
**JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, November 15, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NTV and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that the president of Royal Foods, a health food company, and five of its employees were arrested this morning on charges of fraud. NHK and Fuji TV led with reports on allegations that sumo grand champion Harumafuji injured a fellow sumo wrestler by hitting him with a beer bottle last month. TBS reported on a Diet session during which opposition parties asked Minister of Education Hayashi questions about the Kake Gakuen scandal.

ECONOMY

Secretary Ross says effectuation of TPP would be “tough”

NHK reported this morning that Secretary of Commerce Ross expressed the view that it would be difficult for the TPP members to effectuate the agreement without the U.S. Secretary Ross was quoted as saying at a meeting in Washington on Tuesday: "I think it's going to be tough for them to do that because the real bait for everybody was access to the big U.S. market." The network said the Secretary reiterated the view that the U.S. will promote bilateral trade agreements, saying that "the problem with multilateral trade deals is that it takes time."

Japan's economy continues to expand

NHK reported this morning that the Cabinet Office announced that Japan's preliminary real GDP for the three months through September was up by 0.3% from the previous quarter, or 1.4% on an annualized basis, saying that the country's economy has expanded for seven straight quarters. The network said exports were the biggest driver of growth and were up 1.5 points from the previous three months, mainly due to strong demand for smartphone parts and automobiles. According to the network, capital investment also increased by 0.2 points. However, consumer spending fell 0.5 points, the first decline in seven quarters.

Companies increase regular employees amid labor shortage

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on growing moves to increase the number of regular employees at major companies, such as First Retailing, JAL, and Credit Saison. The program said this is due to a severe labor shortage in Japan, adding that one company has decided to make all of its part-time staff regular employees without changing their working hours. Many companies reportedly think it is essential to motivate their employees through such measures as converting non-regular employees to regular employees and introducing flex-time or telecommuting systems in order to secure sufficient human resources in view of the declining working-age population in the country. The program also reported on moves to employ former gang members, saying that they are popular among companies because they are thought to be "motivated" and have more "guts" than other people.

- [“TPP 11” to “freeze” implementation of provisions on 3 out of 4 remaining](#)

[issues](#) (Yomiuri)

- [While courting Trump, Japan casts net wider for trade deals](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: TPP 11 trade agreement is a deal to build on](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan eyes new farm aid to soften blow from trade deals](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [FOCUS: Japan's longest growth run in 16 yrs may not guarantee future prosperity](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan contractors chase LNG terminal orders in fuel-thirsty Asia](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

INTERNATIONAL

San Francisco city assembly adopts resolution on comfort women statues

Asahi and Sankei reported online that the San Francisco city assembly unanimously adopted on Tuesday a resolution to accept the donation of three comfort women statues, a monument, and money for their maintenance from a group of Chinese-Americans. The statues, which were erected by the group in September, will become the property of the city as a result of the adoption of the resolution. The ownership of the land on which the statues stand was transferred from private hands to the city in mid-October. Mayor Yoshimura of Osaka, which has a sister city relationship with San Francisco, has stated: "The inscription on the monument saying, 'Hundreds of thousands of women were forced to work as sex slaves,' runs counter to the view of the Japanese government. Osaka will end its sister city ties with San Francisco if the statues are put in a public place." Asahi wrote that it has become increasingly likely that the sister city ties between the two municipalities will be terminated. Sankei added that the donation will be automatically accepted by the city unless Mayor Lee vetoes the resolution within 10 days of the notification from the assembly. The group has offered the city about \$208,000 as maintenance fees for at least 20 years. San Francisco will be the third American city to erect a comfort woman statue in a public place following Glendale in California and Brookhaven in Georgia. Yoshimura sounded out Lee on holding a meeting in November, but the San Francisco mayor declined. He reiterated his request to meet with his American counterpart in December. Yoshimura has said that he will make a decision on whether to end the sister city relationship by the end of December if Lee declines to meet with him.

- [Gist of PM Abe's news conference in Manila on Nov. 14](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Analysis: Xi Jinping bests Trump in APEC diplomacy](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Trump succeeds in strengthening encirclement of North Korea on Asia tour](#) (Yomiuri)

- [Commentary: Trump presents non-cooperative strategy on Asian tour](#) (Yomiuri)
- [International media voice mixed opinions on Trump's Asian tour](#) (Nikkei)
- [U.S. ties, Abe's election victory behind Asian nations' eagerness to build relations with Abe](#) (Sankei)
- [Abe aims to boost own govt by improving ties with China](#) (The Japan News)
- [Abe and Modi talk teamwork on open Indo-Pacific](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Abe urges Suu Kyi to let Rakhine's displaced people return home](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Japan, China must work closer to improve stability in Asia](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Japan-China summit talks show desire to improve relations](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Reciprocal visits by Japan, China leaders vital for regional stability](#) (The Japan News)
- [Hiroshima, Nagasaki mayors invited to Nobel Peace Prize ceremony](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Osaka Gov. Ichiro Matsui heads to Paris to boost bid for 2025 World Expo](#) (The Japan Times)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Nov. 14, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [LDP Kishida, Nikai factions reconcile for the sake of post-Abe succession](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Estimated amount of public subsidies for political parties in FY2017 and changes from initial estimates](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Concerns shown over Japan's press freedom at U.N. panel](#) (Jiji Press)

OPINION POLLS

- [66% say "no rush" to propose constitutional amendment, Mainichi spot poll](#) (Mainichi)

SCIENCE

- [Japan announces plans to contribute 500 million yen to fight global warming](#) (Asahi Evening edition)

EDUCATION

- [18,780 Japanese students studied in U.S. in FY16](#) (Yomiuri)

SOCIETY

- [Concerns shown over Japan's press freedom at U.N. panel](#) (Jiji Press)