
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Friday, April 13, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK led with a report that Farm Minister Saito announced that an investigation has found that one of his ministry's officials had a document on Kake Gakuen. All commercial networks gave top play to a report that a 35-year-old man from Yamaguchi Prefecture was arrested this morning on suspicion of murdering a 17-year-old girl in Hiroshima 14 years ago.

ECONOMY

President Trump criticizes Japanese trade practices in tweet

NHK reported online that, in a recent tweet, President Trump criticized Japanese trade practices and expressed eagerness to enter FTA negotiations to reduce the U.S. trade deficit. The President tweeted: "Would only join TPP if the deal were substantially better than the deal offered to Pres. Obama." The network added that the President went on to say in the tweet that the U.S. already has bilateral deals with six of the eleven nations in the TPP, and is "working to make a deal with the biggest of those nations, Japan, who has hit us hard on trade for years!" Noting that President Trump has included Japan in the tariff measures on steel and aluminum imports and has repeatedly asked Japan to open its auto market, the network said the President is expected to take a tough stance on trade at the upcoming U.S.-Japan summit slated for next week.

GOJ officials comment on reports that President Trump issued instructions on possibly rejoining TPP

Concerning media reports that President Trump ordered senior administration officials to look at the possibility of rejoining the TPP, NHK and TBS quoted TPP Minister Motegi as saying at a press briefing this morning: "I welcome President Trump's remarks if they mean he correctly appreciates the significance and effects of the TPP." However, Motegi also said: "The TPP is like a piece of

fragile glass work as it was created by coordinating all the different interests of the participating nations. The shared view of the 11 nations is that it would be extremely difficult to renegotiate only certain portions of the agreement."

NHK also quoted Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Seko as telling reporters this morning: "I understand that members of Congress from agricultural states in the U.S. who met with President Trump made the announcement, but the details of the President's remarks have not been disclosed. I plan to find out the facts behind the remarks, including their purpose and intention."

According to NHK, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga said: "If the President recognizes the significance and the effects of the TPP, I welcome this. We will continue to stress to the U.S. the economic and strategic importance of the TPP, especially the fact that it is a plus for the U.S. economy and employment. At the same time, our intention to make all-out efforts to swiftly effectuate the TPP11 remains unchanged. In any case, we hope to hear the view of the U.S. side first."

The network also quoted Finance Minister Aso as saying: "I mustn't take the reports at face value, but if they are indeed true, I welcome them. If the United States has decided that it should join the TPP11 that is led by Japan, that would mean that we've achieved something."

- [Japan welcomes Trump shift on TPP, warns against renegotiation](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan eyes 500 mil. yen fine for fraudulent casino applications](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gov't to study measures to mitigate impact of 2019 sales tax hike](#) (Kyodo News)
- [WTO panel rules against S. Korea antidumping duties on Japan](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan's regional economies expanding on spending, exports: BOJ](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Wholesale price of rice on the decline](#) (Nikkei)

INTERNATIONAL

Details of U.S.-DPRK summit may be decided soon

TV Asahi reported at noon that President Trump said the planned summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "is being set up right now" and that "it will be terrific." Noting that the President has been saying that the summit will be held in May or early June, the network said his latest remarks suggest that the date and the venue of the summit will soon be decided.

Four senior White House officials in charge of security policy to resign

NHK reported online that it has become apparent that four senior White House officials in charge of security policy will resign, saying that while this probably represents a reshuffling of staff associated with the arrival of new National Security Adviser Bolton, there are concerns that their departure may affect the U.S. response to such pending issues as Syria and North Korea. The network said that on Wednesday the White House announced that Deputy National Security Adviser Schadlow will resign and then on Thursday it announced that Deputy National Security Adviser Waddell will resign. The network said the two officials were close aides to former National Security Adviser McMaster.

- [Concern growing about possible yen appreciation as a result of U.S.-Japan summit](#) (Nikkei)
- [Envoy to U.S. on North Korea, U.S.-DPRK summit, Japan-U.S. ties, ROK ties, Abe diplomacy](#) (Bungeishunju)
- [Japan, Switzerland agree to maintain pressure on N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan to avoid direct support for U.S strike on Syria: sources](#) (Kyodo News)
- [ROK says "international practices need to be considered" over drafted worker statue](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 12, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Document on Abe cronyism scandal found at ministry despite PM denial](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Abe administration in hot water over multiple scandals](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Growing number of LDP members keeping distance from PM Abe](#) (Mainichi)
- [Aso's faction plays up its unity](#) (Yomiuri)
- [New party to be formed by DP, Party of Hope to adopt middle-of-the-road policies](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Sugio submit membership application to CDPJ](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Level-headed Diet discussions needed to clear up suspicions over Kake](#) (The Japan News)
- [Cartoon: Article 4 of the Broadcast Law](#) (Akahata)
- [Cartoon: Abe in the batter's box](#) (Mainichi)

EDUCATION

- [Universities developing original tests to assess English speaking skills](#) (Nikkei)

SOCIETY

Kumamoto two years after earthquakes

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" on Thursday reported on the situation in Kumamoto Prefecture after it was hit by two powerful earthquakes with a seismic intensity of 7 two years ago. The program said people in the disaster-hit areas are still suffering, adding that at least 45 households have no choice but to live in warehouses or greenhouses because they have been unable to move into temporary housing facilities. The program also reported on a 20-year project to restore Kumamoto Castle, saying that the residents of Kumamoto are hoping to see the castle return to its original appearance as it is a symbol of hope.

- [Japan's population falls for 7th year; foreigners hit record high](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Over 50,000 children on queue for admission to day care last October](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

SECURITY

- [Misawa service member's family may be involved in hit-and-run](#) (NHK)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

Okinawa governor issues comment on 22nd anniversary of agreement to return Futenma

Ryukyu Shimpo and Okinawa Times reported on a written comment released on Thursday by Okinawa Governor Onaga on the 22nd anniversary of the agreement reached between the governments of the United States and Japan on the return of the Futenma Air Station. According to the papers, the governor said that the central government's stance of moving forward with the base relocation within the prefecture without the consent of the people of Okinawa is a major reason that the Futenma issue has not yet been resolved. Referring to the central government's promise to the prefecture to suspend operations at Futenma within five years by February 2019, the governor insisted that Futenma operations should be suspended regardless of progress in the FRF construction at Henoko if the GOJ places priority on the lives and property of the local residents. Onaga added that he will address the issue with strong resolve to fulfill his campaign pledge not to allow a new base to be constructed in Henoko.

