
JM JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, November 8, 2016

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All major broadcasters led with reports on a massive sinkhole that opened up on a main road in a commercial district near JR Hakata Station in Fukuoka early this morning.



SCIENCE

Paris Agreement bill passes Lower House

NHK reported this afternoon that a bill required for Japan to ratify the Paris Agreement was unanimously approved at the Lower House Plenary Session today, saying that while Japan will only be able to participate in the first gathering of the signatories as an observer, it is hoping to play a "leading role" in future negotiations and rule making. The network said the GOJ is expected to obtain Cabinet approval of the necessary documents as early as this week and submit them to the UN to formally become a signatory. Prime Minister Abe reportedly issued a statement in which he said: "Japan is determined to play a leading role in the establishment of rules to increase transparency

on emissions by UN member countries so that the Paris Agreement's spirit of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by all nations will be upheld.”

- [Cartoon: Paris Agreement](#) (Akahata)

SECURITY

U.S. Osprey conducts test flight in Saga

Asahi reported online that the Defense Ministry arranged a test flight by a Futenma-based Osprey at Saga Airport this morning in response to a request from local residents who wished to see for themselves the noise generated by the tilt-rotor aircraft, which is scheduled to be deployed at the airport for the GSDF starting in FY2019. The ministry reportedly measured the noise at 10 locations in Saga and Fukuoka Prefectures to which the GSDF Ospreys are expected to fly in the future. After observing the flight on the ground and from the sea, Saga Governor Yamaguchi said: “Various opinions will emerge since many people observed the flight firsthand. It is not appropriate for me to make a definitive statement right now.” NHK carried a similar report this afternoon.

Abe, U.S. Air Force chief agree to move forward with return of NTA, Futenma relocation

Jiji Press reported that Prime Minister Abe and U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff Goldfein agreed during their meeting at the Kantei on Monday that the U.S. and Japan should move forward with the return of the Northern Training Area by the end of this year and the Futenma base’s relocation to Henoko. The prime minister expressed concern over North Korea’s series of nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches and said that he would like to beef up the U.S.-Japan alliance, which has been strengthened through Japan’s enactment of the new security laws and its updated defense cooperation guidelines with the U.S. The Air Force chief said that the U.S. will firmly apply its extended deterrence, including its “nuclear umbrella,” to the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Ceremony to return NTA to be held on Dec. 20

Ryukyu Shimpo and Okinawa Times both reported that a ceremony marking the return of a large portion of the Northern Training Area may be held on around Dec. 20, as the ongoing construction work for the four helipads is likely to be completed in mid-December. Ryukyu Shimpo claimed that the USG is expected to issue an official notification on the return to the GOJ on around Nov. 10, and that Ambassador Kennedy will probably participate in the ceremony.

The Ryukyu Shimpo said in a separate piece that the Abe administration has employed all possible means, including using SDF helicopters to transport heavy equipment and mobilizing riot police from the mainland to remove protesters, to ensure that the helipads can be completed this year. While noting that the central government is expected to play up the planned ceremony to call attention to its efforts to reduce the base burden on Okinawa, the article claimed that the functions of the

remaining NTA will actually be enhanced as the new helipads are designed to enable the use of Ospreys, which the outdated platforms were unable to accommodate.

POLITICS

Minister Yamamoto receives bomb threat

NHK reported online that Agriculture Minister Yamamoto's office received an email last week threatening to bomb MAFF unless Yamamoto resigns. The network said the office has reported the incident to the police and so far no suspicious items have been found at the ministry.

- [Prime minister's schedule on Nov. 7](#) (Nikkei)
- [DP to discuss united front despite Rengo remarks, DP President Renho](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [1.2 trillion yen in taxpayer money wasted in FY 2015: Board of Audit](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Interview with Renho: "I want to pursue victory relentlessly"](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japan to add new duties to GSDF in S. Sudan on Nov. 15](#) (Jiji Press)
- [SDF to improve response capability under new security laws](#) (Yomiuri)
- [SDF conducts first joint drill with U.S. under new security law](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

INTERNATIONAL

Kishida underscores continued close cooperation with U.S. after election

NHK reported online that Foreign Minister Kishida stated at a regular press briefing on Tuesday that regardless of who becomes the next U.S. president, there will be no change in Japan's position that the U.S.-Japan alliance is the cornerstone of its diplomacy. Kishida added that Japan will continue to work closely with the U.S. not only on bilateral issues but also for the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world.

- [Japan, Russia not on same page on economic cooperation](#) (Asahi)
- [S. Korea, Japan to hold military intelligence talks on Wed. in Seoul](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, Kazakhstan leaders vow unity on nuclear disarmament](#) (Kyodo News)

- [Taiwan to ease food import ban on Japan except Fukushima](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Obama's Japan legacy: From Operation Tomodachi to Hiroshima visit, exiting Obama viewed favorably in Japan](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Cartoon: President Park](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)

ECONOMY

[Aso says Japan will respond properly to any currency fluctuations after U.S. election](#)

NHK reported online that Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aso stated at a regular press briefing on Tuesday that Japan will closely watch to see if there are any fluctuations in the foreign exchange markets due to the outcome of the U.S. presidential election. While saying that he refrains from commenting on elections in foreign countries, Aso stated that it will be necessary for Japan to respond properly if there is any impact on the forex markets. Economic Revitalization Minister Ishihara separately told reporters that it is necessary for Japan to keep a close eye on the policies adopted by the U.S. because the outcome of the presidential election in the U.S. will likely have a significant impact on the Japanese economy.

- [Segments missing in minutes of Lower House TPP committee; DP claims vote invalid](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Insufficient coordination by LDP Diet Affairs Committee caused delay in passage of TPP legislation](#) (Asahi)
- [Cartoon: TPP bills](#) (Akahata)
- [Why do the TPP bills always get delayed? Questions and answers](#) (Nikkei)
- [Ruling parties zigzag in handling TPP bills in Lower House](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan gov't council urges JA Zen-Noh to downsize materials sales to farmers](#) (Jiji Press)
- [MAFF plans to finance farmland consolidation](#) (Yomiuri)
- [MOF, MAFF at loggerheads over rice-crop conversion subsidy](#) (Asahi)

EDUCATION

- [Japan's JET int'l exchange, teaching program marks 30th year](#) (Kyodo News)

- [Diet group on Japanese language education for foreigners to be created](#) (The Mainichi)

TV PROGRAMS

[The fight against ISIL](#)

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" on Monday reported on the ongoing fight against ISIL, saying that Iraqi and other U.S.-backed forces have entered the cities of Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria, which remain strongholds of ISIL. The allied forces are reportedly facing difficulties because ISIL members are taking desperate measures, including launching sneak attacks and using children as soldiers or having them carry out suicide bombings. The program said it appears extremely difficult to eradicate ISIL without causing civilian casualties. Another source of concern is the fact that the allied forces are divided into different ethnic and religious groups and may face internal divisions. The program said taking back Raqqa will be far more difficult than taking back Mosul, since different forces within Syria are unlikely to unite in the fight against ISIL.

