



Afternoon Alert - Friday, April 21, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK, Fuji TV, and TV Asahi gave top play to reports on the robbery of 380 million yen in Fukuoka on Thursday, saying that the police are planning to arrest four South Korean men who tried to leave Japan from the Fukuoka Airport last night with 700 million in cash. The police are investigating whether the group had any connection with the robbery. NTV and TBS led with reports on an apparent terrorist attack in Paris on Thursday, in which one police officer was killed and two were wounded.

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump “absolutely confident” that China will use leverage over DPRK

Asahi and Yomiuri reported online on a press conference on Thursday by President Trump, during which he said he has “absolute confidence” that Chinese President Xi will step up its pressure to dissuade North Korea from engaging in nuclear and missile provocations. The U.S. president disclosed that he made the following statement to the Chinese leader when they met earlier this month: “You’ll make a much better deal on trade if you get rid of this menace or do something about the menace of North Korea.”

Senior officials of U.S., Japan, ROK to discuss North Korea on April 25

NHK reported at noon that Foreign Minister Kishida told reporters this morning that the top envoys of the Six-Party Talks from the U.S., Japan, and South Korea will meet on April 25 in Tokyo to discuss North Korea. According to the network, MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Kenji Kanasugi, DOS Special Representative Joseph Yun, and South Korea’s Special

Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs Kim Hong-kyun will attend the meeting. Kishida reportedly said the senior government officials will share their views on North Korea's accelerating nuclear and missile development, and confirm trilateral cooperation.

- [Inadequate preparation prevents U.S. from taking offensive at Economic Dialogue](#) (Yomiuri)
- [“Inside story” of Japan-U.S. Economic Dialogue](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan, U.S. finance chiefs meet amid uncertainty over currency policy](#) (Kyodo News)
- [South Korea disapproves of using SDF to evacuate Japanese citizens living in South Korea](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Fisheries Agency cracks down on Taiwanese tuna fishing boats near Senkakus](#) (Sankei)

ECONOMY

[Aso comments on President Trump’s remark on “strong dollar”](#)

Nikkei reported online on press remarks on Thursday in Washington by visiting Finance Minister Aso, who commented on President Trump’s recent statement that the dollar is too strong. The Japanese minister said: “What’s wrong with it? It’s not such a big deal. Japan doesn’t have a problem with it.” Aso made the remark in response to a media inquiry as to whether the President’s statement runs counter to the confirmation by Aso and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin earlier in the day that issues related to foreign exchange and financial policies should be discussed between the two officials. The paper said the remark will probably cause a stir because it implies that the GOJ endorses the U.S. leader’s view.

- [Suga says no options have been eliminated for TPP](#) (Mainichi Evening edition)
- [Japan Post weighs huge write-down on Toll acquisition](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [More foreigners visited Japan in Jan.-March, spent less per person](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Verification test launched for stable supply of wind power](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Where to put all the radioactive waste is now the burning issue](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

SECURITY

MSDF vessels leave Sasebo for possible joint exercises with USS Carl Vinson

NHK reported at noon that two MSDF escort ships left the Sasebo base in Nagasaki this morning for possible joint exercises with the USS Carl Vinson strike group, which is heading toward the Korean Peninsula. The network said Pentagon officials are expecting the U.S. carrier to arrive in the Sea of Japan early next week and operate in waters near the Korean Peninsula, adding that MOD officials said neither the schedule nor the location of the joint exercises have been decided yet. The network said that since April 25 is the anniversary of the Korean People's Army, the purported joint exercises are probably aimed at keeping North Korea in check. The network also pointed out that the USS Carl Vinson strike group is apparently taking its time sailing to the Sea of Japan, quoting a senior MOD official as saying that the U.S. probably intends to exercise restraint in responding to North Korea unless it stages a provocation.

- [Editorial: Science council's latest guidance misunderstands 'freedom of research'](#) (The Japan News)
- [LDP subcommittee to consider possession of cyberattack capability](#) (Sankei)
- [Interagency liaison council on space security established](#) (Mainichi Evening edition)
- [Witnesses at Lower House Constitution Commission seek greater autonomy for Okinawa](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

POLITICS

PM Abe sends "masakaki" tree offering to Yasukuni Shrine

NHK reported this morning that Prime Minister Abe dedicated a "masakaki" ceremonial tree offering to Yasukuni Shrine for the spring festival, which began today. The network said the premier is not expected to pay a visit to the shrine during this year's spring festival. According to the network, Health Minister Shiozaki also sent a ceremonial offering to the shrine. All other networks carried similar stories, adding that 95 members of a cross-party group of Diet members visited the shrine today. NHK also reported that Internal Affairs Minister Takaichi visited the shrine.

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 20](#) (Nikkei)
- [Komura hints that LDP Santo and Aso factions may merge after Diet session ends](#) (Mainichi)
- [Abe sends offering to war-linked Yasukuni Shrine, visit unlikely](#) (Kyodo News)

- [A study of the Cabinet Secretariat \(Part 2\): Bringing in ace bureaucrats from various ministries](#) (Nikkei)
- [A study of the Cabinet Secretariat \(Part 3\): Kantei controls appointments in the ministries](#) (Nikkei)
- [Cartoon: The DP and Kim Jong Un](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Gov't must publicize lower house constituency demarcation changes](#) (The Mainichi)

SCIENCE

Curing brain disorders with regenerative medicine

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on new regenerative medicines being developed in Japan including drugs to repair cerebral infarction or brain damage and drugs to cure dementia. Although Japan has been criticized for making it difficult to gain approval for new drugs and prompting talented researchers and companies to go overseas, the trend has been changing since a law was enacted in 2014 to encourage the swift approval of regenerative drugs. The program said the "Silicon Valley" of regenerative medicine might end up being in Kobe or Kawasaki.

- [Gov't sets S&T investment target of 24 trillion yen for 2020](#) (Nikkei)

SOCIETY

- [Relaxed visa requirements boost number of asylum seekers looking to work in Japan](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Child suicide rate remains unchanged](#) (Asahi)
- [Record number of minors fall victim to crime via social media](#) (Kyodo News)