


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Afternoon Alert - Monday, May 21, 2018

The following information reflects the reporting of the cited news media and does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Japan Media Highlights is intended for USG use only and should not be forwarded. Visit the website [here](#). For more information, contact TokyoMATT@state.gov.

HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK led with a report that the LDP, Komeito, Japan Innovation Party, and Party of Hope reached a rough agreement today on amendments to a labor reform bill. NTV and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that the Los Angeles Angels' Shohei Ohtani won his fourth game on Sunday. TBS and Fuji TV led with reports that passengers were evacuated from an ANA Boeing 767 prior to its departure from Narita for Hong Kong this morning when the cabin filled with smoke, saying that four passengers are feeling ill after inhaling the smoke.

ECONOMY

Addressing the declining labor force in Japan

Sunday's "NHK Special" reported on the declining population in Japan, focusing on the labor force. The program said that in about 30 years, the total population of Japan will drop to about 100 million and the labor force will drop by about 35 million from its peak. The key to addressing the declining labor force is elderly people and foreigners. The program said "silver human resources centers," where the average age of prospective employees is 72, have been expanding their activities, saying that elderly people have become essential personnel in many sectors. The program also reported that companies are becoming increasingly dependent on foreign workers, especially Vietnamese workers, adding, however, that countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, and European nations are also seeking to attract Vietnamese workers.

- [With TPP ratification in sight, Abe raises banner of free trade](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Brazil calls for Japan-South America economic partnership](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Huis Ten Bosch envisages underwater casino](#) (Sankei)
- [Toshiba enters new chapter with sale of memory unit](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Ex-bankers from foreign firms venturing into start-ups in pursuit of inspiration](#) (Nikkei)

- [Record 98% of university graduates land jobs amid recovering economy](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan offers Cambodia help to build 1st subway in Phnom Penh](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Gov't energy plan inflexibility on nuclear, renewables reveals lack of vision](#) (The Mainichi)

INTERNATIONAL

- [Japan agonizes over cooperation with U.S. in dealing with China in trade issues](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan aims to check China through Pacific island nations](#) (The Japan News)
- [Abe: "Russians never fail to keep their promises"](#) (Asahi)
- [Japanese, German, French foreign ministers agree to support Iran deal](#) (Kyodo News)
- [S. Korea minister seeks Japan role in econ. cooperation with North](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Diet group to resume activities for N. Korea ties](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japanese diplomat referred to three non-nuclear principles at U.S. advisory commission](#) (Asahi)
- [Kono mum on if record exists in support of U.S. nuke deterrence](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

POLITICS

Lawmakers discuss work-style reform bills, Japan's response to DPRK

On NHK's "Nichiyō Toron" Sunday debate show, senior lawmakers from the ruling and opposition parties discussed bills on work-style reform in Japan. LDP Deputy Secretary General Hagiuda expressed the ruling coalition's willingness to enact the bills during the current Diet session, stressing that work-style reform, which is expected to increase productivity, is an important issue for the future of Japan. However, Secretary General Fukuyama of the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan expressed strong objections to the bills, which include the system to exempt highly skilled professionals from working hour regulations, and insisted that the ruling coalition should not railroad the bills.

In response to Fukuyama's criticism of the Abe administration for "being left behind" amid the ongoing diplomatic efforts by the United States, South Korea, and China toward North Korea, Hagiuda stated that Prime Minister Abe's close coordination with President Trump in applying pressure on the DPRK and other efforts have helped to persuade Pyongyang to change its attitude.

- [Prime minister's schedule on May 18, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on May 19, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on May 20, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Political schedule as envisioned by ruling parties](#) (Yomiuri)
- [JCP chief not keen on cooperating with new DPFP in next Upper House election](#) (Sankei)
- [Finance Ministry faces personnel crisis amid recent string of scandals](#) (Sankei)

OPINION POLLS

Public approval for Abe cabinet picks up

TV Asahi reported on the results of its opinion poll conducted over the weekend, which found that public support for the Abe cabinet recovered to 34.1%, up 5.1 points from last month. Nonsupport dropped 4.1 points to 51.1%. In addition, 45% of respondents expressed support for the passage of the labor reform bill, while 36% did not. Meanwhile, 67% expressed opposition to the integrated resort bill.

