


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Afternoon Alert - Monday, July 24, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK, NTV, TBS, and Fuji TV gave top play to reports on the Lower House budget committee meeting being held this morning, in which Prime Minister Abe said he was not asked by his friend Kotaro Kake, who heads Kake Gakuen, for help in opening a new university department, and that he did not instruct government officials to give favorable treatment to the school operator. TV Asahi led with a report on record rainfall in Akita, saying that more than 400 houses were flooded.

OPINION POLLS

Public support for Abe cabinet plunges to 34.7%, Fuji TV poll

Fuji TV reported at noon on the results of its opinion poll conducted over the weekend, which found that public support for the Abe cabinet plunged to 34.7%, down 12.0 points from last month, and nonsupport rose 13.2 points to 56.1%. The network said this was the first time for public approval to drop to the 30% level under the second Abe cabinet launched in December 2012. According to the network, 29% of respondents said they trust Prime Minister Abe, while 63% said they don't. In response to a question about the cabinet reshuffle scheduled for Aug. 3, 63% said Defense Minister Inada should be replaced. 3% said Justice Minister Kaneda should be replaced, and 10% said no one should be replaced.

- [Cabinet support rate plummets further to 26%, Mainichi poll](#) (Mainichi)
- [Opinion poll & results from Mainichi Shimbun](#) (Mainichi)

- [Abe's approval rating plunges to 39% as 65% find administration complacent, Nikkei poll](#) (Nikkei)
- [Disapproval rating reaches all-time high of 52% as pollees stray from Abe, Nikkei poll](#) (Nikkei)
- [57% approve of Japan-EU EPA, Nikkei poll](#) (Nikkei)

POLITICS

- [Reshuffle could make or break Abe cabinet](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Slumping Abe woos Kishida ahead of cabinet reshuffle](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Land Minister Ishii expected to be reappointed in cabinet reshuffle](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Commentary: Bureaucrats fear "Suga agenda"](#) (Asahi)
- [Prime minister's schedule on July 23](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on July 22](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on July 21](#) (Nikkei)

INTERNATIONAL

- [U.S. says "Japanese military engaged in human trafficking"](#) (Sankei)
- [ROK objected to "ICBM" wording in Japan-U.S.-ROK joint statement](#) (Sankei)
- [China taking soil samples from Japan's EEZ seabed possibly to support continental shelf claim](#) (Sankei)
- [Abe plans to visit India in mid-September](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Editorial: Is it future-oriented for S. Korea to establish a comfort women day?](#) (The Japan News)
- [Russia unyielding on territorial issue despite economic cooperation with Japan](#) (Sankei)
- [FM Kishida appoints members of eminent persons' panel on nuclear disarmament](#) (Asahi)

- [British foreign sec'y raps N. Korea ICBM test as "reckless provocation"](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Obama's Hiroshima message portrayed in illustrations by Japanese artist](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)

ECONOMY

- [Team Japan eyes all-in-one exports in natural gas power generation](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Regional parliament in Europe may hold key to Japan-EU EPA](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Possible melted fuel spotted at bottom of Fukushima plant reactor](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Renewable energy purchase prices to reach 94 trillion by FY2050](#) (Sankei)
- [MLIT asks condominium associations to decide whether to allow "minpaku" operation](#) (Nikkei)

SCIENCE

AI program offers proposals for changing Japanese society

"NHK Special" analyzed Japan's social structure and issues using an artificial intelligence (AI) program incorporating 7 million items of public data on Japan, including demographics, nursing care costs, and medical costs. The AI program came up with the conclusion that "the rate of people in their 40s who live alone" in Japan holds the key to changing the nation, adding that the choices of this demographic group will have a serious impact on various social issues. According to the AI program, if the rate of people in their 40s who live alone were to double, the number of vacant houses would increase by 27%, the number of people who die of starvation would increase by 49%, and the birth rate would drop by 12%. Social welfare costs and the number of people committing suicide would also increase. The AI program said that the number of people in their 40s who live alone can be lowered by reducing rent costs, and that such people could be happier if they "didn't enjoy their work" so much.

Geo Japan – Part 1: How was the Japanese archipelago formed?

Sunday's "NHK Special" reported on the formation of the Japanese archipelago, saying that four major "miracles" resulted in the development of Japan as we know it. This episode of the program focused on the first two miracles. Japan was part of the Asian continent about 30 million years ago and the first miracle occurred when Japan was torn from the continent and formed two islands. The second miracle occurred when many volcanic islands collided with the Japanese islands about 5 million years ago, forming mountains and connecting the two islands together.

Experts discuss how to prevent alien species from entering Japan

In response to the recent discovery of venomous red fire ants in Japan, six experts on NHK's "Nichiyo Toron" Sunday debate show discussed ways to prevent harmful alien species from entering Japan. There is strong concern in Japan about the risks these species pose to human health and the ecosystem. The panelists stressed the need to implement stricter cargo inspections at commercial ports in Japan.

EDUCATION

- [Japan to promote study abroad using "Furusato Nozei" donations](#) (Jiji Press)

SECURITY

- [6,000 around Atsugi base to sue gov't for noise pollution next month](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Clarity needed to clean up mess regarding S. Sudan daily reports](#) (The Japan News)



Protesters form human chain around Camp Schwab to protest FRF construction

Sunday's Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo led with reports on a rally held at Camp Schwab on Saturday, during which the participants lined up for 1.2 km along the fence around the base to express opposition to the construction of a "new base" at Henoko. According to the organizer, some 2,000 people participated in the event.