



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, June 22, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

Most networks reported that the rainy season officially ended in Okinawa today. Other top news included reports that Central Japan Railway held a press conference today to apologize for the suspension of Shinkansen bullet train services between western and southwestern Japan for about 5 hours on Wednesday.

## SECURITY

### Okinawa city assembly calls for suspension of Kadena parachute training and ramp use

Okinawa Times wrote that a group of Okinawa municipal assembly members visited the Defense Ministry's Okinawa bureau and the U.S. Air Force's 18th Wing at Kadena Air Base on Wednesday to call for the suspension of parachute drop drills there and the use of a Navy ramp at the base. Saying that there is criticism among local residents that the U.S. military is ignoring their feelings, the local legislators delivered a written opinion calling on the U.S. to comply with the 1996 SACO agreement. According to the assembly members, a public affairs officer at Kadena stated that the wing's operational requirements make it necessary to conduct the drills for a designated number of hours. An official at the MOD Okinawa bureau expressed the view that the use of the ramp is unacceptable and stated that the U.S. and Japan are discussing whether an agreement has been reached on the use of the facility. The official added that the GOJ has asked the U.S. to suspend the parachute training at Kadena.

### U-2 makes emergency landing at Kadena

Ryukyu Shimpo and Okinawa Times wrote that a U-2 reconnaissance plane deployed at Osan Air Base in South Korea but temporarily deployed at Kadena Air Base made an emergency landing at Kadena at around 8:22 a.m. on Wednesday. The aircraft was moved to a hangar at a Navy ramp on the base after undergoing a mechanical inspection for 20 minutes on a runway. The Okinawa Times wrote that the Defense Ministry's Okinawa bureau said that it was notified by the 18th Wing at around 10:00 a.m. that the aircraft made a precautionary landing on account of a minor problem. The MOD bureau informed the governments of the prefecture and surrounding municipalities of the situation via email.

### **U.S. undecided on when to begin operations at Takae helipads**

Okinawa Times wrote that the Okinawa Marines told the paper on Wednesday that it is difficult to say at this point when it will become possible to begin operations at four new helipads in Takae. The paper wrote that the Marines said that operations at the facilities will start following the completion of a rigorous process to ensure the safety of the training area. The paper interpreted this remark to mean that creating an environment under which the Marines can conduct drills safely is a condition for the start of operations.

The paper wrote that although the U.S. and Japanese governments agreed on December 21, 2016, on the provision of the helipads in exchange for the return of a large portion of the land occupied by the Northern Training Area, some of the helipads have been hit by mudslides and the construction of a footpath connecting the G district and nearby river has not yet been completed. The paper conjectured that repairs and additional construction work at Takae will probably be completed in August or later. Noting that conditions for the U.S. military's use of the helipads have not yet been fulfilled even though more than six months have passed since December, the paper claimed that it was clear that the GOJ tried to expedite the helipad construction to complete it by the end of the year in order to demonstrate its efforts to reduce the base-hosting burden on Okinawa

- [\*\*US destroyer crash casts shadow on North Korea deterrence\*\*](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [\*\*LDP panel calls for Japan to look to 2% GDP defense spending target\*\*](#) (Kyodo News)
- [\*\*SDF conducting drill based on scenario of Nankai Trough earthquake\*\*](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)
- [\*\*U.S. military under fire for gun safety breaches on Okinawa\*\*](#) (The Japan Times)
- [\*\*Body of unidentified American man found off Naha port\*\*](#) (Okinawa Times)

## **ECONOMY**

## **USTR calls on Japan to make concessions on beef imports**

TBS and TV Asahi reported at noon that USTR Lighthizer said at a Senate hearing on Wednesday that Japan should make concessions on beef imports in order to reduce its trade surplus with the U.S. TBS quoted him as saying: "I think in the areas like beef and the others, they ought to make some unilateral concessions — at least temporary concessions.... And I don't quite understand why that doesn't happen." The USTR also stressed: "That's a simple way to get that trade deficit down and doesn't cost them anything." TV Asahi also reported that the USTR stressed that there is no way the U.S. will return to the TPP.

