
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Friday, August 3, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TV Asahi led with coverage of the extreme heat throughout Japan. NTV gave top play to a report that the International Olympic Committee is planning to ask the Japan Amateur Boxing Federation to set up a third-party panel to investigate the alleged misuse of grant money given by the Japan Sport Council to Rio de Janeiro Olympian Daisuke Narimatsu. Fuji TV led with a report that a 36-year-old man was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of a seven-year-old girl in Tochigi Prefecture.

INTERNATIONAL

Japan conveys to U.S. concerns about Iran sanctions

NHK reported that senior officials of MOFA and METI visited Washington on Aug. 1 and 2 and met with State Department and Treasury Department officials. The network said that in response to the Trump administration's plan to resume economic sanctions against Iran, the Japanese officials conveyed Japan's concern that restricting oil imports from Iran would have a major impact on Japanese corporations. The network said the U.S. side explained that the Iran nuclear deal is insufficient and that the U.S. is planning to resume the sanctions as planned. The network added that the two sides agreed to continue discussions on future

measures.

GOJ lodges protest against South Korea's maritime survey near Takeshima

NHK reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters today that the GOJ has confirmed that a South Korean marine research vessel operated inside Japanese territorial waters near the disputed Takeshima islands (Liancourt Rocks) on Aug. 1 and 2. Suga reportedly said the GOJ has asked for an explanation from the South Korean side and lodged a strong protest saying that conducting research activities without Japan's consent is unacceptable. The network said South Korea also conducted maritime research near the disputed islets in July 2016.

Plan emerges within LDP for Nikai to become envoy to North Korea

TV Tokyo's evening news program "World Business Satellite" reported that since the abduction issue has become stalled amid the conciliatory mood between the U.S. and North Korea, there are growing calls within the LDP for Secretary General Nikai to become an envoy to North Korea for the purpose of achieving a breakthrough in the abduction issue. The program quoted an incumbent cabinet minister as saying: "Resolving the abduction issue between governments is difficult due to what happened in the past. Mr. Nikai should visit North Korea in his capacity as secretary general." The LDP's Takeo Kawamura, a close aide of Nikai's, told the network: "Mr. Nikai could become an envoy to North Korea in order to resolve the abduction issue." The program explained that Nikai met with Chinese President Xi and then South Korean President Park when Japan's relations with China and South Korea soured in 2015 and successfully realized a summit between Abe and the two leaders. The program said Nikai visited the DMZ on Thursday and later told reporters that he will spare no effort in achieving a breakthrough in the abduction issue if necessary.

- [Japan, China may hold meeting of finance ministers this month](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Foreign Minister Kono spent 140 days overseas during his first year in office](#) (Asahi)
- [Nikai meets with South Korean Prime Minister](#) (Yomiuri)
- [With abduction issue unresolved, Japan at odds over allowing North Koreans to attend Tokyo Games](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japan must build confidence with Russia for regional stability in East Asia](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan protests S. Korea for sailing ship near disputed islets](#) (Kyodo News)

- [Japan, China at odds over issues related to East China Sea](#) (Kyodo News)

ECONOMY

Japan, China to hold financial dialogue as early as end of August

NHK reported that the Finance Ministry has begun making final arrangements to hold a Japan-China financial dialogue between finance ministers and senior finance officials as early as the end of August in Beijing. The network said the dialogue has taken place six times in the past, with the last session being held in Yokohama in May 2017. According to the network, the two sides are expected to discuss the possible resumption of the currency swap agreement, which allows the central banks to swap hard currency with one another for intervention in the currency market in the event of a financial crisis. The agreement expired five years ago due to the deterioration of bilateral relations over the Senkaku Islands. The network added that the two nations are also expected to exchange views on the importance of free trade amid the intense trade friction between the U.S. and China.

- [FOCUS: Japan-U.S. trade talks to spotlight Tokyo's negotiation strategy](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Tokyo plans sovereign wealth fund to finance US infrastructure](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Is the BOJ's monetary policy adjustment really just a tweak?](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Reading the future of new Japan-U.S. trade talks through the "ceasefire" between the U.S. and EU](#) (Nikkei Business, Online)
- [Japan economy needs AI, robots to offset aging population: white paper](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Cartoon: Kuroda's Olympic challenge](#) (Asahi)

AMBASSADOR

- [U.S. Ambassador to attend Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on Aug. 6](#) (Chugoku Shimbun)
- [Nippon Scouts Jamboree to begin tomorrow](#) (Hokkoku Shimbun)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on August 2, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Ishiba to announce candidacy for LDP leadership, says '95% ready'](#) (The Mainichi)

- [Nikai seeks another term as LDP secretary-general by backing Abe's third win as party leader](#) (Yomiuri)

**OPINION
POLLS**

- [Highlights of the July 2018 Jiji Press Public Opinion Poll](#) (Jiji Press Public Opinion Poll Bulletin)
- [Trend in average cabinet support rate, Saitama University Social Survey Research Center](#) (Saitama University Social Survey Research Center)

**OKINAWA
LOCAL PRESS**

[New U.S. military commander arrives in Okinawa](#)

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo reported on the III Marine Expeditionary Force change of command ceremony held at Camp Courtney on Thursday, noting that Lt. Gen. Nicholson turned over his duties as the commanding general of III MEF to Lt. Gen. Eric Smith, whose previous command was the 1st Marine Division. The new commander reportedly met with the local press after the event and emphasized the importance of maintaining the Marine presence in the southernmost prefecture irrespective of the deescalated tension on the Korean Peninsula. "We constantly train and are prepared to respond to various crises," he said. "Our presence is not only for the purpose of dealing with North Korea." As for mishaps and misconduct involving U.S. military aircraft and personnel, the general reportedly said he will take responsibility for all the activities of personnel and is committed to maintaining high levels of safety.
