



Afternoon Alert - Monday, March 26, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

NHK gave top play to a report that 37 people were killed in a fire that broke out at a shopping center in Siberia on Sunday. All commercial networks led with reports on the intensive deliberations at the Diet on the Moritomo Gakuen scandal.

## INTERNATIONAL

### PM Abe mentions possibility of trilateral summit between U.S., Japan, DPRK

NHK reported on its website on remarks made by Prime Minister Abe at a meeting of the Upper House Budget Committee this morning, saying that when the premier was asked about a possible Japan-DPRK summit, he stressed that dialogue for the sake of dialogue would be meaningless. Meanwhile, the premier reportedly said he is not completely ruling out the possibility of a trilateral summit between Japan, the U.S., and North Korea in order to resolve the abduction issue.

Abe was quoted as commenting on the possibility of a Japan-DPRK summit: "We communicate with North Korea through various channels, including via the Japanese Embassy in Beijing, but I would like to refrain from commenting on the details. Holding dialogue for the sake of dialogue would be meaningless. For Japan, resolving the abduction issue is extremely important. I will make all-out efforts to ensure that the planned U.S.-DPRK summit can become an opportunity to make progress on the abduction issue, and I will do so at the Japan-U.S. summit next month." Concerning the possibility of a trilateral summit between Japan, the U.S., and North Korea, Abe reportedly said: "There is no need to hold one at this point, but if we were to hold one, there has to be a possibility that we will achieve something with regard to the abduction issue. Both a summit between North and South Korea and one between the U.S. and the DPRK are being planned, but this does not rule out

a summit between Japan, the U.S., and North Korea. We must consider various possibilities in order to resolve the abduction issue."

- [Japan seeks additional preconditions for U.S.-N. Korea summit](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Abe to ask Trump to take up abduction issue in U.S.-DPRK summit](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Deadlocked territorial row with Russia requires persistent dialogue](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan says Indo-Pacific strategy not aimed at containing any country](#) (Kyodo News)

## SECURITY

- [New sea policy eyes N. Korean missiles](#) (The Japan News)
- [Abe attends graduation ceremony of Japan Coast Guard Academy](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Charges dropped against crewmen over U.S. destroyer, ship collision](#) (Kyodo News)

## ECONOMY

- [Japanese firms applying for U.S. steel tariff exemptions](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Editorial: Futile trade war must be avoided in dealing with U.S. protectionist policy](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: U.S. self-serving trade sanction undermine international order](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: U.S. hard-line trade policy calls for negotiation, not retaliation](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Hitachi, Toshiba, Mitsubishi Heavy resume talks on merging nuclear fuel units](#) (Sankei)
- [Toshiba to buy Japanese atomic fuel maker](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

## POLITICS

### **Ruling, opposition party members discuss Moritomo scandal**

On NHK's "Nichiyo Toron" Sunday debate show, senior ruling and opposition party members of the Upper House discussed issues related to the controversial sale of state-owned land to school operator Moritomo Gakuen, including the Finance Ministry's tampering with documents on the land deal. The opposition panelists insisted that thorough investigations should be conducted to determine whether the ministry revised the documents in view of the school operator's alleged close ties with Prime Minister Abe's wife Akie.

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 23, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on March 24, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on March 25, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Abe renews vow to seek Constitution change at party convention](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gist of PM Abe's speech at LDP convention, March 25](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Abe banks on diplomacy to reverse Moritomo backlash](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Opposition reacts strongly to LDP constitutional revision proposals](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Clear-cut text for Constitution's Article 9 requires sincere, focused debate](#) (The Japan News)
- [Commentary: How Japan lost its policymaking skills](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

- [Japan Teachers' Union to back CDPJ](#) (Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: Abe views the cherry blossoms](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

## OPINION POLLS

### **Public approval for Abe cabinet drops to 32.6%**

TV Asahi reported at noon on the results of its opinion poll conducted over the weekend, which found that public support for the Abe cabinet plunged to 32.6%, down 11.7 points, from last month. Nonsupport rose 13.2 points to 54.9%. Support for the LDP fell 4.8 points to 40.3%, while support for the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan rose 2.9 points to 16.2%. When asked whether the Abe cabinet should resign en masse to take responsibility for the Moritomo Gakuen scandal, 48% said it should, while 39% thought it should not.

- [Abe's approval rating plunges to 42%, falling below 49% disapproval rate, Nikkei poll](#) (Nikkei)
- [74% "support" holding U.S.-DPRK summit, Nikkei poll](#) (Nikkei)
- [Opinion poll & results from Nikkei Digital](#) (Nikkei, Online)

## SOCIETY

- [Almost half of refugee status seekers in Japan in their 20s](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Editorial: Review of Broadcast Law could invite deterioration, distrust of programs](#) (The Japan News)

## SCIENCE

### **The massive network of the human body – Final part: Quest for health and longevity**

Sunday's "NHK Special" ran the final part of its series, "The massive network of the human body," focusing on scientists who are at the forefront of the latest medical treatment for cancer and heart disease. The program took a close look at the microcapsules called exosomes in every cell that are released to communicate with each other. While a recent study found that these exosomes play an extremely important role in protecting people's health, they are also manipulated by cancer cells to aid the spread of cancer. The program said scientists are now trying to control these exosomes to prevent metastasis. The program also reported on the latest treatment that uses exosomes to regenerate cardiac muscle cells.