
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Morning Alert - Friday, August 17, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK led with a report on a robbery and rape suspect who is still at large after escaping from an Osaka police station on Sunday. All commercial networks led with reports on the record rainfall mainly in the Tohoku and Hokuriku regions on Thursday, adding that a newly developed tropical depression is expected to become Typhoon Soulik, which may approach the Japanese mainland early next week.

Top stories in national dailies included a GOJ plan to introduce Space Situational Awareness satellites to monitor space debris (Yomiuri); a plan by Toyota to boost its production capacity in China by 20% (Nikkei); government ministries' suspected overstatement of the number of people they employ with disabilities (Mainichi); rapidly advancing genomics studies in China (Asahi); and a suspected bribery scandal involving the All Japan Kendo Federation (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

Abe mulls visiting China around Oct. 23

Asahi wrote that it has learned from several sources connected to Japan-China relations that the governments of Japan and China are making arrangements for Prime Minister Abe to visit China around Oct. 23 when the two nations mark the 40th anniversary of the signing of their peace and friendship treaty. According to the sources, the Japanese side has asked Beijing to arrange a meeting with President Xi. The paper said that although the Chinese side is responding positively to the idea of a summit with the Japanese leader, it plans to make an official decision after the LDP presidential election slated for September. Japan is considering the possibility of Abe traveling to various cities in China, such as Shenzhen, the center of China's high-tech industry, and Xian, which plays a significant role in the nation's "One Belt, One Road" initiative. The paper speculated that while Prime Minister Abe wants to play up Japan's improved ties with China as a diplomatic achievement ahead of the nationwide local elections and Upper House election next year, China is hoping to attract additional investment from Japan to boost its economy and stabilize diplomatic relations amid escalating trade friction with the United States.

ECONOMY

Japan's exports to U.S. decline for second straight month

Asahi wrote that according to a preliminary report released by the Finance Ministry on Thursday, Japan's exports to the United States in July were down by 5.2%, marking the second consecutive monthly decline, owing to reduced shipments of autos, steel, and semiconductors. According to the paper, Japan's trade surplus with the United States narrowed by 22.1% to 502.7 billion yen. Yomiuri, Nikkei, and Sankei ran similar stories.

SECURITY

Defense Ministry to beef up space, cyberspace defense

Yomiuri and Nikkei wrote that the Ministry of Defense told the LDP on Thursday that it will enhance the capabilities of the three branches of the SDF to jointly deal with new types of threats in space and cyberspace and attacks using electromagnetic waves as "cross-domain operations." According to Yomiuri, the ministry intends to include the plan in its National Defense Program Guidelines to be updated by the end of this year.

In a related development, Nikkei wrote that with the cooperation of private security companies and key infrastructure operators the GOJ is planning to set up a new unit to deal with cyberattacks by the end of fiscal 2018 to prepare for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

SCIENCE

Japan to use satellites to monitor space debris

Yomiuri led with a report saying that the GOJ is studying a plan to use Space Situational Awareness (SSA) satellites to monitor space debris and other nations' satellites with the aim of protecting Japan's satellites. The paper wrote that the GOJ is planning to launch SSA satellites starting in fiscal 2024. The paper added that the GOJ is planning to work with the United States in considering the idea because the U.S. military already operates several SSA satellites, adding that officials from the Ministry of Defense, the SDF, and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology are planning to join a multilateral tabletop SSA exercise to be held in the United States in the fall.

Japan mulls developing its first manned lunar landing spacecraft

Sankei wrote that the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) is considering the idea of developing Japan's first manned lunar landing spacecraft. The paper speculated that Japan is considering participating in the United States' lunar base project in the 2020s and is aiming to put a person on the moon around 2030 with the cooperation of European nations.