Fuji TV also reported on the results of its weekend poll, which found that public approval for the Abe cabinet rose 1.5 points to 39.8% and nonsupport dropped 5.6 points to 48.5%. More than 70% of respondents said that a certain amount of closure has been achieved in the Kake Gakuen scandal after the testimony by the prime minister's former aide, Yanase. Meanwhile, 73% said the Diet deliberations should focus on more important issues than the Kake Gakuen or Moritomo Gakuen scandals. In addition, 57.9% of respondents expressed opposition to the passage of the labor reform bill, while 25.3% expressed support. On the U.S.-DPRK summit slated for June 12, 59.9% expressed high expectations, while 37% did not. On the abduction issue, 64.6% expressed hope for progress, while 31.9% did not. When asked who is most suitable to be the next LDP president, 25% chose former Secretary General Ishiba, followed by Shinjiro Koizumi at 23.3%, and PM Abe at 22.4%. However, 44.8% of LDP supporters picked PM Abe, followed by Ishiba at 20.3%, and Shinjiro Koizumi at 18.1%.

- [Cabinet support rate rises 3 points to 42%, 25% say work-style reform bill should be passed during current Diet session, Yomiuri poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Opinion poll & results from Yomiuri Shimbun](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Cabinet fails to resolve Abe scandals but approval rate up, Asahi poll](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Abe cabinet's approval rate levels off at 38%, as 65% say "PM bears responsibility" for Kake scandal, Jiji Press poll](#) (Jiji)
- [58% say diplomatic summits will not result in progress on abductee issue, Jiji Press poll](#) (Jiji)

EDUCATION

- [LDP panel proposes deferred tuition payment instead of gov't's free higher education](#) (Yomiuri)

SOCIETY

- [U.S. cites Japan for noncompliance with Hague treaty on cross-border parental child abductions](#) (The Japan Times)
- [46 rescued from human trafficking in Japan in 2017](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Seniors in need of nursing care to reach 7.7 million in 2025](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Feature: Ex-serviceman's tours near base drawing U.S. military folk in Japan](#) (Kyodo News)

SECURITY

Japan's intelligence operations

Saturday's "NHK Special" reported on Japan's intelligence activities, which have been veiled in secrecy. The program said NHK obtained top secret files from the National Security Agency (NSA), including the so-called Japan files, which reveal Japan's intelligence activities. The program said Japan's intelligence agency called the Directorate for Signals Intelligence (DFS) under the Defense Department frequently appears in the files, saying that although it has been active for more than 50 years since the end of the WWII, it is veiled in secrecy. According to the program, the DFS has six facilities across the nation that intercept signals from military facilities, airplanes, and ships of neighboring nations around the clock. The program said although all of the intelligence collected by Japan is handed over to the U.S., the U.S. only provides limited intelligence to Japan. The program also said the Cabinet Intelligence Research Office (CIRO) also appears frequently in the files. The program said that according to the files, Japan was involved in intelligence-gathering operations on the Al Qaeda spring offensive, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the Crosshair program, which the U.S. military has not disclosed. An academic pointed out that more discussions will be required if intelligence provided by Japan leads to a war to determine whether its provision violated the Japanese Constitution, which prohibits the use of force.

- [Suga allying with Okinawa mayors' league in autumn gubernatorial race](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Defense Ministry to outsource cybersecurity work to private sector](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Residents near MCAS Iwakuni worried about aircraft noise](#) (Chugoku Shimbun)
- [Defense Ministry to use private sector micro satellites for intelligence gathering from June](#) (Mainichi)
- [China lands bombers on South China Sea outpost for first time](#) (The Japan Times)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

- [Soil in returned land at Northern Training Area suspected of chemical contamination](#) (Okinawa Times, Ryukyu Shimpo)
- [Kadena airman arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- [Ginowan mayor to visit U.S.](#) (Okinawa Times, Ryukyu Shimpo)