPP accord to renegotiation. On the regional free trade scheme signed by his predecessor, who was ousted last month as a result of the general election, the new Malaysian leader reportedly stated that smaller nations are handicapped and that they should be given chances to compete.

