



Afternoon Alert - Monday, September 25, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most networks led with reports that Prime Minister Abe will announce this evening his intention to dissolve the Lower House on Sept. 28. NHK said Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters this morning that the premier will hold a press conference at 6 p.m. today.

POLITICS

Senior party officials discuss upcoming general election

During NHK's "Nichiyo Toron" Sunday debate show, senior lawmakers from the ruling and opposition parties discussed Prime Minister Abe's plan to dissolve the Lower House for a snap general election on Oct. 22. LDP Deputy Secretary General Hagiuda stated that through the election, the ruling coalition plans to seek the approval of the Japanese public for the Abe administration's policies and achievements in the past four-and-half years. He added that whether the LDP and the Komeito party are able to secure a majority together will be the indicator of whether the LDP has won the election. Komeito Deputy Secretary General Saito said that the ruling coalition will ask the public to choose between a stable government and an unstable coalition of opposition parties. Democratic Party Secretary General Oshima insisted that Abe should be held accountable for his alleged involvement in the Moritomo and Kake scandals. The secretaries general of the Japanese Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party criticized Abe's plan to dissolve the Lower House for a snap election by saying that the premier is "disregarding democracy."

Veteran lawmaker leaves DP to join Koike's new party

NHK reported at noon that veteran Democratic Party lawmaker Jin Matsubara, former state minister in charge of the abduction issue, submitted his resignation from the party today because he plans to join a new party to be formed this week by lawmaker Masaru Wakasa, who is close to Tokyo

Governor Koike. Matsubara told reporters today: "I am planning to join the new party that Tokyo Governor Koike is going to form. The Democratic Party is a beautiful mountain, but the new party will have the dynamism of an active volcano. We need party dynamism in order to change politics."

Governor Koike to head new party

NHK reported live on a press conference held by Tokyo Governor Koike, during which she said she will create a new party called "Kibo no To" (Party of Hope) with lawmaker Masaru Wakasa and become the party leader. She will continue to serve as Tokyo governor. The network said Koike and other members are making arrangements to hold a press conference on Wednesday to announce the launch of the new party.

- [Tokyo Gov. Koike announces plan to launch own national party](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Can Abe convince voters, party to accept spending changes?](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan's Abe making risky bet on snap election](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [DP to focus on education in election](#) (The Japan News)
- [Doubts voiced on PM's "prerogative" to dissolve Lower House under Article 7 of Constitution](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Pro-constitutional revision forces need to win 310 seats in election](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Lack of unity among opposition parties to benefit ruling camp in election](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan opposition Democratic Party eyes merging with Liberals](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Senior vice minister to join new opposition force](#) (Kyodo News)
- [DP Lower House candidates in Kanagawa leaving to join new party](#) (Yomiuri Yokohama Edition)
- [Watanabe to switch to Lower House in the next general election](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Use of funds from tax hike a poor pretext for a snap election](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Can DP avoid 'illicit union' with JCP in upcoming lower house election?](#) (The Japan News)
- [Cartoon: LH Dissolution](#) (Asahi)
- [Discord within the National Security Council](#) (Sentaku)

- [Strength of in-house groups in House of Representatives and House of Councillors](#) (House of Councillors, House of Representatives)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Sept. 21-23, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Sept. 23, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Sept. 24, 2017](#) (Nikkei)

OPINION POLLS

- [44% say they will vote for LDP, 8% for DP in next Lower House election, Nikkei poll](#) (Nikkei)
- [Unlikely for there to be alternative party for those critical of Abe administration, Nikkei poll](#) (Nikkei)
- [56% said it is inappropriate to dissolve Lower House for snap election now, Nikkei poll](#) (Nikkei)

INTERNATIONAL

- [S. Korea gov't to set up monument for "comfort women"](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gist of Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S. summits, Sept. 21](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)
- [Full translation of Abe's remarks to reporters on Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S. summits, Sept. 21](#) (Sankei)
- [China says pressure, talks both key to dealing with N. Korea: Japan](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, S. Korea vow to promote security cooperation over N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan's U.N. messaging on N. Korea a success, for now](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gov't to freeze assets of more DPRK entities, individuals](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Experts weigh in on possibility of hydrogen bomb test over Pacific](#) (Nikkei)
- [Opinion: New U.S. sanctions are broader and more powerful](#) (Nikkei)
- [ROK public diplomacy ambassador views forced labor issue "resolved"](#) (Yomiuri)
- [South Korea hoping emperor will visit before he abdicates](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [South Korean PM attends Japan-Korea exchange event for first time](#) (Nikkei)

