
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Monday, April 16, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK led with a report on the first economic dialogue between Japan and China in eight years, saying that the two sides agreed on the need to strengthen economic cooperation. All commercial networks gave top play to reports that Vice Finance Minister Fukuda is expected to release a statement sometime today about reports by a tabloid magazine that he allegedly harassed female reporters by using offensive language.

ECONOMY

- [Japan to pitch new trade dialogue to draw Trump back to TPP: Shinzo Abe readies for 'all-or-nothing' meeting with US president](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan welcomes Trump shift on TPP, warns against renegotiation](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Persevere in urging the U.S. to return to the TPP](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan, China talk economic cooperation in 1st dialogue in 8 yrs](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Public, private sectors to jointly seek ways to shore up auto industry](#) (Mainichi)
- [Knowledge and preparation key to M&A](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Gov't must establish a long-term, stable power supply for the nation](#) (The Japan News)
- [Centuries' worth supply of rare earths found in Japanese waters](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Five things to know about rare earths](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Sony to launch space business](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

INTERNATIONAL

Japan, China hold first economic dialogue in eight years

NHK reported that Japan and China are holding their first high-level economic dialogue in eight years in Tokyo today. Kono was quoted as saying at the beginning of the dialogue: "The situation surrounding the global economy has been changing drastically, and there are more roles to be played by both Japan and China. We need to develop a new perspective and think about how we

can cooperate and collaborate." Chinese Foreign Minister Wang reportedly said: "I am convinced that the dialogue will play a positive role in the improvement and development of the bilateral relationship and give new momentum to our economic cooperation." The network said the dialogue will continue until this afternoon, adding that the two sides are expected to discuss cooperation with China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative and stronger economic cooperation, and exchange views on the recent tariff measures by the Trump administration.

Kim Jong Un's ambition – Part 1: Tyrant or strategist?

Sunday's "NHK Special" aired the first part of its new series, "Kim Jong Un's ambition," which looks into why the young North Korean leader is able to maintain his regime and nuclear and missile development program while the international community is stepping up its economic sanctions against the country. The first part focused on whether Kim is a tyrant or a strategist, reporting on his childhood and personality. The program said since Kim had no time to establish himself as a "divine" leader, he focused on revitalizing the economy. Kim reportedly promoted a capitalism-like principle of market mechanisms among the public and made them work hard and compete with each other so that the nation would not be greatly affected even if sanctions are intensified. The program also used artificial intelligence to analyze Kim Jong Un's statements and remarks, saying that it found that Kim uses the word "association" frequently, speculating that he wants the public to belong to associations and work toward shared goals. The program also said Kim uses positive and inspiring words such as "strengthen" and "train" in conjunction with "association" in an attempt to plant a spirit of self-help in the public. The program also said about 30% of Kim's public remarks have been made during visits to various sites, quoting Keio University Professor Isozaki as saying that unlike past leaders who ruled the country ideologically, Kim probably values practical results and benefits. The program also said Kim is more terrifying than his father, saying that by openly and brutally executing his aides, including those who made minor mistakes, he is preventing others from thinking about revolting against the regime.

- [Questions arise over Trump-Abe ties at critical juncture for Japanese prime minister](#) (The Japan Times)
- [U.S. tightens pressure on Japan for bilateral trade deal](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Abe, Trump set to play golf in U.S.](#) (The Japan News)
- [PM Abe starts diplomatic campaign for spring 2018 with U.S. visit](#) (Sankei)
- [Opposition leader says attack on Syria "inevitable"](#) (Nikkei)
- [Expert: Syria attack meant to demonstrate U.S.'s non-tolerance of use of chemical weapons](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Commentary: Iran the real target of U.S. attack on Syria](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Will joint strikes on Syria prevent future atrocities by Assad government?](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Attack on Syria is irresponsible use of force](#) (Asahi)
- [Editorial: Use of force won't appease Syria's disarray](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Attack on Syria is inevitable preventive measure](#) (Sankei)

- [Japan offers China help with ‘toilet revolution’](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: Resolute measures needed against China’s assertive maritime advances](#) (The Japan News)

POLITICS

Ruling parties share “sense of crisis” over drop in Abe cabinet’s approval rating

NTV reported at noon on the results of its nationwide opinion poll conducted over the weekend, which put public approval for the Abe cabinet at 26.7%, an all-time low since the launch of the second Abe cabinet. A reporter said while Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters this morning that the government will remain calm, there is a growing view in the government and ruling camp that it has entered the “danger zone.” Suga was quoted as saying: “As I always say, public support can go up or down.” A former cabinet member from the LDP reportedly said: “We have crossed a watershed. I don’t think public support will recover.” Some are reportedly saying that it has become unclear whether PM Abe will be able to be reelected as the party president for a third term in September. Meanwhile, the reporter said the opposition parties are stepping up attacks on the Abe cabinet, quoting Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan Secretary General Fukuyama as saying: “I feel that the public is increasingly turning away from the Abe government. I don’t think they will be able to maintain the government.”

Ruling, opposition policy chiefs discuss response to Moritomo, Kake scandals, work-style reform, and DPRK

On NHK’s “Nichiyo Toron” Sunday debate show, lawmakers from the ruling and opposition parties discussed how to respond to the scandals involving a land deal with Moritomo Gakuen in Osaka and a school project by Kake Gakuen. Alleging that Prime Minister Abe used his influence over the purchase of land and school approval process, the opposition parties stepped up their criticism of the premier. Discussants from the ruling LDP and Komeito Party expressed their readiness to conduct investigations into the cases, but the opposition panelists stressed the need for more thorough investigations, including sworn testimony by a former assistant to Abe.

The panelists also discussed work-style reform and agreed on the need to resolve the abduction issue. Expressing his concern about Secretary of State-Designate Pompeo's remarks at a Senate hearing on April 12, during which he reportedly stated that the purpose of the upcoming U.S.-DPRK summit is to address the nuclear threat to the United States, Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan policy chief Akira Nagatsuma said that he wants Abe to talk about all of the North Korean missiles, including those capable of reaching Japan, at his summit with President Trump this week.

- [Top Finance Ministry official denies sexual harassment allegations](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Thousands rally across Japan to protest Abe administration](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Prime minister’s schedule on April 13, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister’s schedule on April 14, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister’s schedule on April 15, 2018](#) (Nikkei)

- [Scandal-hit Abe unlikely to get 3rd term as LDP leader: ex-PM Koizumi](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Cartoon: Missing document after missing document](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

OPINION POLLS

- [Abe cabinet support rate drops to 37% as 79% unconvinced by PM's explanation of cronyism scandal, Kyodo News poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Abe cabinet's approval rate falls for second consecutive month to reach 38%, as over 70% unconvinced by Moritomo scandal explanation, Jiji Press poll](#) (Jiji)
- [70% back Japan-North Korea summit, as U.S., S. Korea, and China hold summits, Jiji Press poll](#) (Jiji)

SECURITY

- [Japan think tank highlights N. Korea tension in latest annual report](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan to bolster coast guard patrols near disputed Senkaku Islands](#) (The Japan Times)

SOCIETY

- [Column: Reunion with a former student](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [NHK news department head listens to Kantei, not audience](#) (Shukan Shincho)
- [Women's presence increasing at BOJ](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Japan's plunging population adds urgency to immigration talk](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