## **Suga comments on USTR's call for Japanese concessions on beef**

Jiji Press reported that following USTR Lighthizer's call for Japan to make "unilateral concessions" on its beef imports, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga pointed out during a press briefing this morning that Japan "has received no specific requests from the USG on market access during a series of talks, including the U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue." Suga also reportedly said that the U.S. and Japan will "hold constructive discussions on what kind of bilateral trade framework is best."

- [\*\*USTR urges Japan to make “unilateral concessions” on beef imports\*\*](#) (Kyodo News)
- [\*\*Japan to ban junket agents from casinos\*\*](#) (Mainichi)
- [\*\*Self-imposed deadline drove Toshiba's hasty bidder choice\*\*](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [\*\*METI announces new roadmap for underwater methane development\*\*](#) (Nikkei)
- [\*\*Industry-government-academia partnership based in Chubu to team up with French aerospace industry group\*\*](#) (Nikkei)
- [\*\*IoT is projected to accelerate economy\*\*](#) (Yomiuri)
- [\*\*Corporate adviser system in Japan under scrutiny\*\*](#) (Jiji Press)
- [\*\*The rise and fall of Japanese chipmakers\*\*](#) (Yomiuri)
- [\*\*Sumitomo to construct gas-fired power plant in Tunisia worth 38 billion yen\*\*](#) (Nikkei)
- [\*\*Foreign visitors to Japan reach 2.29 mil. in May, record for month\*\*](#) (Kyodo News)
- [\*\*77 companies say economy is “moderately expanding,” Asahi poll of 100 major companies\*\*](#) (Asahi)

- [47 of 100 major companies “are concerned about Trump administration,” Asahi poll](#) (Asahi)

## INTERNATIONAL

- [Japan, South Korea to set up defense-chief hotline](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan, S. Korea foreign ministers at odds over “comfort women” deal](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: It is time for Japan and the US to join the AIIB](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: Together with U.S., increase pressure on DPRK](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan, Turkey agree to ensure security cooperation](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan business lobby in China sets up council on Silk Road plan](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Commentary: Rethinking the concepts of “friend” and “foe”](#) (Sankei)
- [Governor retracts call to drive N. Koreans to starve](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japanese ICT firms urged to use Malaysia as stepping-stone to ASEAN](#) (Kyodo News)

## POLITICS

- [Prime minister’s schedule on June 21](#) (Nikkei)
- [Opposition parties to seek extra Diet session](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Abe likely to retain Suga, Aso, Nikai, Komura in cabinet, LDP reshuffle](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [LDP eyes new clause in Constitution to explicitly refer to SDF](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan’s ruling party plows ahead with constitutional change](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [TV stations differ in reporting on passage of “anti-conspiracy law”](#) (Mainichi)
- [The ordinary Diet session through the eyes of Asahi reporters](#) (Asahi)
- [Cartoon: The Kake scandal](#) (Akahata)

- [Political rivals to hold “reunion party”](#) (Sankei)
- [Critics seek level playing field in referendum on Constitution](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Prosecution to be tested in Moritomo school scandal](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

## OPINION POLLS

- [Opinion poll & results from Nikkei Digital](#) (Nikkei Online)
- [76% favor capping overtime work, Nihon Yoron Chosakai poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

## SOCIETY

### **Shogi player Sota Fujii: 14 years old, 28 straight victories**

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported on Sota Fujii, who became the youngest professional shogi player at the age of 14 years and 2 months. Fujii has won 28 consecutive official matches. The program reported on his childhood days and recounted some of the matches he won this year. Fujii said in an interview that his dream is to become the first title holder from the Tokai region.

- [Gov't to introduce program to grant permanent residence to “Cool Japan” professionals](#) (Nikkei)