



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, January 16, 2018

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.

HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and NTV gave top play to reports on the warm weather in Japan today. Fuji TV and TV Asahi led with reports that seven bodies were found inside a boat that washed ashore on the coast of Kanazawa in Ishikawa Prefecture six days ago, saying that the bodies are believed to be North Koreans. TBS reported on North Korea's decision to send its art troupe to South Korea for the Pyeongchang Olympics.

INTERNATIONAL

Onodera dismisses Russia's concern over Japan's deployment of Aegis Ashore

NHK reported that during a news conference this morning Defense Minister Onodera commented on Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov's remarks on Monday expressing opposition to Japan's plans to introduce the Aegis Ashore missile defense system. Lavrov reportedly said that the deployment of the system would throw cold water on ties between Russia and Japan. Onodera reportedly said that Aegis Ashore is a purely defensive system that is necessary for Japan to protect the lives and property of its people from possible ballistic missile attacks amid North Korea's nuclear and missile development. The defense minister reportedly added that the system, which will be operated by Japan on its own initiative, will not pose any threat to its neighbors, including Russia, and that Japan will explain this to the Russian side at every opportunity in the future.

Experts discuss outcome of inter-Korean talks

Five experts discussed the outcome of the recent inter-Korean talks, during which North Korea agreed to participate in the PyeongChang Winter Olympics in February. Canon Institute for Global

Studies Research Director Kunihiko Miyake expressed caution by saying that the latest development in inter-Korean relations should be discussed separately from the nuclear issue. Director of Policy Research at the Tokyo Foundation Bonji Ohara speculated that China is also probably not very optimistic about progress on the nuclear issue. Keio University Associate Professor Atsuhito Isozaki and Sophia University Professor Kazuhiro Maejima said that Pyongyang is probably trying to drive a wedge between the United States and South Korea. University of Tokyo Professor Tadashi Kimiya conjectured that South Korea is trying to take the lead in negotiations with North Korea.

- [Cartoon: Kim Jong Un's Olympic torch](#) (Sankei)
- [FM Kono visiting China on Jan. 27-28 as bilateral ties marred by submarine intrusion](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: China's provocations near Senkakus undermine improved bilateral ties](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Chinese Navy vessels' entry into contiguous zone a cause for concern](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: Xi's chutzpah](#) (Asahi)
- [US could use Japan's missile defense system to attack: Lavrov](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Japan's Kono to call for pressure on N. Korea at security confab](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Sweden, North Korea to hold vice-ministerial talks](#) (Asahi)
- [Japan, Baltic states agree to boost ties, cooperate against N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, Estonia agree to never accept nuclear N. Korea](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Cartoon: Comfort women accord](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

Tanker reportedly sinks in Japan's EEZ

Monday evening's Nikkei ran a Kyodo story saying that China's state-run Central Television reported on Sunday that a Panama-registered tanker, which drifted into Japan's exclusive economic zone after colliding with a cargo ship and bursting into flames in waters off Shanghai on Jan. 6, apparently sank on Jan. 14. According to the Chinese outlet, the tanker was engulfed in flames around noon (1:00 p.m. in Japan) on Jan. 14 before there was confirmation that it had sunk at 4:45 p.m. The Japanese Coast Guard detected the tanker 315 kilometers west of Amami-Oshima Island in Kagoshima Prefecture at 5:00 p.m. (Japan time) on Sunday, but the tanker vanished from the radar of a ship dispatched to the area 40 minutes later. The tanker, owned by an Iranian shipping company, was transporting oil condensate, a light type of crude oil. The tanker was carrying a crew

of 32 Iranians and Bangladeshis. Three bodies had been recovered as of Saturday.

ECONOMY

Risks of rising stock prices around the world

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported on rising stock prices in Japan as well as other parts of the world, including New York, saying that there are high expectations for further global economic expansion. The program said, however, that many investors and experts are pointing out hidden risks, such as subprime loans for automobiles, the effect of negative interest rates on regional banks, and the huge amount of debt worldwide, including China.

U.S. calls for Japan to eliminate restrictions on beef imports

Saturday morning's Tokyo Shimbun claimed that in the bilateral economic dialogue the Trump administration has been demanding Japan remove the existing ban on U.S. beef imports from cattle aged 31 months or older, speculating that Washington appears determined to increase agricultural exports to Japan. The article added that working-level officials of the two governments are expected to hold talks in Tokyo in late January to discuss bilateral trade issues and international trade rules.

- [Kobe Steel under a klieg light in U.S. over data fakery](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan falling behind peers on shift away from coal](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Semipublic fund to back Japan bid for Malaysia-Singapore rail line](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japanese and Saudi firms to cooperate on electric cars and animation](#) (The Japan Times)

og

SECURITY

- [Japan says vessel spotted near Senkakus was Chinese nuclear attack sub](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, Spain defense chiefs agree to keep pressuring N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [MSDF monitoring North Korean ships](#) (The Japan News)
- [JCG plans bases for larger vessels in expanding fleet](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan, France plan mine-spotting sonar](#) (The Japan News)

POLITICS

- [Summary of PM Abe's remarks to traveling press corps in Sofia, Bulgaria on Jan. 15](#) (Sankei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 14-15, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 13-14, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 12-13, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 12, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [2 key opposition parties agree on basic policies to form alliance](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Minister raps gov't energy policy, vows to promote renewables](#) (Kyodo News)
- [SDP leader Yoshida announces he will not seek re-election after term ends](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Opinion poll analysis \(Part 1\): LDP support rate low in densely populated areas](#) (Nikkei)

OPINION POLLS

- [83% reject further demands from S. Korea over comfort women, Yomiuri poll](#) (The Japan News)
- [34% say Para. 2 of Art. 9 should be deleted, 32% say it should be retained, Yomiuri poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Opinion poll & results from Yomiuri Shimbun](#) (Yomiuri)

SCIENCE

The massive network of the human body – Part 4: Intestines

Sunday's "NHK Special" aired the fourth part of its series, "The massive network of the human body," focusing on the intestines. The program said the latest science has found that intestines actually control the whole immune system, adding that 70% of immune system cells are found in the intestines. The program also reported on how the intestines "communicate" with intestinal bacteria and on the mechanism of allergies.

- [Ministry to recommend Kyoto as host for 2019 climate change meeting](#) (Kyodo News)

SOCIETY

- [Foreign trainee work deaths data highlights safety, exploitation issues](#) (Kyodo News)
 - [Single-person households expected to hit 40% in 2040](#) (The Japan News)
-

