
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Monday, March 19, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK, TBS, and TV Asahi led with reports that Prime Minister Abe again denied any involvement in the falsification of Moritomo Gakuen documents during the Diet session this morning. NTV gave top play to the finding that the Finance Ministry's Financial Bureau asked the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) to falsify documents related to Moritomo Gakuen, but MLIT submitted the unaltered documents to the Diet. Fuji TV reported that multiple Financial Bureau officials told the network that they were ordered by former bureau chief Sagawa to alter the documents.

POLITICS

- [Plunging cabinet support ratings imperil Abe's reelection for 3rd term as LDP president](#) (Sankei)
- [Abe denies link to land sale as calls grow to summon key figure](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Company says it was pressed to fake waste data for Moritomo](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Focus on aim of Moritomo document tampering as Sagawa faces summons](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: Moritomo scandal](#) (Asahi)
- [Prime minister's schedule on March 16, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on March 17, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on March 18, 2018](#) (Nikkei)

OPINION POLLS

- [Cabinet nonsupport rate exceeds support rate for first time in five months as support plummets to 39%, Jiji Press poll](#) (Jiji)

- [Public skeptical about inter-Korea summit, with 60% saying “no progress will be made toward denuclearization,” Jiji Press poll](#) (Jiji)
- [Cabinet support rating plunges 9 points to 38%, as 66% say Abe bears responsibility in alteration of official documents, Kyodo News spot poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Abe falls to third place while Ishiba takes lead as choice for next LDP leader, Kyodo News spot poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Kyodo News spot opinion poll & results from Tokyo Shimbun](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

INTERNATIONAL

- [Experts discuss developments in North Korea situation](#) (NHK)
- [Japan to continue isles negotiations with re-elected Putin](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Japan, U.S. must keep in even closer step on policies toward North Korea](#) (The Japan News)
- [Lavrov suggests deal on joint activities with Japan on disputed isles](#) (Kyodo News)

ECONOMY

- [Gov't sees a temporary tariff increase on steel inevitable](#) (Nikkei)
- [Komeito favors ¥8,000 admission fee for casinos to match Singapore](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Small bluefin tuna quotas to be slashed / Hokkaido, Kagoshima to be hit hardest](#) (The Japan News)

SCIENCE

The massive network of the human body – Part 6: Birth

Sunday's "NHK Special" ran the sixth part of its series “The massive network of the human body,” focusing on birth. The program showed how a single fertilized egg grows into a fetus inside the womb, saying that the fertilized egg produces individual organs by “communicating” with other cells. According to the program, the fetus also “communicates” with the mother by sending signals to receive more nutrition. The program also reported on the latest study on creating artificial organs by using iPS cells.

AMBASSADOR

- [Top U.S. diplomat visits Fukushima Daiichi, expresses cooperation in decommissioning work](#) (Fukushima Minpo)

SOCIETY

Meltdown Part 7: Why did TEPCO reduce coolant water?

Saturday's "NHK Special" took up the Fukushima nuclear accident in 2011, focusing on TEPCO's decision in accordance with the manual to reduce the amount of water used to cool the reactors on March 17 and 18 in order to prevent a build up of pressure inside the container vessels. But this caused the temperature inside the reactors to rise. The program speculated that this increased the dispersal of radioactive materials into the air. The program also reported on organizational issues, saying that most of the decisions needed to be made by Plant Manager Yoshida, but he was too

busy ensuring staff safety and communicating and coordinating among organizations, including the Kantei and TEPCO headquarters. Although many staff members reportedly voiced opposition to reducing the coolant water, Yoshida failed to involve himself in the matter.

- [Editorial: Make fully known Hague Convention rule of protecting children](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan to introduce plea bargaining on June 1](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Public trust in broadcasting at risk](#) (The Japan News)

SECURITY

U.S. forces making military preparations in case diplomatic efforts over DPRK fail

NHK reported on its website that Lt. Gen. Berger, Commander of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, met with Defense Minister Onodera at the MOD and indicated that the U.S. military is making military preparations to deal with North Korea in case diplomatic negotiations make no progress. Concerning the envisaged summit meetings between North and South Korea and the U.S. and North Korea, Onodera reportedly said: "In order to obtain meaningful results from the planned summit meetings, continued pressure is necessary. In order to maximize the pressure, the joint U.S.-ROK military drills should be carried out as planned." In response, Lt. Gen. Berger reportedly said diplomatic pressure must continue. The commander also referred to his talks with senior GSDF officials from March 19 on strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance and said: "If diplomatic policies fail, there is a possibility that we will have to respond militarily in some way. We must always be prepared to respond."

- [Defense Ministry eyes missile deployment on main Okinawa island](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Abe stresses importance of space, cyberworld defense](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Ruling on Henoko base work undermines the role of the judiciary](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

- [Kono asks Sec. Mattis to ensure safety of U.S. military aircraft, meets with Okinawan students](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
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