



**NORTH KOREA  
TODAY**



GOODFRIENDS



Weekly Newsletter

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["Good Friends" desires to help the North Korean people through humanistic point of view, and publishes "North Korea Today" describing the way the North Korean people live as real as possible. We at Good Friends also hope to be a bridge between the North Korean people and the world.]

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[Hot Topics]

***Pyongyang* Residents, while Concerned about Kim Jong-il's Health, Refrain from Speculating Openly**

Residents of *Pyongyang* have recently been speculating about the exact condition of Mr. Kim's health. *Jung Ho-Sung* (alias), who is in his 50s and lives in Central District, *Pyongyang*, said that during a July 8th public memorial for Kim Il-sung, the founder of North Korea, the General looked frail. His appearance shocked residents and set off a wave of speculation about the severity of what was wrong with him. But people still refrain from talking openly about it.

A mid-level official predicted that the rumor would not spread quickly, saying that since the details of the General's health are a closely-guarded secret, those who circulate a rumor about his health could be arrested by security agents for committing a political offense. With the risk of arrest in mind, people talk about the health issue only in confidence with others they trust.

**"It Would Be a Great Mistake to Think That We Will Surrender," A High-Ranking Officer in *Pyongyang* Remarks on the Tense Situation**

A high-ranking officer in *Pyongyang* expressed concern about the continuing conflict with the international community. At the same time, he expressed confidence that his nation will forge ahead successfully. Set forth below is his remark on the current situation:

"The current situation of the country is very tense, both inside and outside. The American imperialists consider our Republic to be a thorn in their side. Since we have succeeded in launching the satellite and proceeding with the nuclear test, they are raving mad in their desire to exterminate the Republic. The American imperialist conspires with its satellite nations to pass a full-scale resolution on sanctions against our Republic so they can blockade us and bring us to our knees. However, it would be a great mistake to think that we will surrender.

No hunter will throw away his gun because the beast growls ferociously. We will accomplish that which lies before us no matter what our opponents may say.

The Japanese and South Korean puppets have made a declaration of war, proclaiming a preemptive strike on us. In particular, the *Lee Myung-bak* government has declared that it will join the Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation Security Initiative, taking the lead in sanctioning and blockading us, cutting off all of our support, attempting to trace or inspect our ships, and revealing its anti-national nature while engaging in provocative acts.

As the international environment has become undeniably tense, we have judged that a war may arise at any time, so we have invalidated the cease-fire agreement and taken a battle position. The People's Army is fully prepared to fight hard and to win pursuant to the order of the Department of the General Staff. We have created widespread countermeasures around the front lines of the 38th parallel and the coastline area in order to defend against acts of espionage by satellite and high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft. Also, by reinforcing the defenses of important bridges, caves and emplacements, we have thoroughly made arrangements and plans in preparation for several possible circumstances. Even if there is a preemptive strike, we can avoid a serious loss as most of the important war materiel and supplies are held in reserve in deep underground tunnels or in mountain caves. If foreign nations dare to provoke a war, our full-scale strike targets will be the American imperialist and its satellite nations, and our blows will completely annihilate our enemies."

### **Some High-Ranking Officers in *Pyongyang* Express a Sense of Betrayal by China**

A feeling of dissatisfaction toward the Chinese Party and the government is growing among high-ranking officials in *Pyongyang*. One high-ranking officer pointed out that the feeling is due to how "China tolerated and passed the full-scale resolution on sanctions against North Korea when the American imperialists and the satellite nations raised the resolution in the UN. China gave its support after North Korea conducted its satellite launch and nuclear test." Officials often say: "Since North Korea is like a forward guard post of Russia or China due to its geographical location and strategic viewpoint, I believed they would not want North Korea to fail or become isolated, but I must have been under an illusion." Some officials said that "although it is true that China has provided tremendous assistance to North Korea and it may be acting to protect itself from global public opinion, it is also true that China has changed."

They reproached China for operating under capitalistic management and production methods and for trying to compromise with American imperialism rather than opposing it in the international arena. "Slogans like 'North Korea and China are blood brothers,' 'Comrades in the trench,' or 'May the friendship between North Korea and China be forever' have become things of the past," said the officials.

### **[Food]**

#### **Food Rations to Farm Workers in *Hwanghae* Province Discontinued**

In many parts of *Hwanghae* Province, food rations to farm workers have halted in turn negatively impacting agricultural production throughout the region and

increasing the food burden on farmers. According to residents from *Sariwon* in North *Hwanghae* Province who were mobilized to work in collective farms, "We had hard time working there because we had insufficient food. Even farmers rarely participated in the farm work." *Jo Hyunye* (alias, 40s) said that "Once the rice rations were cut, many farm workers moved to open markets to participate in businesses leaving behind only the weak elderly people to work on the farms."

Farmers from *Baechun*, *Chungdan*, and *Yeonan* Counties in South *Hwanghae* Province said that this was the first time the additional rations for the mobilized people were cut. Due to the army's increasing demand for food provisions, the farmers had to give up corn and potatoes harvested from their own vegetable gardens. The citizens said that "This is worse than the period under Japanese colonial rule." Furthermore, the food shortage is so serious that it even impacts senior beneficiaries and retired soldiers in *Haeandong*, *Haeju* City in South *Hwanghae* Province. Since these elderly people are forced to survive on only watered-down porridge twice a day, their futures are bleak, and it is becoming more difficult for them to sustain their lives.

