



Afternoon Alert - Monday, November 20, 2017

The following information reflects the reporting of the cited news media and does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Japan Media Highlights is intended for USG use only and should not be forwarded. Visit the website [here](#). For more information, contact [TokyoMATT@state.gov](mailto:TokyoMATT@state.gov).

## HEADLINES

### Noon news

NHK and NTV gave top play to reports that the suspect who was arrested previously for his involvement in the death of a total of nine people in Zama was re-arrested this morning on suspicion of murdering a 23-year-old woman. The networks said the police are also investigating the suspect on suspicion of murdering the eight other people. TBS, Fuji TV and TV Asahi led with reports on the cold weather today, saying that the temperature in Shimukappu, Hokkaido, was minus 17.3 degrees Celsius this morning.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Ruling, opposition lawmakers assess Abe's diplomatic efforts

In NHK's "Nichiyo Toron" Sunday debate show, senior officials of two ruling and seven opposition parties assessed Prime Minister Abe's recent diplomatic activities, including his bilateral talks with President Trump and other foreign leaders in Tokyo and in nations in the region. LDP Deputy Secretary General Hagiuda gave high marks to Abe's meetings with Chinese President Xi and Premier Li as positive moves to improve Japan's relations with China and his bilateral and multilateral meetings with the U.S. and Australian leaders as steps to apply further pressure on North Korea in a unified manner. Komeito Deputy Secretary General Saito also gave high marks to Abe by welcoming signs of improvement in the ties between Tokyo and Beijing

Democratic Party Secretary General Mashiko said that Abe should be more careful about deepening personal ties with President Trump in view of his "vulnerable" political standing at home. He also criticized Abe for making little progress on the abduction issue. While welcoming the efforts made by Abe to confirm close cooperation with the U.S., Party of Hope Secretary General Furukawa stressed the need for the GOJ to prepare contingency plans for evacuating Japanese nationals from South

Korea. Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan Secretary General Fukuyama said he was pleased that the U.S.-Japan summit confirmed the close coordination between the two nations. However, he called on the prime minister to provide detailed explanations about his talks with President Trump, including the possibility of the U.S. taking military action against the DPRK and plans for evacuating Japanese nationals from South Korea.

Japanese Communist Party secretariat head Koike criticized Abe for “taking a dangerous path” by choosing the option of military pressure and rejecting dialogue in dealing with North Korea. He also said it is problematic that the premier promised to purchase military equipment from the United States. Social Democratic Party Secretary General Mita criticized the agreement reached between the U.S. and Japanese leaders to move forward with the FRF construction at Henoko.

- [Editorial: Trump’s Asia trip gives no hints on his strategy to stabilize region](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: San Francisco comfort women statue could end sister-city ties with Osaka](#) (The Japan News)
- [Mother of abductee asks Abe to meet with Kim Jong Un](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

## ECONOMY

- [Tighter criteria eyed for steep new drug prices](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan to step up price cuts for off-patent drugs](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Commentary: A standard approach to fiscal reconstruction](#) (The Japan Times)

## POLITICS

- [Prime minister’s schedule on Nov. 19, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister’s schedule on Nov. 18, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister’s schedule on Nov. 17, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Abe’s policy speech leaves much to be desired, lacks long-term vision](#) (The Japan News)
- [Cultural Affairs Agency to help cultural assets raise their own restoration funds](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)
- [Cartoon: Tobacco ban goes up in smoke](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

## OPINION POLLS

- [Cabinet support rate tops 45%, exceeds nonsupport rate for first time in two months, Jiji Press poll](#) (Jiji)
- [54% support pressure tactics over dialogue for North Korea, 70% "worried" about U.S. president's stance, Jiji poll](#) (Jiji)

## SCIENCE

- [Japan, seen as advocate of coal, U.S. ally, fails to make presence felt at COP23](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Keep Paris Agreement on course, even without the United States](#) (The Japan News)

## SOCIETY

### **The last 30 days of Ryoma Sakamoto**

Sunday's "NHK Special" aired a dramatization of the last 30 days of Ryoma Sakamoto, who successfully facilitated the peace negotiations between Chōshū Domain and Satsuma Domain, two powerful provinces that had long been hostile toward each other, and united them against the Bakufu, the government of the Tokugawa shogun. Sakamoto was assassinated at the age of 31 just before the Meiji Restoration. This year marks the 150th anniversary of his death and many documents have been found on his final days. The dramatization was created based on this new information.

