



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, March 13, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

All networks led with reports on the Ministry of Finance's altering of documents on the sale of state-owned land to Moritomo Gakuen, saying that Finance Minister Aso reiterated to reporters this morning that he has no intention to step down.

## INTERNATIONAL

### PM Abe meets with South Korean envoy

NHK reported at noon that Prime Minister Abe met at the Kantei this morning with visiting South Korean National Intelligence Service Director Suh Hoon, who met with North Korean leader Kim and later with President Trump. The network quoted Abe as saying at the top of the meeting: "I welcome discussions based on the premise of denuclearization...It is extremely important for North Korea to take concrete actions toward denuclearization and translate words into action." The network said the premier expressed hope that Japan, the U.S., and South Korea will work closely to endeavor to resolve the nuclear, missile, and abduction issues.

In response, the South Korean official reportedly said: "It is very significant that Worker's Party of Korea Chairman Kim Jong Un clarified his intention toward denuclearization in his own words. I came here to convey the view of President Moon that cooperation between Japan and South Korea is very important in making the trend toward peace on the Korean Peninsula since the PyeongChang Olympics a positive trend." He went on to say, "In order to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and resolve the missile issue, it is very important for the leaders of South Korea and Japan to unite and work together more closely than ever."

### President Trump appears eager to forge nuclear deal with North Korea

Yomiuri, the world's largest newspaper, carried a speculative piece on the proposed summit

between President Trump and DPRK leader Kim Jong Un, highlighting the following tweet posted by the President last week: “The deal with North Korea is very much in the making and will be, if completed, a very good one for the World.” Explaining that the U.S. leader appears to be very eager to forge a nuclear deal, the daily wondered if he will be tempted to get involved in working out the details of a denuclearization agreement, a role that lower-ranking officials were tasked with under previous U.S. administrations. Quoting CIA Director Pompeo as saying on an American Sunday talk show, “President Trump isn’t doing this for theater. He’s going to solve a problem,” the daily speculated that in meeting with Kim the President intends not just to elicit a concrete statement on denuclearization but also to reach agreement on a mechanism to that end. However, the article voiced concern that this approach could backfire since the “shrewd” DPRK leader may try to manipulate the President at a time when many USG positions focusing on North Korean affairs are vacant.

- [Editorial: Make road to denuclearization real](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

## **ECONOMY**

- [Editorial: Implementation of import restrictions is not tolerated](#) (Sankei)
- [JBIC joins hands with Turkey to finance firms’ expansion into Africa](#) (Nikkei, Evening edition)
- [Cartoon: Nuclear power](#) (Akahata)
- [Editorial: Newly decided U.S. tariff on steel imports could hurt free trade system](#) (The Japan News)

## **POLITICS**

- [LDP unlikely to finalize Constitution reform proposals by convention](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Prime minister’s schedule on March 12, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan’s Finance Minister Aso again rejects calls for resignation](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [New document fraud in Japan deepening gov’t credibility crisis: experts](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Abe contrite over document tampering amid political firestorm](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Ministry altered land sale documents, Abe and wife’s names dropped](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gist of secret redactions to Moritomo papers](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Ruling, opposition parties poised to battle over Aso’s possible resignation over Moritomo papers](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Finance Ministry’s document tampering scandal may affect consumption tax hike](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Leading ruling party officials react to Moritomo document tampering scandal](#) (Sankei)
- [Business lobby chief calls for thorough probe into cronyism scandal](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Over 1,000 gather to demand Abe’s resignation over cronyism scandal](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Commentary: Aso must stay in job despite Finance Ministry’s document tampering scandal](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Moritomo paper scandal signifies a democracy in crisis in Japan](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

- [Nikai's support for Abe's reelection as LDP president "unshaken" by document scandal](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Cartoon: Moritomo Gakuen scandal](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Abe's route to revising Article 9 crosses minefield of legalese](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Editorial: Clause on how to respond to crises should be written into Constitution](#) (The Japan News)
- [Gov't OKs bill to lower age of adulthood from 20 to 18](#) (Kyodo News)

## OPINION POLLS

### **NHK poll: Support for Abe cabinet drops to 44%**

NHK's "News Watch 9" reported on the results of its opinion poll conducted over the weekend, which found that the public approval rating for the Abe cabinet had dropped 2 points from last month to 44%. Disapproval rose 4 points to 38%. Concerning President Trump's decision to meet with North Korean leader Kim by May, 55% of respondents welcomed it, while 36% did not. On Prime Minister Abe's plan to visit the U.S. as early as next month to meet with President Trump to discuss North Korea, 68% welcomed it, while 26% did not. When asked whether they can trust the North Korean leader's remarks about his intention to denuclearize and refrain from conducting nuclear tests or missile launches, 3% said they can, 71% said they cannot, and 22% were undecided. The LDP's support rating was 36.3%, followed by the Constitutional Democratic Party at 10.2% and Komeito at 3.1%.

- [44% support Abe cabinet, 38% do not, NHK public opinion poll](#) (NHK online)
- [Cabinet and political party support rates, NHK public opinion poll](#) (NHK online)
- [Cabinet support rate drops to 45% as 71% say "Aso should resign," Sankei-FNN poll](#) (Sankei)
- [Older people and women distrust Prime Minister Abe, Yomiuri poll](#) (Yomiuri)

## SECURITY

### **Naha court rejects Okinawa's call for suspension of Futenma relocation work**

NHK reported on its website that the Naha District Court has ruled against Okinawa Prefecture's call for the central government to suspend the Futenma relocation work in Henoko, Nago.

- [Pro-GSDF candidate's election victory signals weakening of anti-base All Okinawa Council](#) (Sankei)

## OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

- [Okinawa governor meets with U.S. environmental group filing suit over Henoko dugongs](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
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