



Morning Alert - Friday, June 22, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK led with a report on the aftermath of the powerful earthquake that hit the Osaka region five days ago, saying that the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism has instructed all local municipalities to inspect concrete-block walls in response to the death of a girl in the collapse of a wall. NTV led with a report saying that Argentina lost to Croatia in the FIFA World Cup. TBS reported on Senegal's national soccer team, which Japan will play against on Sunday. Fuji TV and TV Asahi gave top play to reports on the arrest of a woman in Osaka on the charge of murdering her brother in a staged suicide.

Top stories in national dailies included an order by the Financial Services Agency to all banking institutions in Japan to check whether they are involved in trading with 10 Japanese-North Korean joint ventures that are suspected of illegally sending money to North Korea (Mainichi); the Japan Fair Trade Commission's intention to announce soon its view that smartphone contracts with four-year installment payment plans may be illegal (Yomiuri); shareholders' proposals made at the annual meetings of 42 firms in June (Nikkei); an Osaka school's report to the city education board about the dangers of its concrete walls three years ago (Asahi); and the different focuses of two suprapartisan parliamentary groups on North Korea – one on the abduction issue and the other on diplomatic normalization (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

Indo-Pacific Command chief meets with PM Abe, DM Onodera

All national dailies wrote that Adm. Davidson, commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, held talks with Prime Minister Abe at the Kantei on Thursday. The papers wrote that the two officials reportedly confirmed close cooperation between the United States and Japan in maintaining peace

and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and addressing North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and abduction of Japanese nationals. The papers wrote that Adm. Davidson held separate talks with Defense Minister Onodera and reportedly agreed with him on the policy of maintaining the current sanctions until Pyongyang achieves complete denuclearization. Sankei wrote that the two officials confirmed that the U.S. military and the SDF will continue to conduct joint drills.

U.S., Japanese officials in charge of nonproliferation discuss nuclear issues related to DPRK

Asahi wrote that MOFA announced on Thursday that its Director-General for Disarmament, Nonproliferation, and Science Department Yoshida discussed nuclear issues related to North Korea with Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation Ford on Wednesday. The paper wrote that the two officials reportedly discussed how to utilize inspections by the IAEA and Japan's expertise in implementing the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the DPRK.

Foreign Minister Kono to visit Thailand, Bhutan, Indonesia

All national dailies wrote that Foreign Minister Kono left Japan on Thursday for a trip to Thailand, Bhutan, and Indonesia through June 28. In Thailand, Kono will attend a ministerial meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development. Asahi added that Kono is making arrangements to hold talks with his Palestinian counterpart on the sidelines of the conference.

GOJ to cancel evacuation drills in preparation for possible DPRK missile launches

All national dailies wrote that on Thursday the GOJ decided to cancel plans to conduct this fiscal year evacuation drills in various places in Japan in preparation for possible ballistic missile launches by North Korea. The government reportedly made the decision in view of the easing of tension surrounding North Korea following the U.S.-DPRK summit in Singapore.

ECONOMY

Some steel products from Japan, other nations exempted from U.S. tariff

All national dailies reported on the announcement made on Wednesday by the Department of Commerce that it has exempted 42 steel products from Japan and four other nations from the new high tariff on steel. Sankei quoted Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga as telling the press on Thursday that Japan will continue to strongly call on the U.S. to exempt Japanese products from additional tariff measures.

SECURITY

Abe to attend Okinawa Memorial Day event

Mainichi, Nikkei, and Sankei wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga announced on Thursday that Prime Minister Abe will visit Okinawa on Saturday to attend an annual event to commemorate those who died during the Battle of Okinawa. Mainichi speculated that in his remarks at the event, the premier will renew his vow for peace and refer to reducing the base-hosting burden on Okinawa.

Cost of C-2 aircraft keeps rising

Asahi wrote that it has learned from multiple GOJ sources that the price of the domestically produced C-2 transport plane has increased by 40%, or 7 billion yen, per unit from fiscal 2011 when the ASDF began procuring the aircraft. The paper wrote that although the price increase may be partially due to an increase in the cost of parts, the GOJ is calling for the Defense Ministry to review its cost estimates and control. The paper wrote that according to internal documents, although the price of the aircraft was 16.5 million yen in fiscal 2011, it was estimated at 23.6 billion yen this fiscal year. The paper wrote that in April a Finance Ministry panel made the “unusual” recommendation that the Defense Ministry study the possibility of procuring a more cost-effective model.

POLITICS

LDP may hold presidential election around Sept. 20

Yomiuri wrote that the leadership of the ruling LDP has begun making final arrangements to hold a presidential election around Sept. 20 before Prime Minister Abe’s current term as party president expires on Sept. 30. The paper speculated that this date was selected in view of Abe’s planned visit to the United States to attend the UN General Assembly sessions later in the month.

