
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Thursday, July 20, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK led with a report that a senior USG official told the network on Wednesday that there has been activity involving ICBM-related equipment in a Pyongyang suburb over the last few days, saying that this activity is very similar to the preparations for North Korea's ICBM launch on July 4. The official reportedly warned that North Korea may launch an ICBM-level ballistic missile within the next two weeks. TBS, Fuji TV, and TV Asahi led with reports that Regional Revitalization Minister Yamamoto denied the claim by the Japan Veterinary Medical Association that he said a new veterinary medicine department would be created in Shikoku two months before Kake Gakuen was officially selected. NTV gave top play to the announcement that the rainy season ended in Yamaguchi Prefecture and northern Kyushu today.

POLITICS

TV pundit says Inada will likely resign

Regular nightly news programs reported heavily on the reemergence in the media of the scandal over the concealment of GSDF daily activity logs. TBS "News 23" commentator Hoshi projected that Defense Minister Inada is likely to resign to take responsibility for this and other scandals. Hoshi said the embattled official will probably have little choice but to step down following the official release on Friday of a report on the log scandal put together by an independent inspection team, since the report is expected to conclude that Vice Defense Minister Kuroe was closely involved in the concealment. The journalist said the Abe administration is hoping to quickly quell the turmoil at the ministry by accepting Inada's resignation.

On TV-Asahi's "Hodo Station," former Kyodo News managing editor Goto said some GSDF and MOD officials are displeased that the inspection team probably will not put the blame on Inada in its

planned report since she is outside the scope of the inspection in the first place. He speculated that these disgruntled officials perhaps leaked information that is damaging to the minister at this juncture. Goto also said that although Inada may not have been involved in the ministry's decision to conceal the logs that was apparently made by the vice defense minister and other senior MOD and GSDF officials, she should still be held accountable for failing to overrule it. Goto urged Prime Minister Abe to dismiss the defense chief without delay once the inspection report has been released.

- [Inada being used as “scapegoat” in scandal over SDF logs from South Sudan](#) (Sankei)
- [Distance from Abe: Inada takes a hit from Abe's protection](#) (Nikkei)
- [Factions in Japan's ruling party jostle before cabinet shakeup](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Minister denies report on new vet school plan](#) (NHK World)
- [LDP to face challenges in local elections after Tokyo election debacle](#) (Sankei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on July 19](#) (Nikkei)
- [Cartoon: Kake Gakuen scandal](#) (Asahi)

OPINION POLLS

- [50% say their trust in U.S. has decreased, Genron NPO survey](#) (Asahi)
- [Column on Current Events 2017: How should opinion polls be designed?](#) (Chuokoron)

INTERNATIONAL

- [Editorial: A world ‘sans America’ has truly arrived](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan and U.S. start planning next round of high-level economic talks](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Column: Tillerson's lack of communication with State officials, fading presence](#) (Shukan Ekonomisuto)
- [Russia's plan for military base on Chishima island may hinder territorial talks](#) (Sankei)
- [Nikai asks China to act on N.Korea](#) (NHK World)

ECONOMY

- [Changes in trade policies create tailwind for Japanese trading houses](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan goes back to square one in selecting possible nuclear waste disposal sites](#) (Mainichi)
- [Rift in labor group Rengo over merit-based pay system](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Marubeni seeks juicier cut of China market with \\$170m US beef deal](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Mitsubishi Electric to partner with U.S. company to develop nuclear reactor equipment](#) (Nikkei)
- [Komeito sets up project team to study integrated resorts bill](#) (Mainichi)
- [Foreign visitors to Japan increase 17% in 1st half of 2017](#) (Kyodo News)

SOCIETY

Nursing care insurance system reform

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported on Japan's nursing care insurance system, which underwent a major reform in April. As a result of the reform, people who require the minimum level of care, accounting for about 30% of all beneficiaries, will be supported not only by certified care workers, but also non-certified local residents, and each local municipality will decide what kind of services should be provided to such beneficiaries. The program introduced efforts in Daito City, Osaka, where local residents do special exercises to help eliminate the need for nursing care. As a result, the city has been able to stop providing nursing care services to people who require the minimum level of care.

- [Cat and mouse game continues in high paying dating services](#) (Kyodo News)



Parachute drop drills conducted despite local opposition

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo reported on parachute drop drills performed in waters designated for training off Tsuken Island, Okinawa, on Wednesday night, noting that this was the fourth time for this type of training to be carried out this year by the U.S. military. According to the dailies, at least six paratroopers were witnessed jumping from an MC-130 Hercules Combat Talon. Noting that the prefectural and Uruma municipal governments had called for the training to be cancelled, the articles said local officials and residents are concerned that the U.S. military will continue to conduct similar training in the area periodically.

- [Okinawa gov't conducts first joint drill with GSDF, US forces](#) (Okinawa Times)
 - [PBS visits Henoko for news program feature](#) (Okinawa Times)
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