



Morning Alert - Thursday, July 12, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

All networks continued to give extensive coverage to the aftermath of the record rainfall in western Japan. NHK reported that the death toll has reached 175 and 62 remain missing.

Top stories in national dailies included reports on the aftermath of the record rainfall in western Japan (Mainichi, Yomiuri, Sankei); the U.S.'s release of a list of Chinese products that could be targeted with tariffs (Nikkei); and the passage of an election reform bill in the Upper House (Asahi).

INTERNATIONAL

Suga says “now is best time to denuclearize North Korea”

Yomiuri wrote that on Wednesday Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga delivered a speech at a symposium sponsored by the paper in Tokyo in which he said now is the best time to achieve the complete denuclearization of North Korea and resolve the abduction issue. The paper quoted Suga as reportedly saying that Japan is prepared to provide economic assistance to the DPRK if it achieves denuclearization and resolves the abduction issue. The chief cabinet secretary reportedly indicated that coordinated efforts between the United States and Japan to apply pressure on North Korea helped persuade Chairman Kim Jong Un to agree to completely denuclearize at his summit with President Trump.

Secretary Pompeo says U.S. mulling exceptions to its request to halt imports of Iranian oil

NHK wrote on its website on Wednesday afternoon that in an interview with a TV network in UAE on Tuesday Secretary of State Pompeo reportedly stressed that the U.S. will increase pressure on Iran by resuming sanctions. The network said while the Trump administration is asking Japan and other

nations to completely stop imports of Iranian oil by November, the Secretary reportedly said that the U.S. is considering making exceptions to its request. Noting that Japan relies on Iran for 5% of its oil imports, the network said the GOJ is exploring ways to continue to import oil from Iran so that Japanese corporate activities are not affected, adding that attention will be focused on whether the U.S. will soften its stance and make an exception for Japan.

Nikkei: Japan caught between U.S, Iran

Nikkei wrote that Secretary of State Pompeo hinted on Tuesday at the possibility of making exceptions to its request that nations stop importing Iranian oil and that the GOJ is planning to continue discussions with Washington on a possible waiver for Japan. The paper wrote that although Japan has traditionally had friendly relations with Iran, its diplomacy toward Tehran has been swayed by its relationship with Washington. The paper wrote that Japanese companies, eager to tap the large emerging market in Iran, are calling on the GOJ to strengthen economic relations with the country. The paper also noted that Prime Minister Abe has a personal interest in Iran through his experience as an assistant to his late father Shintaro Abe, who as foreign minister visited Iran and Iraq in 1983 in an attempt to mediate the Iran-Iraq War.

Foreign Minister Kono holds talks with Malaysian leader

Asahi reported on Foreign Minister Kono's talks with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir on Wednesday in Kuala Lumpur, saying that the two discussed bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas, including issues related to the South China Sea. Kono held separate talks with Foreign Minister Saifuddin and expressed Japan's desire to strengthen cooperation in seeking a "free and open Indo-Pacific." The two ministers reportedly agreed to urge North Korea to achieve "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization." Sankei ran a similar story.

ECONOMY

U.S. announces plan for additional tariffs on Chinese imports

All national dailies ran extensive reports on the Trump administration's announcement on Tuesday of its plan to impose tariffs on an additional \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods. China immediately responded to the U.S. announcement by saying that it will take necessary countermeasures. Asahi speculated that the tit-for-tat retaliation between the two nations will likely further roil the global economy. Yomiuri conjectured that the "trade war" between the United States and China will likely continue to escalate. Sankei opined that trade friction between the two nations has reached a "dangerous level," and Mainichi wrote that the conflict between Washington and Beijing has deepened. Nikkei observed that there is a risk of the "trade war" between the United States and China sinking into a quagmire.

SECURITY

Suga meets with Ginowan mayor

Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri, and Sankei reported on Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga's meeting with Ginowan Mayor Sakima at the Kantei on Wednesday. The papers wrote that the two discussed ways to utilize land returned by the U.S. military and Sakima's possibly running as the LDP candidate in November's Okinawa gubernatorial election. Suga reportedly asked the mayor to give serious consideration to running.

SCIENCE

Japan proposes resumption of discussions on commercial whaling

Mainichi wrote that on Wednesday the GOJ proposed to the International Whaling Commission (IWC) that it resume discussions on the commercial whaling of certain types of relatively abundant whales such as minke whales at its meeting to be held in Brazil on Sept. 10-14. The paper wrote that it appears difficult for the IWC to accept Japan's proposal because most of its members oppose whaling.