- [Editorial: S. Korea should put off aid to North, coordinate closely with Japan, U.S.](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: High time to deepen cooperation with China, Russia over N. Korean crisis](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Ensure international solidarity to bolster pressure on North Korea](#) (The Japan News)
- [Ex-residents of Russian-held isles return home after bad weather](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan to host int'l confab in Nov. to assist Iraq's recovery](#) (Kyodo News)

ECONOMY

- [Abe proposes spending changes to direct 2 trillion yen for enhancing social security](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan's NEC lays Southeast Asia-U.S. submarine cable](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan to expand service sector work for foreigners](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan plans new laws to encourage offshore wind power generation](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Rice sellers, agricultural cooperatives work to stabilize rice prices](#) (Nikkei)
- [Watchdog members claim Toshiba FY 2016 accounts contain misstatements](#) (Kyodo News)

SOCIETY

Regional NHK director depicts life with disabled sister

Sunday's "NHK Special" carried a documentary created by an NHK Aomori director who has a sister with disabilities. He decided to make a film about his sister following the Sagami-hara massacre in which 19 people with disabilities were killed. The director explained that since the perpetrator said "people with disabilities only create unhappiness," he wanted to show that his family is happy and that his disabled sister makes people smile. The documentary showed his parents taking care of their daughter without losing their sense of humor and making efforts to having her interact with as many people as possible. The parents said although taking care of their daughter is hard work, her mere existence makes them happy.

- [Justice Ministry confirms counselor's rape query to Congo asylum seeker was inappropriate](#) (The Japan Times)

- [Families of Japanese soldiers killed in WWII offer flowers to victims of Pearl Harbor attack](#) (Mainichi)

AMBASSADOR

Ambassador Hagerty meets with Osaka leaders

Sankei reported online that Ambassador Hagerty paid a courtesy call on Osaka Governor Matsui and Osaka Mayor Yoshimura at the governor's office on Monday. The paper wrote that the governor and mayor requested cooperation from the U.S. with Osaka's efforts to win the bid for hosting the 2025 World Expo, and the Ambassador said in response, "Gambatte kudasai" (I wish you the best!) in Japanese. While expressing their desire to promote Osaka's relations with the U.S., the Osaka officials expressed strong concern over the recent installation of a comfort woman statue in San Francisco, a sister city of Osaka. The paper quoted the Ambassador as saying in reply that it is necessary for the U.S., Japan, and South Korea to strengthen their partnership against the threat posed by North Korea, and he hopes that the peoples of Japan and South Korea will look ahead to the future together.

Chunichi Shimbun, Kyoto Shimbun, and other papers ran a similar Kyodo story, quoting the governor as saying: "I'm worried that the relationship between the U.S. and Japan could become complicated due to inaccurate perceptions of history. Please convey my concern to President Trump."

Yomiuri also reported online on Ambassador Hagerty's courtesy call, saying that Mayor Yoshimura told the Ambassador that it may become necessary for the municipality to fundamentally review its sister-city relationship with San Francisco if the city allows a comfort woman statue to be established in a public space. According to the paper, Mayor Yoshimura and his predecessor Hashimoto have sent to San Francisco several letters urging the city to carefully deal with its assembly's adoption in September 2015 of a motion supporting a plan to erect a comfort woman statue.

SECURITY

- [Aso refers to shooting armed N. Korean refugees in crisis](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Okinawa lodges protests with MOFA, MOD over parachute drop training in Kadena](#) (Okinawa Times)
- [Yokota base allows visitors to touch weapons at festival](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [15,000 GOJ email addresses with the go.jp domain breached](#) (Yomiuri)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

- [LDP's Okinawa chapter calls on U.S. to hold trilateral talks in case of accidents](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
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