



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, April 19, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TV Asahi led with reports on the joint press conference by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe at Mar-a-Lago on Wednesday, with TV Asahi saying that the two nations agreed to commence new consultations on trade led by USTR Lighthizer and Economic Revitalization Minister Motegi. NTV, TBS, and Fuji TV gave top play to reports that Vice Finance Minister Fukuda once again denied a report that he sexually harassed female journalists.

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump, PM Abe hold joint press conference

NHK reported at noon on a joint press conference held by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe held at the conclusion of their two-day summit at Mar-a-Lago, saying that the two leaders announced that they agreed to maintain maximum pressure on North Korea and urge it to take concrete actions toward denuclearization through the U.S.-DPRK summit. The network said the two leaders also announced that they agreed to create a new framework to discuss trade and investment between USTR Lighthizer and Minister in charge of Economic Revitalization Motegi.

According to the network, Abe said: "Thanks to the bold decision by President Trump to hold the first-ever U.S.-DPRK summit, we are facing a historic turning point....We should not reward North Korea by just agreeing to hold a dialogue. We once again agreed on the solid policy of maintaining maximum pressure and urging North Korea to take concrete actions toward denuclearization." On the abduction issue, the premier said: "Japan and the United States are determined to work more closely and strengthen pressure on North Korea so that all of the abductees can return home immediately. "

The network said the President stressed that he will take a tough stance at the U.S.-DPRK summit

to realize denuclearization, quoting him as saying: "If we don't think it's going to be successful, it won't happen. If I think that it's a meeting that is not going to be fruitful, we are not going to go." The President also reportedly said even if the summit is held, he would walk out of it if he thinks it will not be fruitful.

Meanwhile, the network also quoted Abe as saying: "We will expand trade and investment between Japan and the United States to benefit both nations. Based on that foundation, I have agreed with President Trump to commence 'consultations for a free, fair, and reciprocal trade deal' for the economic development of a free and open Indo-Pacific region based on fair rules." Abe also said: "I am aware that the United States is interested in pursuing bilateral deals, but Japan believes that the TPP is best for both nations. I hope to discuss the matter based on that position."

Ambassador Hagerty says President Trump, PM Abe had “thoughtful discussions”

NHK reported online that Ambassador Hagerty, who attended the U.S.-Japan summit, talked to several media outlets at Mar-a-Lago on Wednesday and stressed the significance of President Trump's promise to Prime Minister Abe that he will raise the abduction issue at the envisaged U.S.-DPRK summit. The network quoted the Ambassador as saying that the two leaders "had very deep and thoughtful discussions about topics including the DPRK and our strategy in negotiations that are upcoming between the President and Kim Jong Un." On the abduction issue, the Ambassador reportedly said: "President Trump met with their families in November of last year. Indeed, I met with their families just last week in my home in Tokyo. That's been a major topic of conversation. I think there are very encouraging words coming there."

Meanwhile, on the agreement to establish a new framework to discuss trade between the two nations, the Ambassador was quoted as saying: "It's not a new framework; it's an enhancement of the existing framework." The network said the Ambassador expressed hope that discussions toward reducing the U.S. trade deficit will move forward. On whether Japan will be excluded from the tariff measures on steel and aluminum imports, the Ambassador reportedly said the conditions for Japan's exclusion have not been discussed yet and expressed the view that discussions on it will be held between USTR Lighthizer and Economic Revitalization Minister Motegi.

Thursday evening's Yomiuri reported on a separate press briefing on the summit given by Ambassador Hagerty, in which he reportedly disclosed that the two leaders discussed North Korea's chemical and biological weapons. The Ambassador was quoted as saying: "President Trump's intention is to see all of these weapons of mass destruction eliminated from the Korean Peninsula."

Suga comments on U.S.-Japan summit

NHK reported online that during a press briefing this morning, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented on the U.S.-Japan summit. He was quoted as saying: "I was told that the two leaders were able to exchange very candid views on North Korea and economic matters. It was an

extremely significant visit. The two leaders were able to further deepen their relationship of trust." On the agreement to create a new framework to discuss trade and investment, Suga reportedly said: "The two leaders agreed to discuss concrete ways to realize the economic development of a free and open Indo-Pacific region based on fair rules. Japan will continue to urge the United States to rejoin the TPP under this framework." On North Korea, Suga also reportedly said: "The two leaders agree that the abduction issue, which is the most important matter for Japan, must eventually be resolved. We will continue to work on it, while considering what would be the most effective way to resolve the issue in a comprehensive manner."

