
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Thursday, March 29, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK, TBS, Fuji TV led with reports that a ministerial meeting between the Koreas was held in the North Korean part of Panmunjom today ahead of the summit next month. NTV and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that an SDF UH-1 helicopter made an emergency landing at Yonego Airport at about 8:15 a.m. today, causing the temporary closure of a runway.

INTERNATIONAL

ROK, DPRK agree to hold summit on April 27

NHK reported that the two Koreas held a ministerial meeting today and agreed to hold an inter-Korean summit on the South Korean side of Panmunjom on April 27. The network said the two nations also agreed to hold a working-level meeting on April 4 to discuss protocol and security for the upcoming summit.

Kono says Japan to continue pressure campaign against North Korea

NHK reported this afternoon on remarks made by Foreign Minister Kono at the Upper House Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee today concerning the recent summit between China and the DPRK. Kono reportedly said: "North Korea's intention toward denuclearization has not been announced externally. Considering the fact that activities were confirmed at one of its nuclear facilities even after [North Korea reportedly expressed willingness toward] denuclearization, we still need to form a clear view [of North Korea's intention.]" The network added that Kono stressed the need to continue the pressure campaign against the North until it takes concrete action toward denuclearization.

When asked about the possibility of holding a Japan-DPRK summit or the Six-Party Talks, Kono

reportedly expressed the view that the GOJ will closely monitor developments in the inter-Korean and U.S.-DPRK summits and determine the best means to resolve the nuclear, missile, and abduction issues. When asked at what stage the government was informed of about the China-DPRK summit, Kono reportedly said: "Japan, the United States, and South Korea share various kinds of information, and we do not announce when or how we were informed."

New Japanese Ambassador to U.S. comments on DPRK

NHK reported on its website that Japan's new Ambassador to the U.S., Shinsuke Sugiyama, held a press conference in Washington on Wednesday during which he said Japan "is with great interest collecting and analyzing information" on the recent summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Chinese President Xi. "North Korea's call for dialogue is the result of the maximum pressure campaign by the U.S. and Japan, as well as the U.S., Japan, and South Korea," he said. Meanwhile, Sugiyama also stressed the need to realize complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization by saying: "This is just the beginning. Holding dialogue for the sake of dialogue is meaningless."

Japan is “passive player” in unfolding diplomacy on Korean Peninsula

Concerning North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's accelerated diplomatic overtures, including his surprise trip to Beijing, former Kyodo News managing editor Goto asserted on TV-Asahi's nightly news show "Hodo Station" on Wednesday that Japan has been kept on the outside, as the Chinese government apparently chose to inform only the United States and South Korea of Kim's secretive visit. The journalist explained that it is difficult for Japan to be a viable player in the rush of global diplomacy over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons in the first place since unlike the U.S., South Korea, and China, it does not have unique leverage over the DPRK. Because Tokyo has been bypassed by the North Korean leader's diplomatic outreach, the regular commentator insisted that it has no choice but to rely on Prime Minister Abe's strong bonds with President Trump for conveying its messages to the reclusive regime. Goto said when meeting with the U.S. leader in mid-April, the premier will be tasked with persuading him to address the abduction issue without fail in his planned summit with Kim Jong Un in May.

- [Abe's foreign policy on the rocks as U.S. sets off alone](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [China's Xi welcomes Kim with eyes on Trump](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Analysis: Kim plays Six-Party Talks card in surprise visit to China](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Ruling, opposition parties concerned Japan left out as U.S., DPRK leaders prepare to meet](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Kim's China visit could be catalyst to prod the North into action](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Nail down Kim Jong Un's true motive for “denuclearization”](#) (Sankei)
- [FM Kono protests Russian military drills over Northern Territories](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan to send its first member to group promoting UNSC resolution](#) (Yomiuri)

ECONOMY

Aso says Japan will reject bilateral FTA talks with U.S.

NHK reported on its website on remarks made by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aso at an Upper House committee today on the new tariff measures imposed by the Trump administration. Aso reportedly stressed that Japan will flatly reject bilateral FTA talks with the U.S. by saying: "It is important for us not to be dragged into bilateral negotiations with [tariff measures] as leverage. We flatly reject bilateral negotiations."

- [U.S. orders tariffs on \\$50-\\$60bn of Chinese goods](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [More Japanese cryptocurrency exchanges to close](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan to provide loans for Indonesian geothermal power generation project](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan's 1st icebreaker LNG carrier begins service in Arctic Sea](#) (Kyodo News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 28, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan enacts record 97.71 tril. yen budget for FY 2018](#) (Kyodo News)
- [FY18 budget allocations focus on revolution in human resources development, productivity](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Gist of interview with PM Abe after passage of FY18 budget on March 28](#) (Sankei)
- [Schedule of major political events over next few months](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Summoning of Sagawa came short of getting to the crux of the matter](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Sagawa's replies only deepened suspicion of Abe administration](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Cartoon: Abe and eraser](#) (Asahi)
- [Rumor spreading JCP Shii may resign, but no promising successor is on the horizon](#) (Sentaku)

OPINION POLLS

- [70% say they "do not trust" politicians and bureaucrats, Yomiuri-Waseda University Survey on Political Attitudes](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Infographics from Yomiuri-Waseda University Survey on Political Attitudes](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Opinion poll & results for Yomiuri-Waseda University Survey on Political Attitudes](#) (Yomiuri)

EDUCATION

- [Kyoto University and Todai tie for first in magazine's ranking of Japanese schools](#) (The Japan Times)

SECURITY

- [With security laws in force two years, SDF building track record in protection of U.S. warships](#) (Nikkei)
- [Kyoto University says "no" to military research](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

Okinawa assembly calls for USG to compensate murder victim's family

Ryukyu Shimpo reported on Thursday that the Nago municipal assembly on Wednesday adopted a unanimous motion urging the U.S. government to pay redress to the family of an Okinawa woman who was murdered by a Kadena AB employee in 2016. The legislature reportedly condemned the U.S. for its alleged hesitancy to offer an ex gratia payment to the bereaved family on the grounds that the perpetrator was not a direct hire of the U.S. military.

- [USAF Ospreys to conduct nighttime flight drills in Okinawa](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
 - [U.S. military training airspace significantly expanded around Okinawa](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
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