



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, April 17, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

Most networks gave top play to updates on a statement released by the Finance Ministry denying a tabloid report that Vice Minister Fukuda sexually harassed female reporters. TBS led with a report on the Kake Gakuen scandal.

## INTERNATIONAL

### U.S. may make tough demands on trade at U.S.-Japan summit

NHK reported on its website that President Trump has announced the presidential delegation for the U.S.-Japan summit, saying that in addition to officials in charge of North Korea, USTR Lighthizer and Assistant to the President for Economic Policy Kudlow will attend the summit. The network also reported that Vice President Pence and National Security Advisor Bolton will be among the delegation. The network said the President stressed at a recent event that the trade situation with friendly countries is getting worse and expressed hope to reduce the U.S. trade deficit. Noting that the President has expressed eagerness to enter FTA talks with Japan, the network said the U.S. may make tough demands of Japan on trade.

- [Former envoy to U.S. Fujisaki: "Japan, U.S. should coordinate on security policies"](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Solidarity key as Abe prepares to meet Trump ahead of US talks with N. Korea](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Deal with North Korea through a strong Japan-U.S. alliance](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan, China affirm importance of free trade amid friction with U.S.](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Main points of Japan-China high-level economic dialogue, April 16](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Use Chinese foreign minister's Tokyo visit to build irrevocable trust](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Concerns about quagmire after attack on Syria](#) (Mainichi)

- [Editorial: Solely relying on force won't bring peace](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [ROK lawmakers to land on Takeshima on April 23-24](#) (Sankei)
- [7% of pollees in three African nations say Japan is most trustworthy country, MOFA poll](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan names new ambassadors to Nigeria, Nepal, Armenia](#) (Kyodo News)

## ECONOMY

### Japanese LNG plant in Maryland begins operation

NHK reported online that Tokyo Gas and Sumitomo Corporation announced that their natural gas liquefaction plant in Maryland started operation on April 9. The two companies plan to annually export about 2.3 million tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Japan over the next 20 years starting later this month. A Tokyo Gas official said at a news conference that the export of LNG will strengthen energy cooperation and promote trade between the United States and Japan. The network said that Japan agreed with the United States at their economic dialogue last October to help expand U.S. exports of LNG and that other LNG projects involving Japanese firms are underway in the United States. The broadcaster speculated that Japan is hoping to underscore the results of its efforts to help expand U.S. exports ahead of the U.S.-Japan summit this week.

### Labor reform in medical institutions and schools

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" on Monday reported on nationwide efforts to reform work styles in Japan, focusing on medical institutions and schools where many people work extremely long hours. According to the program, about 40% of doctors, 30% of middle school teachers, and 60% of high school teachers work more than 80 hours of overtime each month. The program first looked at Niigata City Hospital, where a resident physician recently committed suicide due to extreme overwork. The hospital has decided not to accept patients with minor health problems because securing a sufficient number of doctors is difficult. The program also reported on a middle school in Osaka where, in addition to their regular work, teachers patrol the school district in the morning, supervise students during lunchtime to prevent bullying, oversee club activities after school, and respond to phone calls from parents and neighbors in the evening. The program said the city is planning such measures as hiring trainers from outside the school for certain classes and using automated answering machines during the evening.

- [Toyota to equip U.S. cars with intelligent safety system from 2021](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Spent nuclear fuel stored in Japan](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Gov't proposes power generation operators shoulder power grid maintenance costs](#) (Yomiuri)
- [8 out of 14 public-private investment funds vastly underused](#) (The Japan News)
- [Feature: Tokyo hopes to become innovation hub and challenge Japanese conformism](#) (Kyodo News)

## POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 16, 2018](#) (Nikkei)

- [Abe-Kishida meeting on April 16 may signify Kishida will wait for handover of premiership](#) (Sankei)
- [Panel avoids mention of scrapping broadcast law clause](#) (The Japan News)
- [Newspaper association calls for drastic change to broadcasting reforms](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Establishing new party by juggling numbers will not win public support](#) (The Japan News)
- [Cartoon: Scandal-tainted administration](#) (Akahata)

#### OPINION POLLS

- [66% of voters don't buy Abe's statements about scandals, Asahi poll](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Ishiba preferred over Abe for next LDP president, Asahi poll](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Opinion poll & results from Asahi Shimbun](#) (Asahi)
- [Abe most popular as next LDP president among party supporters but backing is down 9 points, Kyodo News poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Cabinet support among women dips below 30% for first time, Kyodo News poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Kyodo News opinion poll & results from Tokyo Shimbun](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

#### SECURITY

- [Local residents petition gov't, Tokyo metropolitan gov't, U.S. Embassy for removal of Azabu heliport](#) (Akahata)
- [China probed Japan's EEZ without permission](#) (Yomiuri)

#### SOCIETY

- [Dozens of detainees go on hunger strike at Japanese immigration center](#) (Kyodo News)

#### OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

- [Okinawa governor back to work after incapacitation, to undergo surgery before end of April](#) (Okinawa Times)