- [White paper: Older ex-cons most likely to return to jail](#) (The Japan News)

## SECURITY

### **U.S. Marine involved in auto accident says he drank alcohol on base**

NHK reported on its website that a 21-year-old U.S. Marine who was arrested on charges of driving under the influence of alcohol after his military truck struck a car and caused the death of a man in Naha on Sunday told the police that he drank alcohol on base. The network said the U.S. Marine Corps in Okinawa explained that the Marine was not on duty at the time. The network said a nephew of the Japanese man who was killed in the accident told the network that his uncle was "a very gentle person" and was kind to his children. He also said the accident was "very regrettable." He also reportedly said: "Every time an incident or accident involving a U.S. military service member occurs, the U.S. military says it will tighten discipline. But there have been many accidents. This means the measures taken were not sufficient. I don't think the people of Okinawa and the U.S. military will be able to build a relationship of trust."

## **Suga comments on fatal traffic accident involving U.S. service member in Okinawa**

NHK and most commercial networks reported in their noon news programs that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented at a press conference this morning on the arrest on Sunday of a U.S. Marine on charges of negligent driving resulting in death and driving under the influence of alcohol over his involvement in a traffic accident in Naha on Sunday in which a local man was killed. NHK said that while expressing condolences to the victim and his family, Suga stated that it is very regrettable that the incident happened despite the Japanese government's repeated requests to the U.S. military that it thoroughly enforce discipline and take measures to prevent a recurrence. TBS quoted Suga as saying that the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs have conveyed Japan's great displeasure over the incident to the U.S. military and the U.S. Embassy in Japan and made strong requests that the U.S. side enforce stricter discipline, take measures to prevent a recurrence, and respond sincerely to the family of the victim. Suga added that Ambassador Hagerty has expressed condolences and an apology and his intention to cooperate with the investigation and make efforts to prevent a recurrence.

The broadcasters also reported on a new liberty policy issued by III MEF Marines in Okinawa that said: "Effective immediately Tier 3 liberty has been directed by US Forces Japan for all military service members until further notice. Marines, Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen must return to quarters and cease consuming alcohol effective immediately. Alcohol consumption and alcohol sales stop for all US Forces until further notice. Off base liberty is NOT permitted in Okinawa."

TBS reported that Okinawa Governor Onaga told reporters this morning that the incident left him "speechless" because recently similar incidents involving U.S. service members have occurred repeatedly. The network said that senior U.S. military officials will visit the Okinawa prefectural government in the afternoon to offer an apology.

- [North Korea's weak cybersecurity](#) (Sankei)
- [Okinawan citizens to sue governor for making speech at UN Human Rights Council in 2015](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan to deploy toxic gas detectors for Rugby World Cup, Olympics](#) (Jiji Press)

**OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS**

## **Okinawa upset over latest misconduct by U.S. service member**

Ryukyu Shimpo and Okinawa Times both gave prominent front- and inside-page play to Sunday's fatal traffic accident in Naha City caused by a U.S. Marine who was driving a military truck under the influence of alcohol. . Ryukyu Shimpo said that because the suspect is already under Japanese custody as the incident occurred while he was off duty, the issue of the transfer of custody will not

arise. While the military vehicle was later removed by the U.S. side as a “military asset,” the police have explained that the investigation will not be hampered since the necessary inspection of the truck had been carried out before the vehicle was taken away by the U.S. military.

Both papers separately reported in their city news sections on the growing anger of the victim’s kin and local residents about the latest offense by a member of the U.S. military community. Okinawa Times said DUI incidents involving U.S. personnel have occurred repeatedly in the island prefecture despite the local military authorities' pledges to prevent them. Ryukyu Shimpo expressed concern that appropriate compensation may not be paid to the victim’s family by the suspect and/or the U.S. military. It separately ran an editorial describing the U.S. military as a “bad outlaw,” a phrase just the opposite of the U.S. military's policy of becoming a "good neighbor," noting that the accident took place only three days after Okinawa Area Coordinator Nicholson promised his utmost efforts to reduce incidents of misconduct by men and women under his command to “zero.” The editorial also took issue with the U.S. military authorities’ management of military-owned vehicles since the arrested Marine drove a military truck even though he was not on duty.

- [DM Onodera maintains Japan-U.S. joint use of bases necessary](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- [Abe criticized for not mentioning Okinawa issues in policy speech to Diet](#) (Okinawa Times)