Broadcasters weigh in on first day of U.S.-Japan summit

All evening news programs on Wednesday reported on the first day of the Mar-a-Lago summit between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe, highlighting the President's statement that during his planned meeting with Kim Jong Un he will bring up the abductions of Japanese nationals by DPRK agents. An NHK reporter opined that the U.S. leader heeded Abe's request for addressing the matter in his upcoming meeting with the North Korean leader because the prime minister has made strenuous efforts to build strong personal bonds with the President. While welcoming the President's pledge to take up the abduction issue, former Kyodo News managing editor Goto said on TV-Asahi's "Hodo Station" that it remains to be seen how strongly the President will press Kim to resolve the issue. Commenting on CIA Director Pompeo's secret trip to North Korea, the journalist asserted that the episode signifies that Washington is engaging with Pyongyang without informing Tokyo.

On the economic front, an NHK reporter said that although Japan may be forced to agree to hold FTA talks in exchange for the President's addressing the abductions in his summit with Kim Jong Un, GOJ officials will try to tamp down U.S. expectations for the talks producing quick results in the form of a tangible decline in the U.S. trade deficit with Japan.

- [Gist of Abe-Trump press conference after summit talks](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gist of Japan-U.S. summit talks, April 18](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan relieved at Trump's vow to discuss short-, mid-range missiles, abductions with Kim](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Abe on Mar-a-Lago mission to align US interests on N. Korea with Japan's](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Panmunjom likely venue for U.S.-North Korea summit](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Pompeo 'got along really well' with Kim Jong Un, Trump says: President chooses CIA spies over diplomats to lead negotiations](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- ["Pompeo's visit was to confirm how serious DPRK is," interview with Nanzan University Professor Shunji Hiraiwa](#) (Sankei)
- [Abe expresses condolences on passing of Barbara Bush](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japan protests Russian military drills on disputed islands](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan foreign minister to visit Jordan next week: sources](#) (Kyodo News)

AMBASSADOR

- [Trump won't meet Kim unless it advances U.S., Japan interests: envoy](#) (Kyodo News)

ECONOMY

- [METI funds private sector development of next-generation EV batteries](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan panel starts talks on wider use of electric vehicles](#) (The Japan News)
- [METI to consolidate data on foreign human resources as part of support for SMEs entering overseas markets](#) (Sankei)
- [Sony, Carnegie Mellon Univ. team up to develop AI robots](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Foreign visitors to Japan in fiscal 2017 reach almost 30 mil.](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Commentary: 5 yrs of Abenomics yields uneven success](#) (The Japan News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 17-18, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Opposition calls for Aso's resignation over vice finance minister's alleged sexual harassment](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Finance Ministry misreads public opinion on vice minister's alleged sexual harassment](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Press Club protests MOF request for sexual harassment probe cooperation](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Cartoon: Abe golf outing](#) (Asahi)
- [Cartoon: Finance Ministry sexual harassment scandal](#) (Akahata)
- [LDP's Kishida announces policies signaling "departure" from the Abe line](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Ex-PM Koizumi, LDP chief Nikai dine with veteran politicians, Tokyo governor](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Cartoon: Defense Minister Onodera](#) (Asahi)
- [Governor seen as opponent of reactor restart quits over sex scandal](#) (Kyodo News)

SECURITY

- [Japan, Malaysia ink deal on defense equipment transfer](#) (Kyodo News)

SOCIETY

Popular manga site offers pirated works

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on a website offering pirated manga. The website, called Manga Mura, makes more than 50,000 manga available free of charge. The network said people of all ages have been using the site without knowing that the manga it offers are pirated, saying the site received 170 million visitors last month alone. Manga artists and publishers have been heavily affected by Manga Mura. The government plans to block the site.

- [Japan enacts law on court jurisdiction for int'l divorce](#) (Kyodo News)

