
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Thursday, January 4, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All networks gave top play to reports that the Japan Sumo Association is likely to decide today to demote stablemaster Takanohana from the post of director over his handling of an assault scandal.

POLITICS

PM Abe expresses hope to deepen national debate on constitutional revision

Mainichi reported online that Prime Minister Abe held a press conference after paying a visit to Ise Jingu shrine in Mie Prefecture today, during which he expressed his desire for the LDP to draw up a concrete constitutional revision draft this year. He was quoted as saying: "I hope to present to the people of Japan an ideal constitution this year and further deepen national debate toward constitutional revision." When asked whether he will run for a third term in the party presidential election slated for September, the premier reportedly expressed his intention to make an announcement after the ordinary Diet session is over.

- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 3, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Major topics for Komeito's constitutional amendment discussions](#) (Yomiuri)
- [LDP to propose changing dates of committee meetings at regular Diet session](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Opposition CDPJ bringing nuclear energy debate back to the Diet](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Keidanren maintains close ties, aligns policies with Abe administration](#) (Shukan Asahi)
- [JCP using online tools to soften its "straitlaced image"](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Planned bill to deal with low representation of women in politics](#) (Kyodo News)

OPINION POLLS

- [Majority says revision of Article 9 “unnecessary,” Nihon Yoron Chosakai poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Opinion poll & results from Nihon Yoron Chosakai Poll on the Constitution](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [75% of companies see economy expanding through next autumn, Mainichi poll of 121 companies](#) (Mainichi)

INTERNATIONAL

- [South Korean president holds luncheon with former ‘comfort women’](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Documents reveal China-Russia-DPRK smuggling network used to supply oil to North Korea](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Documents show details of China-Russia-DPRK network for smuggling oil to North Korea](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Canada’s dissent on TPP agreement irks Abe, mars Diet ratification of ACSA with Japan](#) (Sentaku)
- [N. Korean airline reduces number of Pyongyang-Beijing flights](#) (Kyodo News)

ECONOMY

- [Japan’s foreign direct investment holdings double in 5 years](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Tepco mulls joint reactor checkup with other utilities to cut costs](#) (Kyodo News)

EDUCATION

- [Survey finds poverty widens academic gap at around 4th grade](#) (Mainichi)

SOCIETY

- [Japan sees record number of women in management](#) (Yomiuri)

SECURITY

- [U.S. Marine Corps deleted description of resident detention facility from HP](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Special Advisor to Prime Minister Izumi meddles in defense affairs](#) (Sentaku)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

Okinawa leader to propose alternatives to FRF construction

Ryukyu Shimpo front-paged a speculative piece saying that Okinawa Governor Onaga is set to present alternatives to the existing plan to build a Futenma replacement facility off Camp Schwab when he visits the U.S. in March in order to convince Washington that U.S. deterrence can be maintained even without building a new base in the Henoko area. The prefectural government will draw up specific suggestions such as moving the Okinawa Marines to Kyushu and relocating a “rendezvous point” for Marine personnel and amphibious landing ships outside of Okinawa, while taking into account the various proposals that have already been made by private-sector experts.

Pointing out that the governor has long insisted that his government should not be held accountable for coming up with alternative plans for the closure of MCAS Futenma, the daily said in a separate article that this new approach reflects the governor's frustration at not being able to stop the ongoing landfill work for FRF construction off Camp Schwab. The paper added that Onaga's task force will be hard pressed to come up with viable options since even some of the analysts who argue against the FRF construction advocate relocating the Futenma functions to other military installations in Okinawa.

