
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, January 17, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TV Asahi led with reports on a vice ministerial-level meeting between South Korea and North Korea that began today. TBS led with a report on the Vancouver Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Security and Stability on the Korean Peninsula on Tuesday, saying that ministers agreed to continue to apply maximum pressure on North Korea. NTV and Fuji TV gave top play to reports that today marks the 23rd anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, which killed 6,434 people.

ECONOMY

U.S., Japan to strengthen cooperation on improving aging infrastructure

NHK reported this morning on Japan Infrastructure Investment Forum 2018 held in Washington on Tuesday, during which Transportation Minister Ishii exchanged views with Transportation Secretary Chao. According to the network, Ishii expressed hope for stronger bilateral cooperation on measures against aging transportation infrastructure such as highways. Ishii was quoted as saying: "I would like to find ideas for U.S. and Japanese companies to cooperate in infrastructure projects. Let's build a strong network in transportation infrastructure between the U.S. and Japan." Noting that one of President Trump's policy priorities for this year is to realize private and public sector investment of over 100 trillion yen in infrastructure projects, the network said the GOJ is hoping to advance bilateral cooperation in infrastructure by utilizing private-sector funds since this presents an opportunity for Japanese firms to expand their business in the U.S.

- [Japan to update principles on plutonium to seek cuts in stockpile](#) (Kyodo News)

- [MAFF revises estimates of TPP's economic effects](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan's largest business lobby seeks 3% pay hike as "social demand"](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gist of Keidanren report on wage negotiation policy for 2018](#) (Mainichi)
- [Economy Minister Seko calls for renewing Japan's oil interest in Abu Dhabi](#) (Nikkei)
- [Cartoon: Abe's blind spot](#) (Akahata)

SCIENCE

- [Former envoy to U.S. advocates participation in U.S. Deep Space Gateway project](#) (Yomiuri)

INTERNATIONAL

Commanding officers of Aegis ships to face court-martial

NHK reported this afternoon the U.S. Navy announced on Tuesday that the commanding officers of two U.S. Navy destroyers involved in deadly collisions last year face court-martial and military criminal charges including negligent homicide. The network said the USS Fitzgerald, which was deployed in Yokosuka, collided with a container ship in waters off Shizuoka last June, killing seven crew members, and the USS John S. McCain collided with a merchant ship in the Malacca Straits last August, killing ten crew members. The network said the former commanding officer and some crew members of the Fitzgerald and the former commanding officer of the John S. McCain will face charges of dereliction of duty and negligent homicide. The network opined that as missions of U.S. Navy vessels deployed abroad are becoming intense in response to North Korea and China, some speculate that the response capability is perhaps declining due to a reduction in the number of exercises, saying that rebuilding the U.S. Navy is regarded as a major challenge.

- [Japan, U.S., S. Korea vow to maximize pressure on N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Ruling parties to adjust Diet schedule for Abe to go to Pyeongchang](#) (Kyodo News)
- [U.S. urges Tokyo, Seoul not to let comfort women row hit cooperation](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan rejects S. Korea's call for additional measures on comfort women](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, Romania agree to promote Japanese firms' investment](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan's young bureaucrats, China's elite students to resume exchange](#) (Kyodo News)

News)

- [Yomiuri's exclusive interview with Vietnamese President](#) (Yomiuri)
- [N. Korea using ships from other nations to get its hands on fuel](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Editorial: With Abe's eastern Europe visits, Japan should strategically expand diplomacy](#) (The Japan News)
- [Column: Nikai's visits to China and the U.S.-China relationship](#) (Sankei)
- [Universities to monitor radiation levels](#) (The Japan News)
- [Foreign Minister Kono focuses on Middle East diplomacy](#) (Yomiuri)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 15-16, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Rupture of Party of Hope "imminent" amid moves to cooperate with DP](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Abe's party sees removing constitutional military ban as infeasible](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Kuryu promoted to NPA head](#) (Nikkei, Evening edition)
- [Gov't mulls online voting in national elections for citizens overseas](#) (Yomiuri, Evening edition)

OPINION POLLS

- [54% against constitutional amendment under Abe administration, Kyodo News poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Kyodo News opinion poll & results from Tokyo Shimbun](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Trend in average cabinet support rate, Saitama University Social Survey Research Center](#) (Saitama University Social Survey Research Center)

SOCIETY

Discoveries of lost cash on the rise

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported on several cases in Japan in which as much as 40 million yen in cash was discovered at garbage collection sites and waste disposal facilities. Apparently the cash

was inadvertently thrown away by individuals. In addition, companies that dispose of deceased elderly people's belongings on behalf of their children have discovered many valuable items, including cash. The program also reported on an increase in the number of items such as umbrellas stored at lost and found centers, saying that this is partly due to people being too busy looking at their smartphones to keep track of their belongings and to the increase in inexpensive products.

- [Refugee recognition rate in 2016](#) (Yomiuri)
- [20% say women's empowerment has moved forward, Nikkei survey of 2,000 working women](#) (Nikkei)

SECURITY

- [Tsushima eyed as evacuation site in Korea contingency](#) (The Japan News)
- [USG says no USFJ civilian employees exempted from U.S. jurisdiction under SOFA in 2017](#) (Asahi)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

U.S. service members help ensure safe commute for Okinawa schoolchildren

Okinawa Times wrote that several young U.S. service members belonging to Camp Foster and other U.S. bases in Okinawa have been working as crossing guards for children walking to elementary school in Chatan in the morning. According to the paper, the service members have been involved in the activity since last June. They reportedly began to work as crossing guards in response to a recommendation from a Japanese employee at the camp that they should do something to contribute to the local community. The service members work as crossing guards at a crosswalk near the school for an hour starting at around 7:30 a.m. every Tuesday and Thursday.

The local community had been concerned about ensuring that children can commute to school safely because their route has heavy traffic and vehicles, including those of U.S. military personnel, drive at high speed. According to the Okinawa Times, one of the service members involved in the volunteer activity participates almost every morning. Although he does not speak Japanese, he exchanges smiles and greetings of "ohayo gozaimasu" (good morning) with the children.

The leader of a residents' association expressed his appreciation by saying that the community is home to many elderly citizens and they are grateful that the U.S. volunteers always work as crossing guards regardless of the weather. A woman whose grandchild commutes to a nearby kindergarten also expressed gratitude by saying that the service members are working hard.



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