



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, February 21, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TV Asahi led with reports that following Prime Minister Abe's retraction of flawed data that he presented at the Diet regarding the amount of overtime performed by Japanese workers, the GOJ is considering postponing from April 1, 2019 to April 1, 2020 the implementation of part of a labor reform bill expanding the "discretionary labor" system under which employees are given a fixed number of overtime hours and are paid on the assumption that they have worked those hours. The networks said the GOJ is planning to submit the bill to the current Diet session. NTV and TBS gave top play to reports on the PyeongChang Olympics.

INTERNATIONAL

North Korea backed out of meeting with Vice President Pence at last minute

NHK reported at noon that State Department Spokesperson Nauert told reporters on Tuesday that although Vice President Pence was scheduled to meet with North Korean delegation leaders on the sidelines of the PyeongChang Olympics, the meeting was cancelled at the last minute by North Korea. Nauert was quoted as saying: "Although the Vice President's side was ready to meet, the North Korean side decided not to go forward with the meeting." According to the network, a senior White House official said: "We have been clear that we will not allow North Korea to hide its brutality under the amicable atmosphere of the Olympics. This is probably why North Korea cancelled the meeting." The network added that Vice President Pence met with North Korean defectors and visited a memorial to a South Korean Navy vessel that was sunk by North Korea.

TV Asahi and TBS reported on a Washington Post article saying that although the Vice President was supposed to meet with the North Korean delegation at the Blue House on the afternoon of Feb. 10, the North Korean side cancelled the meeting only two hours before, presumably in response to Vice

President Pence's announcement while in Japan that the U.S. is ready to impose additional sanctions, his meeting with North Korean defectors in South Korea, and his ignoring the North Korean delegation members during the Olympics reception and opening ceremony.

- [Editorial: Int'l community must work together to contain N. Korean nuclear threat](#) (The Japan News)
- [DPRK accounts for 90% of warnings issued in Japan's EEZs](#) (Sankei)

ECONOMY

- [Japan likely to postpone plans to build new nuclear plants](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan mulling 30% tax rate on revenue from casinos, sources say](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Gov't proposes 2,000 yen casino admission fee for Japan residents](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan to resume aid for firms' nuclear power plant exports](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japanese drone service provider Terra taps Indian market](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japan's cryptocurrency industry to embrace self-regulation](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

SCIENCE

- [Gov't adopts bill to reduce impact of global warming](#) (The Japan News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 20, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of interpellations at Lower House Budget Committee, Feb. 20](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Abe denies ordering survey with doctored data on overwork problem](#) (Kyodo News)
- [LDP constitutional revision proposals to incorporate Ishin's ideas on education](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Holding G20 Summit in Osaka to help constitutional revision, Abe's LDP presidential election](#) (Mainichi)
- [PM Abe trying to win over junior lawmakers with eye on LDP presidential race](#) (Sankei)
- [Labor union chief: DP's merger with Party of Hope, eventual split a "blunder"](#) (Asahi)
- [Minister for Okinawa hospitalized after suspected stroke: gov't](#) (Jiji)
- [DP Lower House members moving for realignment of opposition parties](#) (Sankei)
- [Infographic: Trend in contributions to LDP's fund-managing organization](#) (Asahi)

OPINION POLLS

- [67% say Sagawa should be summoned to Diet, 58% opposed to expansion of coverage of discretionary work system, Asahi poll](#) (Asahi)
- [Pollees split on revision of Article 9 of Constitution, Asahi poll](#) (Asahi)
- [Opinion poll & results from Asahi Shimbun](#) (Asahi)

SECURITY

[Aomori fishermen's association to seek compensation for fuel leak](#)

NHK reported this morning that a local fishermen's association in Aomori is planning to seek compensation from relevant entities after a ban on fishing in Lake Ogawara was imposed after fuel leaked into the lake from two tanks that were jettisoned by a U.S. fighter jet on Tuesday. The network said local fishermen decided to ban fishing in the lake starting Wednesday until the safety of the water quality is confirmed, adding that they are hoping that the fuel tanks will be recovered so they can resume fishing as soon as possible.

- [Town mayor asks U.S. military to ground F-16s after tanks drop](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Interview with U.S. Seventh Fleet commander on deployment in Asia, accident prevention](#) (Yomiuri, Kanagawa Edition)
- [Editorial: Need to review strategy unable to protect people](#) (Sankei)
- [Tokyo police hold anti-terror drill on expressway](#) (NHK)
- [MOD considering setting up new command center for space, cyber defense](#) (Nikkei)

SOCIETY

- [Fewer Japanese institutions mistreated foreign trainees in 2017, Justice Ministry says](#) (The Japan Times)
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