


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Afternoon Alert - Friday, January 26, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK gave top play to a report that last week the number of people infected with influenza reached a record high for a single week. According to the network, about 2.83 million people were infected with influenza from Jan. 15 to 21. All commercial networks led with reports on a fire that broke out at a hospital in South Korea, killing at least 31 people and injuring many others.

ECONOMY

President Trump mentions possible return to TPP

NHK took up President Trump's remarks to the press suggesting the possibility of the U.S. rejoining the TPP. According to the network, several Japanese cabinet ministers welcomed the President's statement, with Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Motegi saying: "We welcome that President Trump has recognized the significance of the TPP.... But the TPP 11's top priority is to effectuate the accord without fail. The TPP's membership will not be expanded without effectuating it first."

The network speculated that President Trump may have made the comment because he is concerned it will become impossible for the U.S. to return to the TPP in view of the 11 members' recent decision to effectuate the free trade deal without the U.S. The network noted that there have been no follow-up announcements by the White House or the USTR on the President's remarks.

Nikkei ran a similar report on its website, speculating that the U.S. leader might have made the comment in response to calls from domestic businesses that are reportedly worried that the U.S. will be left behind following the recent agreement among the 11 members to effectuate the regional trade liberalization pact as early as 2019. The daily explained that the U.S. cattle industry has been

urging the Trump administration to reconsider the withdrawal out of fear that its products will be outperformed by Australian beef in the rapidly growing Asian market.

- [Int'l accord not targeting forex rates should be kept: Aso](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan to pursue latest TPP plan despite Trump hinting U.S. may rejoin](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Trump opens door to TPP return](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan succeeds in persuading Canada to return to TPP 11](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Taiwanese food ban likely to have negative impact on CPTPP bid](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Sumitomo considering building industrial park in Bangladesh](#) (Sankei)

INTERNATIONAL

- [Abe's fourth arrow — diplomacy How Japan's prime minister took a central role on the world stage](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [FM Kono to push his foreign policy in his first tour to China](#) (Asahi)
- [Japan nixes S. Korea demand to shut museum devoted to disputed isles](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Taiwan protests over Japanese museum related to disputed islets](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gov't draws up aid plan for Myanmar](#) (Mainichi)
- [France and Japan to scale up military exercises to deter China](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: Abe should demand Seoul abide by bilateral accord on comfort women](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan names new ambassadors to Peru, 3 other countries](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Cartoon: No smooth skating for Abe in PyeongChang](#) (Asahi)

SECURITY

Top Marine says helo landings “precautionary”

NHK reported this morning that Gen. Robert Neller, the Marine Corps Commandant, said the

helicopter landings that occurred in Okinawa this month were precautionary measures. [The broadcaster called them "emergency landings."] The general was quoted as saying during a speech in Washington on Thursday: "Quite frankly, I am glad that they were precautionary landings, because nobody got hurt and we didn't lose any airplane." He also reportedly said the Marines are looking to increase flight training hours for pilots to improve their skills. The network also reported that the U.S. Joint Staff Director, Lt. Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, told reporters that the landings are made out of an abundance of caution and stressed the need to continue training. He was quoted as saying: "We have to be able to continue to train if we're going to be able to support our Japanese allies." Commercial networks carried similar stories.

First Japanese F-35A deployed at Misawa

Asahi and Yomiuri reported online that an F-35A was deployed to an ASDF base in Misawa, Aomori Prefecture, on Friday, noting that nine additional F-35As will be deployed there during FY2018. Defense Minister Onodera told the press that the deployment of the state-of-the-art fighter jets is extremely significant for national defense at a time when Japan's neighbors are rapidly modernizing their air capabilities. The Defense Ministry plans to procure a total of 42 F-35As to replace the aging F-4s.

- [Protections on free Wi-Fi inadequate, MIC poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Taiwan wants intelligence-sharing arrangement with Japan](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Abe: Foreigners' land acquisition near hundreds of defense facilities probed in FY16, FY17](#) (Mainichi)
- [Problems involving U.S. military stirring concerns among ruling parties](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Flight of same-model helicopter confirmed](#) (Yomiuri)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 25, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of representative interpellations at Upper, Lower House plenary sessions, Jan. 25](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Options limited for scheduling Diet's initiation of constitutional reform, national referendum](#) (Yomiuri)
- [New MOFA 2nd North America Division chief is son of "anti-U.S." former diplomat](#) (Shukan Posuto)
- [Abe, Kishida meet to discuss LDP presidential election](#) (Yomiuri)

- [LDP's Ishiba faction publishes anthology of policies](#) (Mainichi)
- [Opinion poll analysis \(Part 2\): Geographical disparity in support for amendment of Article 9](#) (Nikkei)

EDUCATION

- [Girls Unlimited Program \(3\): A keen awareness of the importance of verbal communication](#) (Asahi)
- [Girls Unlimited Program \(4\): Helping students assert themselves](#) (Asahi)
- [Girls Unlimited Program \(5\): Sing, dance, and respect each other's differences](#) (Asahi)
- [Girls Unlimited Program \(6\): A different way of discussing in New Zealand](#) (Asahi)

SOCIETY

- [Universities help run cafeterias for low-income kids](#) (The Japan News)
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