


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Afternoon Alert - Thursday, February 16, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All TV networks gave top play to Malaysia's state media reports that another female suspect was arrested in relation to the assassination of Kim Jong Nam, the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Monday.

INTERNATIONAL

FM Kishida departs today for G20 foreign ministerial

NHK reported that Foreign Minister Kishida will leave for Bonn, Germany, today to attend the G20 foreign ministerial, saying that he is expected to share views with his counterparts on global and regional challenges. The network said Kishida is also arranging a trilateral foreign ministerial with Secretary of State Tillerson and ROK Foreign Minister Yun following North Korea's missile launch. The network quoted Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga as telling reporters this morning: "I believe they will discuss close trilateral cooperation mainly on North Korea as the threat it poses has entered a new phase." When asked whether the issue of the comfort woman statues will be discussed during the trilateral talks, Suga reportedly said: "Nothing has been decided on other issues."

- [Japan, U.S. financial chiefs chat by phone, eye talks in March](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan's foreign minister to focus on N. Korea, trade at G-20 talks](#) (Kyodo News)
- ["U.S. is committed to protecting Japan," PM Abe](#) (Sankei)

- [Japan, U.S. leaders' public consultations on DPRK missile launch "unbelievable," DP Secretary-General Noda](#) (Mainichi)
- [Roundtable discussions: Pundits call on Abe, Trump to nurture their relationship of trust](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Opposition's criticism of Abe being "America's sycophant" too shallow](#) (The Japan News)
- [Interview: Banker behind Japan-Russia summit meeting satisfied with results](#) (Asahi)
- [U.S. will not rule out "diplomacy of power"](#) (Asahi)
- [Japanese gov't beefs up intelligence gathering after alleged assassination of Kim Jong Nam](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Assassination of Kim Jong Nam indicates N. Korea becoming more tyrannical](#) (The Mainichi)

ECONOMY

Finance Minister Aso talks with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin

NHK reported at noon that Deputy Prime Minister/Finance Minister Aso held his first telephone conference with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin this morning, saying that they agreed to work together closely for the economic growth of both nations. Aso reportedly congratulated Secretary Mnuchin on his appointment. The network said they agreed to meet at the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting slated for next month in Bonn, Germany. Noting that President Trump has been critical of Japan's "currency manipulation," the network said although the two ministers did not discuss exchange policies this time, they are expected to discuss the issue in the future.

- [Japan's finance minister says yen not weak, blurting out rate](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Foreign visitors to Japan hit second-highest monthly figure in Jan.](#) (Kyodo News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 15](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gov't inconsistent in explaining crimes targeted by anti-terrorism bill](#) (Yomiuri)
- [DP chief briefing labor unions on plan to move up schedule for eliminating nuclear plants](#) (Yomiuri)

- [Kamei's new supra-partisan group to hold first meeting today](#) (Mainichi)

EDUCATION

- [MEXT to ease burden of existing student loan with new payback system](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: New curriculum guidelines must not rigidly control schools' education](#) (The Mainichi)

SOCIETY

- [Research Institute reports growing concentration of wealth in Japan](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Growing income disparity due partly to western style remuneration system](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Japanese victims of human trafficking hit record high](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Dating businesses using schoolgirls to face tougher rules in Tokyo](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Nursery schools should encourage familiarity with Japan's national flag and anthem: guidelines](#) (The Japan Times)

SECURITY

Onaga reiterates determination to block Henoko plan

Okinawa Times gave top play to a report on a policy speech delivered by Governor Onaga at the prefectural assembly on Wednesday. The governor stated that the Futenma base should not remain in its current location permanently and that he will strongly call on the central government to implement measures to remove the danger at the base, including the suspension of operations there within five years. Concerning the FRF construction at Henoko, Onaga stated that his plan to block the construction of a new base is one of the main policies of the prefectural government. The governor added that he will visit the U.S. again to directly convey the Okinawan people's opposition to the Henoko plan and explain the situation in Okinawa to the U.S. government.

Ginowan mayor says he "can't reject Henoko plan"

Okinawa Times front-paged a report on remarks made by Ginowan Mayor Sakima at a Lower House Budget Committee hearing held in Naha on Wednesday. The mayor was quoted as saying: "The governments of the U.S. and Japan insist that Henoko is the only solution for Futenma relocation. It

is difficult for me, as the mayor responsible for protecting the lives and property of the citizens of Ginowan, to reject the Henoko plan.” The mayor told reporters after the hearing: “I wish there were other solutions, but the U.S. and Japanese governments insist that Henoko is the only solution. I should not express either agreement or opposition. I made the remarks to explain that it is difficult for me to reject the Henoko plan.” Sakima added: “The Futenma base should not be allowed to remain in its current location permanently. Some 98,000 Ginowan citizens are dealing with base-related problems. I hope the Japanese government will make efforts to return the Futenma base as early as possible, including the suspension of operations there within five years.”

- [Japan SDF fighters scrambled more than 1,000 times](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Public hearing held on Futenma relocation](#) (Asahi)
- [Henoko Twitter account has 15,000 followers](#) (Okinawa Times)

TV PROGRAMS

Competition for private school admission intensifying

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" reported on intensifying competition for private school admission in Japan, saying that more than 50% of children in some local municipalities take entrance exams to get into private middle schools. Some families even move to different areas so their children can attend school there, adding that real estate agents provide data showing the average household income of each school district in order to identify the best ones. The program also reported on various private prep schools for elementary school students, saying some of them focus on having children experience nature, build friendships, or enhance their physical strength and resilience.