



Morning Alert - Thursday, June 21, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning News

NHK gave top play to a report that a man was found dead and two people were found injured at an apartment in Yokohama at about 1:30 a.m. today. NTV led with a report on the Japanese national soccer team's historic victory over Colombia on Tuesday. TBS ran a follow-up report on the suspicious death of a real estate mogul in Wakayama. TV Asahi led with a report on the arrest of a woman on suspicion of killing her brother in Osaka. Fuji TV gave top play to a report on the heavy rain in the Kyushu region.

Top stories in national dailies included a finding that unauthorized private lodgings are listed on Airbnb's website in Japan (Asahi), survey results showing that a new nursing care program is only being used by 10% of those with lighter support needs (Mainichi), a GOJ plan to step up measures to prevent theft of radioactive materials to thwart terrorism (Yomiuri), moves by Japanese startups to seek their purchase by large corporate groups rather than go through financial markets for capital (Nikkei), and a plan by a monorail operator in Okinawa to allow Chinese tourists to use the Alipay online payment platform at ticket gates (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

U.S. withdraws from UN Human Rights Council

All national dailies reported on the Trump administration's announcement on Tuesday that the United States has decided to withdraw from the UN Human Rights Council. Asahi and Yomiuri wrote that human rights activists have expressed concern that China may increase its influence in the council as a result of the U.S. withdrawal, with Yomiuri adding that there is concern that international pressure on North Korea and Syria over their human rights violations could weaken due to the U.S. departure from the council. Mainichi wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told a press briefing on

Wednesday that Japan appreciates the council's role in protecting human rights in the world. However, he refrained from commenting on the U.S. government's decision to withdraw from the council by saying that it is not appropriate for him to comment on other nations' involvement in international organizations.

South Korea says new initiative on “wartime sexual violence” unrelated to comfort women

All national dailies wrote that South Korea's Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha announced on Wednesday the establishment of a new initiative called “Action with Women and Peace” to address the issue of wartime sexual violence against women in conflict regions. According to Asahi, leaders of civic groups supporting the former comfort women are among the 21 members of the advisory panel of the new organization. However, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented on the new initiative during a regular press briefing on Wednesday by saying that South Korea has informed Japan that the new initiative is not related to the comfort women issue. As well, Foreign Minister Kono told the press in Tokyo that it is not appropriate to link the initiative to the Japan-ROK agreement on the comfort women as South Korea has explained that the initiative is not intended to address specific issues.

Japan, Russia to hold 2+2 meeting in late July

Asahi wrote that it has learned from multiple GOJ sources that the governments of Japan and Russia are making final arrangements to hold a 2+2 meeting of their foreign and defense ministers in Moscow around July 21. The paper speculated that the two nations will discuss the possibility of setting up a framework for a new security dialogue amid Russia's recent military buildup in the Northern Territories, including the deployment of surface-to-ship missiles, and response to North Korea.

ECONOMY

Japanese automakers employ over 90,000 Americans

Mainichi ran a Kyodo story from Washington saying that the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association released on Tuesday a report saying that Japanese automakers employed a total of 92,710 people in the United States as of 2017, up from 28,571 in 1990. Kyodo speculated that the report is aimed at emphasizing the Japanese auto industry's contributions to the U.S. economy, thereby deflecting Trump administration pressure. The article said that Japanese auto manufacturers are planning to ramp up their investment in the United States in response to President Trump's goal of reviving the U.S. manufacturing industry and speculated that the United States will put more pressure on Japan to open its auto market at their ministerial-level trade talks to be launched in July.

Japan, EU to sign EPA on July 11

Nikkei wrote that Prime Minister Abe will likely sign an economic partnership agreement with the EU in Brussels on July 11. The daily conjectured that the GOJ is hoping to effectuate the agreement in

early 2019 by submitting related legislation to an extraordinary Diet session to be convened in the fall with the hope that the accord will serve as a bulwark against U.S. pressure on trade.

SECURITY

LDP defense caucus urges GOJ to produce F-2 successor domestically

Asahi wrote that on Wednesday an LDP caucus on defense issues delivered to Prime Minister Abe a written request calling for the domestic development of the successor to the ASDF's F-2 fighter, which is scheduled to be retired starting around 2030. The request reportedly said that domestic development should begin immediately, insisting that domestic production will lead to cost reductions and the passing down of production technology.

