
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Morning Alert - Monday, August 6, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report on heavy rain in Yamagata Prefecture today. NTV, Fuji TV, and TV Asahi led with reports on a typhoon that is approaching Japan, saying that it may hit the Kanto region around Wednesday. TBS gave top play to a report on a new scandal involving the chairman of the Japan Amateur Boxing Federation.

Major front-page items in national papers included a proposal on introducing daylight saving time in Japan preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, growing support among LDP Diet members for Prime Minister Abe's bid for a third term as party president, and an update on the scandal engulfing the Japan Amateur Boxing Federation chairman.

INTERNATIONAL

Secretary Pompeo, FM Kono confirm continued cooperation on North Korea

All Sunday morning papers reported that Secretary of State Pompeo and Foreign Minister Kono met for 20 minutes in Singapore on Saturday afternoon. Asahi wrote that Kono explained to the Secretary that he met with North Korean Foreign Minister Ri on Friday and conveyed Japan's position to him. Kono also said that Japan plans to hold talks directly with North Korea to resolve the abduction issue. Asahi said that the two ministers reconfirmed their intention seek the removal of all of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and

ballistic missiles. They also reportedly agreed to continue to cooperate in addressing the issue of illicit ship-to-ship cargo transfers involving North Korea.

The papers also reported on a trilateral foreign ministerial between the U.S., Japan, and Australia that was held after the Pompeo-Kono meeting, during which the three sides shared the view that the U.S.-DPRK process toward North Korea's denuclearization is facing a "moment of truth" and agreed on close trilateral cooperation.

Secretary of State Pompeo establishing presence in Asia

Sunday's Yomiuri reported that 100 days have passed since Secretary of State Pompeo took office in April and he is establishing his presence in Asia. Noting that the Secretary was a key architect in realizing the first-ever U.S.-DPRK summit, the paper said he announced in Singapore on Saturday that the U.S. will invest about \$300 million in strengthening security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. The Secretary also announced at the end of July that the U.S. will establish a fund worth \$113 million to support infrastructure development in the region. A diplomatic source in Washington reportedly said: "The past U.S. strategies for the Indo-Pacific region lacked specifics and did not resonate with ASEAN members. By clearly indicating the size of its intended investment the U.S. has facilitated understanding that it is serious."

The paper also wrote that Secretary Pompeo's strength lies in the fact that President Trump places a great deal of trust in him. The paper added that attention will be focused on whether the Secretary will be able to produce results for North Korea's denuclearization.

Japanese, North Korean foreign ministers meet briefly

All Saturday morning papers reported that Foreign Minister Kono held a brief conversation with his North Korean counterpart Ri in Singapore on Friday evening. Asahi wrote that according to MOFA officials, Kono told Ri that Japan is prepared to hold a summit with North Korea. Kono reportedly told the press that he conveyed Japan's basic position of resolving the abduction and nuclear and missile development issues comprehensively based on the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration. The paper speculated that Kono probably told Ri that Japan is prepared to offer economic assistance if the abduction issue is resolved and diplomatic relations are restored. Asahi said Kono did not disclose how Ri responded.

Japan, Australia agree on complete implementation of North Korea sanctions

Nikkei and Sankei reported on Saturday that Foreign Minister Kono met with his Australian counterpart Bishop in Singapore on Friday. The papers said the two ministers reportedly agreed to urge North Korea to achieve the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. They also reportedly confirmed the importance of fully implementing the UNSC sanctions against North Korea. The two ministers reportedly agreed to work closely in surveillance activities to prevent North Korea from exploiting loopholes in the sanctions.

GOJ confirms ship-to-ship cargo transfer involving North Korea

Mainichi and Sankei reported on Saturday that MOFA announced on Friday that it spotted a North Korean tanker engaging in an illicit ship-to-ship cargo transfer in the East China Sea on July 31. Sankei wrote that this was the tenth transfer confirmed by the GOJ. According to MOFA, a Marine Self-Defense Force vessel observed an apparently Chinese-flagged ship connected by a hose to a North Korean tanker.

Seoul's efforts to mediate between Washington, Pyongyang run into difficulties

Today's Yomiuri wrote that the Moon administration appears to be having difficulty promoting dialogue between the U.S. and North Korea, as the two parties are distrustful of Seoul's efforts to broker reconciliation between them. The Trump administration is reportedly negative about South Korea's calls for taking a more conciliatory line toward the DPRK in the absence of concrete steps toward denuclearization on the part of the Kim regime. North Korea has been critical of South Korea because it has apparently failed to convince the U.S. to offer rewards to the regime. The daily added that Seoul's efforts to arrange a trilateral foreign ministerial meeting on the sidelines of the ASEAN-related conferences in Singapore over the weekend in a bid to achieve a breakthrough were apparently unsuccessful due to North Korea's opposition.

