



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, September 28, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All networks led with reports on the dissolution of the Lower House for a snap election.

POLITICS

Prime Minister Abe dissolves Lower House

All networks reported that Prime Minister Abe dissolved the Lower House at the beginning of the extraordinary Diet session today without making a policy speech. The networks said the government is expected to officially decide at an extraordinary cabinet meeting this afternoon that the official campaign period for the election will start on Oct. 10 and the voting will take place on Oct. 22, adding that all political parties have started preparing for the election.

DP President Maehara proposes merger with Party of Hope

All networks reported this afternoon that Democratic Party President Maehara proposed to party members a de facto merger with Tokyo Governor Koike's new Party of Hope during a general meeting of DP lawmakers this afternoon. NHK quoted Maehara as saying: "We will do whatever it takes to put an end to the Abe administration. I would like us to once again take the reins of government and oust the Abe administration, which distorts politics.... I'm making this proposal to you after considering how to bring about a political power shift. This is not merely about merging with another party. It means we will create a major platform.... I would like to choose substance over name. I'm asking for your understanding for my decision."

A TBS reporter said that there are bound to be tough times ahead for the DP in merging with the Party of Hope adding that the plan came as a surprise to most DP members. Noting that Governor Koike has already said she plans to individually select candidates based on their views on the

Constitution and security policy, the reporter said some liberal members of the DP whose views differ from that of Koike's are increasingly concerned about the merger with the new party. The reporter added that if the DP leadership forces the party to merge with the Party of Hope, some within the party fear that the party will eventually break up.

The reporter also said that some ruling party members are closely monitoring Koike's moves as she prepares to close the Tokyo Assembly session on Oct. 5, saying that several senior ruling party members fear that she may run in the general election.

- [Abe dissolves lower house as opposition bands together](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Get behind Koike: Japan opposition chief proposes de facto merger](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Gist of Koike's news conference launching the Party of Hope, Sept. 27](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japan set for largest party realignment in 15 years](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [DP mulls official endorsement of candidates by Party of Hope](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Ruling parties wary of opposition unity in Lower House election](#) (Yomiuri)
- [LDP, Komeito not drafting common campaign platform for Lower House election](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Experts' views on Abe's TV appearances after announcing Diet dissolution](#) (Asahi)
- [Rengo inching closer to Koike's "Party of Hope"](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Koike's new party platform unduly skewed toward populist policies](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Tokyo Gov. Koike's new party enticing and perturbing](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Former PM Koizumi says he won't be involved in Koike's new party](#) (Mainichi)
- [Top court rules vote gap in 2016 upper house election constitutional](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Asao, Matsumoto join LDP](#) (Yomiuri)
- [LDP's Tokyo chapter picks Kamoshita as chairman](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Keidanren to ask firms for political donations for LDP for fourth consecutive year](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

- [Prime minister's schedule on Sept. 27, 2017](#) (Nikkei)

INTERNATIONAL

- [Former USG officials, experts to make contact with DPRK officials in Oslo in mid-Oct.](#) (Asahi)
- [Foreign minister Kono to visit China in November](#) (Mainichi)
- [Prime ministers of Japan, China to exchange congratulatory telegrams](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Professor says Russia has prepared "escape route" for Kim Jong Un in case of U.S. attack](#) (Shukan Gendai)
- ["Comfort women" statue in Seoul designated as public facility](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Abe expresses concern over S. Korea's "comfort women" memorial](#) (Asahi)
- [Pyeongchang Olympic Games organizers fix website map with a missing Japan](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Abe conveys resolve to abductee families following U.N. speech](#) (Kyodo News)
- [FM Kono, Australian opposition leader affirm need for bilateral cooperation in DPRK issue](#) (Mainichi)
- [Interview with Irene Hirano Inouye](#) (Nikkei Magazine Style Ai)

ECONOMY

Growing popularity of ESG investing

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported on the growing popularity of ESG investing, or investment in companies that place emphasis on environment, society, and governance (ESG). According to the program, the global ESG investment market has grown to 2,500 trillion yen. The program said that while such investment is growing worldwide, companies that fail to make sufficient efforts for ESG are facing tough times as there are moves to decrease or stop investing in such companies. The program said major companies in Japan are beginning to review their supply chains in order to improve the labor conditions of those at the bottom of the supply chain. The program added that although the percentage of ESG investing in Japan remains small, NGOs are paying attention to human rights issues concerning Japanese companies ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

- [Japan's chief TPP negotiator Kazuyoshi Umemoto](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)

- [Kobe Steel and US Steel to boost output capacity of high-strength steel](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)
- [Toyota to invest 373 m. dlrs in 5 U.S. plants](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Doyukai chief says Party of Hope's policies seem "half-cooked"](#) (Mainichi)

SCIENCE

- [JAXA going to the moons of Mars in 2020s to return with samples](#) (Kobe Shinbun)
- [JAXA partners with NASA to go to the moons of Mars in 2024](#) (Nikkan Kogyo Shimbun)
- [JAXA to launch probe to the moons of Mars in 2024 to bring back samples](#) (The Fukushima Minyu Shimbun)
- [Eradicating mercury pollution through Japanese technology](#) (Mainichi)

SOCIETY

- [New guidelines outlined to deal with quake that may kill 320,000](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Japan police confirm 114 "JK" biz outlets featuring schoolgirls](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Surviving sexual assault in Japan, then victimized again](#) (The Japan Times)

OPINION POLLS

- [18% say they will vote for "Party of Hope" in proportional representation segment of LH election, Mainichi spot poll](#) (Mainichi)
- [64% disapprove of dissolution of Lower House, Mainichi spot poll](#) (Mainichi)
- [Spot opinion poll & results from Mainichi Shimbun](#) (Mainichi)
- [70% are unconvinced by Abe's reason for dissolving Lower House, Asahi spot poll](#) (Asahi)
- [54% say right to dissolve Lower House should be restricted, Asahi spot poll](#) (Asahi)
- [Spot opinion poll & results from Asahi Shimbun](#) (Asahi)

SECURITY

- [Tokyo metropolitan police conduct anti-terror drill eyeing Tokyo Games](#) (Tokyo Shimbun Evening edition)

- [Commentary: Japan needs non-emotional discussion of possession of nuclear weapons](#) (Sankei)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

- [Okinawa prefectural government questions MOFA about nuclear deployment](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)

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