
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Friday, February 24, 2017

The following information reflects the reporting of the cited news media and does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Japan Media Highlights is intended for USG use only and should not be forwarded. Visit the website [here](#). For more information, contact TokyoMATT@state.gov.

HEADLINES

Noon news

All networks led with reports that the Malaysian police announced this morning that a nerve agent called VX was detected in samples taken from Kim Jong Nam, who was murdered in Kuala Lumpur, making it almost certain that he was poisoned.

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump eager to build up U.S. nuclear capability

All broadcasters reported at noon that President Trump said during an interview with Reuters on Thursday that he is willing to boost the U.S. nuclear capability and that the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia is a "one-sided deal." NHK also quoted the President as saying: "If countries are going to have nukes, then we're going to be at the top of the pack." It remains unclear whether the President is planning to change the policy adopted by the Obama administration of modernizing existing nuclear weapons instead of creating new ones. NHK said Hans Kristensen, a director at the Federation of American Scientists, questioned the view of the President that the treaty is one-sided since the treaty equally imposes restrictions on the nuclear policies of the U.S. and Russia.

President Trump says talks with DPRK difficult

All networks reported at noon that President Trump said during a media interview on Thursday that he is "very angry" at what North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has done, strongly condemning North Korea's repeated nuclear tests and ballistic missile test launches. The President reportedly expressed the view that holding direct talks with the North would be "difficult" at the moment. On

cooperation with Japan and South Korea, the President reportedly said, "Missile defense is one of the things we can do, but we are discussing more things."

- [Pundits assess Abe diplomacy on relations with U.S., overall strategy](#) (Mainichi Evening edition)
- [Cartoon: Putin and Northern Territories](#) (Asahi)

SECURITY

[Okinawans disappointed with court decision rejecting flight ban at Kadena](#)

Both Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo ran extensive front- and inside-page reports on the order handed down by the Okinawa branch of the Naha District Court to the central government on Thursday to pay about 30 billion yen in compensation to residents near Kadena AB for their suffering due to noise generated by the base. However, the court turned down a request by 22,000 residents to ban nighttime and early morning flights at Kadena, saying that the Japanese government is not in a position to regulate the flight operations of U.S. aircraft at U.S. military bases. The local papers paid more attention to this than the compensation order. According to the papers, the plaintiffs expressed their disappointment and intention to continue making efforts to resolve the noise pollution problem at Kadena. The mayor of Kadena stressed the need for the U.S. military and the GOJ to take the court order on compensation seriously. The mayor of Chatan welcomed the court order on compensation, but expressed disappointment over the court's rejection of the flight suspension request. The mayor of Okinawa also expressed disappointment.

Ryukyu Shimpo wrote that the court's decision to reject the request for a flight ban demonstrated its "subservience" to the security policy of the central government. It argued in an editorial that local residents' suffering from problems related to U.S. bases will never be resolved unless the judicial system abandons the thinking that it cannot intervene in operations at U.S. bases. An editorial in Okinawa Times complained about the judicial system's inability to help resolve the noise issue that affects local residents.

- [Editorial: Avoid comments in Diet that fan fears regarding organized crime bill](#) (The Japan News)
- [Speculation growing within MOD that Kuroe will pick his "buddy" as successor](#) (Sentaku)

ECONOMY

[Bannon calls TPP withdrawal "pivotal moment" in U.S. history](#)

Asahi reported online on a remark made on Thursday at the Conservative Political Action Conference by White House Chief Strategist Steve Bannon, in which he said: "I think one of the most pivotal moments in modern American history was the immediate withdrawal from the TPP. It got us out of a trade deal and let our sovereignty come back to ourselves." Explaining that this was probably the first time for the President's closest confidant to express in public his own ideas on such issues as immigration and the media, the daily said his combative narratives offered a glimpse into the strong influence he wields within the Trump administration.

- [Japan-U.S. economic dialogue: concerns over Japan-U.S. FTA agreement](#) (Nogyo Shinbun)
- [Trade and investment insurance agency to fully cover infrastructure export losses](#) (Nikkei)
- [Ghosn to step down as Nissan CEO to focus on leading wider group](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Pork producers association to establish council to make ready for check-off program](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [Japan takes step toward enormous bank of personal data](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Tokyo Gas enters solar power generation business](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Japan should contribute to search for better method of plutonium disposal](#) (Asahi)
- [Gov't retains basic view on economy in Feb., consumption downgraded](#) (Kyodo News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 23](#) (Nikkei)
- [DM Inada's incompetence causing discord in Defense Ministry](#) (Sentaku)
- [Labor group pressing Democratic Party to change nuclear plant policy](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Information management at METI requires all rooms to be locked at all times](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Gist of bill on promotion of gender equality in the political sector](#) (Asahi)

- [Diet submission of conspiracy bill early next month is difficult: Komeito executive](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [What awaits 'post-Abe' LDP](#) (The Japan Times)

SCIENCE

- [Editorial: Japan should fulfill its responsibilities as major consumer of bluefin tuna](#) (Asahi)
- [Bigeye tuna prices rise, closing gap with bluefin tuna](#) (Nikkei)
- [University supercomputers being used in drug development](#) (Nikkei)
- [Biosimilar drugs are not gaining popularity](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Japan Patent Office to develop worldwide IoT database with WIPO](#) (Sankei)

SOCIETY

“Murakami fever” strikes again

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" on Thursday reported on Haruki Murakami, who just released a new novel for the first time in seven years. The program reported on what is known as "Murakami fever," the heated exchange of views about his work by his fans and detractors on social media. The program examined the attraction of Murakami's novels.

- [20% of Tokyo's children live in “difficult circumstances,” Tokyo government poll](#) (Sankei)