



Afternoon Alert - Monday, February 26, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK, Fuji TV and TV Asahi led with reports on the closing ceremony for the PyeongChang Olympics on Sunday. TBS led with a report that North Korea expressed readiness to hold talks with the U.S., saying that the White House released a statement in response saying that it will wait and see if North Korea's renewed willingness for talks "represents the first step along the path to denuclearization." NTV gave top play to a report that dismembered body parts were found in mountainous areas in Osaka and Kyoto. The remains are believed to be those of a woman who went missing after entering a lodging facility with an American man who was arrested last week for confining her.

INTERNATIONAL

Suga comments on North Korea's willingness to talk to U.S.

NHK reported that a South Korean Unification Ministry spokesperson expressed hope today that the U.S. and DPRK will take an appropriate opportunity to begin "constructive dialogue" in response to North Korea's expression of willingness to hold talks with the U.S. on Sunday. According to the network, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters this morning: "The United States has demonstrated its stance in a statement by the White House press secretary that it will continue the maximum pressure campaign against North Korea until it abandons its nuclear program and see if North Korea's message that it is willing to hold talks represents the first step along the path to denuclearization." Suga reportedly added: "We think it's important to convey Japan's view to North Korea and that's what we have been doing. Japan will continue to work closely with the United States and trilaterally with the United States and South Korea to maximize pressure through various means to make North Korea change its policy and create a situation in which it calls for dialogue."

- [Japan to keep up pressure after N. Korea's overture to U.S.](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan wary of N. Korea's attempt to disrupt trilateral cooperation](#) (Yomiuri)

- [U.S. slaps “heaviest” sanctions on N. Korea, on 56 ships, entities](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan adding Indian Ocean countries to maritime security push: source](#) (Kyodo News)
- [China actively naming undersea features near Japan’s EEZ](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Give new impetus to countries to lift import bans on Japanese seafood](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan, Chile pledge to ensure early implementation of TPP trade pact](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Abe, S. Africa’s Ramaphosa vow to cooperate on global stage](#) (Kyodo News)

ECONOMY

- [Revised TPP faces obstacles on road to ratification](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Govt to investigate utilization of CO2](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan’s budget for AI promotion less than 20% of U.S., China](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Myanmar upgrading Yangon circular railway line with Japanese aid](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan customs authorities seize record-high 6,200 kg of smuggled gold](#) (Kyodo News)
- [METI aims to operate power transmission lines in more flexible manner](#) (Mainichi)
- [Gov’t to create powerful “Casino Supervision Commission” under IR implementing law](#) (Mainichi)
- [Police to launch investigation headquarters for cryptocurrency theft](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Coincheck mulling capital tie-Up after massive cryptocurrency theft](#) (Jiji Press)

SECURITY

- [Defense chief hails deployment of F-35A stealth jet in Misawa](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

POLITICS

Party policy chiefs discuss economy, work-style reform, DPRK

In NHK’s Nichiyō Toron Sunday debate show, the policy chiefs of the ruling and opposition parties discussed key issues they have been deliberating in the Diet. LDP Policy Research Council Chairman Kishida stated that the Japanese economy has improved under Abenomics, but it is necessary for the government to work harder to push up wages and consumption. In response, the opposition party representatives expressed strong dissatisfaction with the failure to raise wages. Kishida also stressed the need for work-style reform. While basically agreeing on the need for the reform, the opposition panelists insisted that careful and extensive discussions should be held on the related draft bills that have been submitted to the current Diet session by the GOJ. Concerning North Korea, Kishida underscored that despite any progress made in the recent inter-Korean talks, the international community is in agreement that the DPRK’s nuclear and missile programs must not be allowed.

- [Prime minister’s schedule on Feb. 23, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister’s schedule on Feb. 24, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister’s schedule on Feb. 25, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [LDP constitutional revision HQ mulling provision on PM as SDF supreme commander](#) (Mainichi)
- [Ruling parties concerned about data flaws on discretionary labor system](#) (Yomiuri)

- [New SDP Chief Mitaichi eager to promote opposition cooperation](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Okinawa affairs minister released from hospital](#) (Nikkei)

**OPINION
POLLS**

- [Opinion poll & results from Nikkei Digital](#) (Nikkei, Online)

SOCIETY

- [In written response cabinet says “Marxist faction pervasive in JR unions”](#) (Yomiuri)
 - [Editorial: If Japan wants more foreign workers, more flexibility needed](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
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