
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Friday, August 25, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most networks gave top play to reports that the Omono River flooded in Akita Prefecture this morning due to heavy rainfall. TV Asahi led with a report that North Korea will celebrate the anniversary of the beginning of Kim Jong-il's "military-first leadership" today, adding that so far there are no signs of fresh provocations on the part of North Korea.

INTERNATIONAL

PM Abe, ROK President Moon agree to increase pressure on DPRK

NHK reported at noon that PM Abe held a telephone conference with South Korean President Moon this morning for about 30 minutes, saying that the two leaders agreed to increase pressure on North Korea, together with the U.S., in order to deter North Korea's ballistic missile launches and nuclear development. The premier also explained Japan's position on the issue of forced labor during the Pacific War and pointed out the importance of building a future-oriented relationship.

According to the network, Abe told Moon: "North Korea's provocations are escalating, and we can never accept such provocative acts, including announcing the launch of ballistic missiles toward Guam. Japan, South Korea, and the United States must unite and respond. I share with President Moon a desire to resolve the issue peacefully, and I believe preparing for contingencies is essential." Abe also reportedly said: "It was good to talk with President Moon over the phone on Aug. 7 and to agree that we must pressure North Korea during this phase. I hope to further increase pressure to urge the nation to demonstrate its strong will and concrete actions toward denuclearization in addition to refraining from taking provocative actions. How China and Russia respond holds the key."

Japan, South Korea, and the United States will work closely and lobby [China and Russia]." President Moon reportedly responded: "I understand the Japanese public's concern about North Korea's provocation that it will fire missiles over Japan toward Guam. Close coordination among South Korea, Japan, and the United States is important. I highly welcome Japan's unilateral sanctions."

Meanwhile, PM Abe also explained Japan's position over the issue of forced labor during WWII that the issue of the right to claim assets between the two nations has been resolved. He also reportedly said: "It is important to appropriately manage bilateral issues in order to build a future-oriented relationship."

Komeito leader to visit Russia next month

NHK reported this morning that Komeito Party Representative Yamaguchi will visit Moscow and Saint Petersburg in Russia from Sept. 12 to 18 to meet with senior Russian government officials and parliament members. The network said Yamaguchi is expected to meet with Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matvienko and other senior government officials to promote bilateral talks toward materializing joint economic activities in the Northern Territories and exchange views on responses to North Korea. Yamaguchi was quoted as saying: "As a ruling party, it is important to support exchanges between the two governments and deepen mutual understanding. We hope to play a role in broadening and strengthening the Japan-Russia relationship."

- [Japan freezes assets of more firms, individuals linked to N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [FM Kono to announce creation of investment agreements with 13 nations at TICAD](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Trump should heal U.S. racial divide, face up to realities abroad](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

ECONOMY

- [11 TPP nations to start full-fledged review of free trade deal](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Japan to spur oil refinery shake-up with new quotas](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [METI to set up expert committee to create list of don'ts in overseas M&As](#) (Nikkei)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Aug. 24, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [LDP chapter led by Minister Motegi got donation from subsidized firm](#) (Kyodo News)

- [Three Lower House by-elections in October critical for Abe](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Ex-DP executive Hosono may form new party with Gov. Koike's aide "within this year"](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Discord in LDP Tokyo chapter over election of new leader](#) (Yomiuri)
- [280 bil. yen sought for Japan's labor reform in FY 2018 budget request](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan's health ministry requests record \\$286bn for fiscal 2018](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Cabinet Office to make budget requests to support R&D in three fields](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Finance ministry requests increase in number of customs inspectors](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japanese politicians probe effective ways to leverage Twitter to broaden support base](#) (Nikkei)
- [Interview with Masaji Matsuyama, minister for promoting dynamic engagement of all citizens](#) (Nikkei)

SECURITY

High school cancels school trip to Guam for fear of North Korean missile launch

The Friday evening edition of Tokyo Shimbun reported that a high school in Oita Prefecture canceled a school trip to Guam scheduled for October in the wake of the announcement by North Korea of its plan to launch ballistic missiles toward the U.S. territory. The paper said concerns over North Korea's missile launch are impacting educational institutions in Japan. The school reportedly decided to cancel the trip "to ensure the safety of the students and dispel the anxiety of their parents." According to MEXT, a total of 12 high schools or vocational schools across Japan are planning trips to Guam from September to November this year, and two schools, including the one in Oita, have decided to cancel the trip.

Minor arrested for hit-and-run incident in front of Camp Schwab

NHK reported that an 18-year-old minor was arrested in connection with a hit-and-run incident on Thursday that injured two people who were sitting on a curb of National Route 329 while waiting to participate in a rally protesting the Futenma relocation plan in front of the gate of Camp Schwab. According to police, the minor told police he thought he hit the curb, not people, and did not stop to check because he did not want to be late for work.

- [Russia slams Japan's plan to install land-based Aegis missile defense](#) (Kyodo News)

- [Editorial: Stay vigilant against North Korea's provocations during joint drill](#) (The Japan News)

SCIENCE

- [30 pct of Japanese may face rejection after iPS-cell transplants](#) (Jiji Press)
- [AI enlisted to help prevent traffic jams](#) (The Japan News)

EDUCATION

- [MEXT to request budget allocations to hire 3,800 more elementary, junior high school teachers](#) (Nikkei)
- [Number of junior colleges falling in Japan](#) (Asahi Evening edition)

SOCIETY

U.S. sailors who participated in Operation Tomodachi sue TEPCO

NHK reported this morning on the finding that about 150 U.S. nationals, including Navy sailors, have filed a suit for damages against TEPCO, seeking the establishment by the utility of a compensation fund of at least \$5 billion to cover medical treatment and other related costs as they were exposed to radiation after participating in Operation Tomodachi right after the 2011 nuclear disaster.

- [Surveys: 22% of municipalities, wards have no bookstore](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)