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 **JAPAN MEDIA  
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Friday, February 2, 2018

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#### HEADLINES

##### Noon news

NHK and Fuji TV gave top play to reports that the Financial Services Agency conducted an on-site inspection of Japanese virtual currency exchange Coincheck this morning following the theft of cryptocurrency worth about 58 billion yen. NTV, TBS, and TV Asahi led with reports on the snowfall in the Kanto region.

#### INTERNATIONAL

##### Vice President Pence, PM Abe to meet on Feb. 7

Jiji Press reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga announced this morning that Vice President Pence will visit Japan from Feb. 6 to 8. Jiji said the Vice President and Prime Minister Abe will meet in the afternoon of Feb. 7 to discuss measures against North Korea and confirm close cooperation to strengthen the pressure on it. Jiji speculated that since Vice President Pence is involved in the U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue, he and Abe will exchange views on trade issues. Suga was quoted as saying: "It will be a perfect opportunity to highlight at home and abroad the strong bonds of the U.S.-Japan alliance."

- [Editorial: President Trump vows not to condone North Korea's threats](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: President Trump focuses on achievements rather than setting course](#) (Nikkei)

#### ECONOMY

- [Major utilities using less than 20% of capacity of electric lines](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

- [RCEP members to discuss tariffs, investment protection](#) (Nikkei)
- [Keidanren calls for work style that maximize output](#) (Mainichi)

## POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 1, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of interpellations at Upper House Budget Committee, Feb. 1](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Gist of interpellations at Upper House Budget Committee, Jan. 31](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Supplementary budget for FY17 passes Diet, allocating funds for Aegis Ashore](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Right to exercise collective self-defense to become focal point of revising Article 9](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Cartoon: Incensegate](#) (Asahi)

## OPINION POLLS

- [Trend in average cabinet support rate, Saitama University Social Survey Research Center](#) (Saitama University Social Survey Research Center)

## EDUCATION

- [Mitsubishi UFJ to support students studying abroad with new framework](#) (Nikkei)

## SOCIETY

### **Forced to vacate old buildings, seniors challenged to find other housing**

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported that a growing number of people are being ordered to vacate apartment buildings that were constructed during Japan's high economic growth period because they have become dilapidated and need to be demolished. The program said elderly people are having trouble finding alternative housing because they don't have anyone to serve as rental guarantors. Noting that many apartment buildings in Japan were constructed over 40 years ago, the program said the number of such elderly people is likely to increase.

## SECURITY

### **Defense minister says Japan still plans to procure missile despite failed test**

Nikkei's website took up press remarks this morning by Defense Minister Onodera, who disclosed that his ministry was notified by the U.S. of the failure of a test involving an SM3 Block IIA interceptor missile that took place in Hawaii on Wednesday. However, the minister stressed that there is no

change in Japan's plan to introduce the state-of-the-art interceptor in FY2021. The minister added that the U.S. is investigating the cause of the failure.

### **Marine Corps Osprey squadron commander removed**

Jiji Press reported from Washington that U.S. Marines in Okinawa announced on Thursday that Lt. Col. Bryan Swenson, the commanding officer of an Okinawa-based Osprey squadron, was relieved of his command as of Jan. 26 because of a "loss of trust in his ability to command." Jiji said although the Marines did not release any further details, he was presumably held accountable for such incidents as the Osprey crash off the coast of Australia last August.

- [MOD safety check of U.S. aircraft in Okinawa delayed](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

<b>OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS</b>
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### **Japanese inspection of U.S. aircraft postponed**

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo reported on the Defense Ministry's announcement on Thursday that a plan for SDF personnel to conduct on the same day an inspection to verify the U.S. military's maintenance of AH-1 helicopters at MCAS Futenma was called off in response to a request from the U.S. side citing the need for "additional preparations." The Tokyo-based SDF mechanics in Okinawa for the inspection will be sent home since a new date has not been set. Defense Ministry officials were reportedly perplexed by the request.

- [Futenma-based Ospreys to participate in exercise in Miyagi](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- [Okinawa school to reopen playground](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)