Malaysian leader to visit Japan

Monday's Yomiuri wrote that Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir will travel to Kyushu for four days starting today to deliver a keynote speech at a symposium on developing future leaders to be held in Fukuoka.

ECONOMY

Japan anxious to cut a deal with U.S. to forestall FTA talks

In the first installment of a series on the upcoming "free, fair, and reciprocal" (FFR) trade talks between the U.S. and Japan, Monday's Nikkei wrote that the Abe administration is

bracing for the possibility of the Trump administration ratcheting up the pressure on Japan to seek a bilateral free trade agreement. According to the article, Prime Minister Abe recently told Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Motegi, who will co-chair the new trade talks with USTR Lighthizer, that Japan will never make concessions on the agricultural front. The premier also reportedly instructed Motegi to try to dissuade Washington from imposing additional tariffs on Japanese auto imports. The paper conjectured that in a bid to head off U.S. pressure to enter FTA talks, the Abe administration is aiming to forge a trade deal centering on additional imports of American shale gas and defense equipment.

Toyota to face burden of 460 billion yen if U.S. imposes higher tariffs on auto imports

Saturday's Asahi, Nikkei, and Sankei reported that Toyota Motor Corp. disclosed on Friday that the average cost of exporting vehicles to the U.S. would rise by about 660,000 yen (approx. \$6,000) per car if the Trump administration imposed higher tariffs on autos and auto parts. Asahi wrote that since Toyota exports about 700,000 cars to the U.S. annually, its total burden would be about 460 billion yen.

Trade Minister Seko visits Toyota's new R&D facility in Detroit

Sunday's Asahi reported that Toyota Motor Corp. gave Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Seko a tour of its new research and development facility in Detroit, Michigan, on Friday. The daily said the facility is Toyota's major hub in North America and the visit was aimed at underscoring the automaker's contributions to the U.S. economy since the Trump administration is considering imposing higher tariffs on auto imports. Seko reportedly told reporters after visiting the facility: "Those who support the U.S. economy are feeling insecure. I hope the Trump administration will listen to their voices."

Japan to propose 15% increase in catch quota for bluefin tuna

Saturday's Sankei reported that the Fisheries Agency disclosed on Friday that it has submitted to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) a proposal to increase the catch quotas of bluefin tuna for each nation and region by 15%, given that the population of bluefin tuna has recovered due to international restrictions implemented in 2015. According to the daily, Japan's proposal will be discussed at a WCPFC meeting to be held in Fukuoka from Sept. 4 to 7. If an agreement is reached at the meeting, the proposal will be discussed at the annual convention slated for December in Hawaii.

SECURITY

"Japanese Marines" to be deployed near Senkakus on regular basis

Sankei front-paged an informal MOD decision to deploy GSDF amphibious troops in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands on a regular basis for training to defend against possible Chinese aggression. The amphibious troops, who are stationed at an SDF camp in Nagasaki, will be mobilized in the East China Sea for training with the goal of coordinating crisis operations with troops based in Okinawa and Kagoshima. The daily added that the implementation of the planned deployment of GSDF Ospreys at Saga Airport is crucial for enabling the “Japanese Marines” to respond to potential Chinese aggression in a timely and flexible manner.

Komeito calls for improving SOFA implementation

Saturday’s Nikkei and Sankei reported that Komeito Secretary General Inoue visited Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga at the Kantei on Friday and called for improvements in SOFA implementation in light of repeated incidents involving U.S. service members and U.S. military aircraft. According to Sankei, Inoue asked Suga to examine the possibility of stipulating in a supplementary agreement that U.S military personnel should be handed over to Japanese authorities before indictment in the case of heinous crimes.

British amphibious assault ship arrives in Tokyo

Saturday’s Sankei reported that the HMS Albion, a British Navy amphibious assault ship, arrived in Tokyo on Friday, saying that this is the first time for the vessel to call at Tokyo. The British vessel has been engaged in monitoring the implementation of economic sanctions against North Korea. The paper wrote that the port call is intended to enhance coordination with Japan in light of the security situation in East Asia.

POLITICS

GOJ appoints Tomita ambassador in charge of G20 summit

Sankei reported on Saturday that the GOJ decided at a cabinet meeting on Friday to appoint Japanese Ambassador to Israel Koji Tomita as the ambassador in charge of the G20 summit that Japan will host in 2019.