### **Elderly Residents at *Shinpo* Nursing Home Fed Ground Maize Porridge**

In *Shinpo* Nursing Home located in the *Yanghwa-ri*, *Shinpo* City in South *Hamgyong* Province, porridge made of ground maize is distributed as a meal at most three times a day. An official revealed that the porridge is mixed with leftovers from polished rice from the local grain enterprise. Nevertheless, only the elderly who can move around independently receive three daily meals while those who cannot go to the toilet themselves receive two and the elderly who cannot move at all are fed only once daily.

The heightening severity of the food crisis has led to a rapid increase in the death rate for the elderly. Last December, there were 110 residents at the *Shinpo* Nursing Home, which has since been reduced to 70 as of this May. Forty residents have passed away within a period of less than six months. The city government distributed 50kg of honey to the nursing home before the medical check-ups on May 5th.

An official said "Only meritorious elderly can go to the *Shinpo* Nursing Home and it is known to be one of the best nursing homes in the county. It's an executive nursing home that used to have plentiful supplies of meat, fish and rice. One cannot imagine the conditions elsewhere provided that this executive nursing home is facing such harsh conditions due to the food crisis."

### **[Economy]**

#### **Merchants in *Hwasung* County are Grateful to Earn Even 1,000 Won a Day**

The merchants in *Hwasung* County of Northern *Hamgyong* Province are concerned that their businesses are continuing to slow down. Due to excessive market regulations by the *Hwasung* City Party, many have complained that they are fortunate to be making even 1,000 *Won* a day. Moreover, there is intense competition from the number of merchants that are crowding the market in excess of the allowed 200 sales booths. The items that are often sold include grain oil, wild

edible greens and confectionaries to name a few. *Lee Soon-Ock* (50s), who sells confectionaries says, "With 1,000 *Won* a day I can barely buy one-kilogram of corn. It's been a long time since I've eaten corn rice. Business has been bad because of all the training for the 150-day battle and the restrictions on the items we can sell."

*Jang Youngsook* (40s) complained about her hardships saying, "The City Party collects a rent amounting to 300 *Won* for each spot. Since there are around 200 spots in the market, the City makes about 60,000 *Won* a day, or approximately 2,000,000 *Won* a month. The Corps uses the money for various business expenses, car fuel or for throwing receptions for higher-ranking officials. It would be great if they reduced their spending, lowered the rent on the market space, or even got rid of it all together. Although, none of these are realistic demands, shouldn't the City Party at least try to consider these suggestions for the sake of the people they represent?"

### **The Heechun Power Plant in *Jagang* Province Will Be Completed Seven Years Ahead of Schedule**

The *Heechun* power plant in *Jagang* Province, which is currently under construction, will be completed in 2012--seven years ahead of schedule. In April, the North Korean People's Army has agreed to provide assistance in overseeing the completion of the plant; each Corps had sent a large number of soldiers to the construction site. In addition to these efforts, the General Consulate of North Korea in *Shenyang*, China had collected funds from *Josun* international trading companies from three provinces in Northeast China and had also ordered the purchase of several excavators to aid in the construction of the plant.

### **[Politics]**

#### **Former Leader of Public Prosecutors Found to Have Criticized Other Officials**

There was breaking news in *Hyejin* City, *Rygang* Province as the identity of the person who wrote letters about officials' illegal conduct in the Province Party was revealed. The anonymous writer was the former leader of public prosecutors. He wrote over 12 times to the province party without including a sender's address. In August 2008 when he built and tried to sell a house, his illegal business was reported to the central party, and he lost his position. He believed that the secretary in charge of the province party and officials of the party reported his illegal conduct, and he was planning to pay them back for this loss and finally did. He was not satisfied with these anonymous letters, so he let his wife put leaflets outlining the illegal behavior of these officials on the streets or places where people get together frequently. Last June 19, he was arrested by security officials. In a week, the officials expelled him and his family to the police department in *Oro* County, South *Hamgyong* Province.

#### ***Chungjin* City Expels Temporary Workers to Join 150-Day Battle in Their Hometown**

Officials in *Chungjin*, North *Hamgyong* Province are investigating part-time fishermen who catch squid. The fishermen are being sent back to their hometown. The Party of North *Hamgyong* Province ordered these people to return to their registered places and explained the reason. Local officials said, "To make money, these temporary

fishermen who came from other districts do not go back to their hometown even during the 150-day-battle period. They do not participate in any work for their nation."

In this context, the *Chungjin* Police Department is investigating harbor villages such as *Ryunjin* of *Chungam* District where temporary fishermen usually live together. Sixty students of the Politics College who are on field training for police officers in *Chungjin* since July 5 began this assignment as their project for the 150-day battle. These temporary fishermen who sold all of their property to come to *Chungjin* and fish squid during the high season were disappointed. *Cha, Myung-cheol* (in his 40s) from *Yeonsan* County, North *Hamgyong* Province, said of his difficulties, "I catch squid at the risk of my life during the season, and I can barely live for one year with what we earn during this season. We are living in poverty and among the poorest. How can we live if they expel us?"

## [Society]

### ***Ahnju* Police Arrested Vendors for Trading Stolen Goods**

Ten vendors were arrested in early July in South *Pyongan* Province. They allegedly stole goods from factories and public enterprises and traded stolen goods illegally. The items they traded include machinery, repair tools, power wire, automobile parts, medical devices, and medicine. *Ahnju* City safety bureau began a surprise raid around markets because the number of thefts increased in almost every institute and public enterprise.

*Gu Hyung-chul* (20's) said, "Because of increased thefts, they have tightened security and run night-guard teams. A junior-high school was robbed last week, and valuable experiment supplies such as a microscope, a stuffed pheasant and a sea gull were stolen. The thief even took the curtains from the classroom windows. On the same day, somebody broke into a village office and took office supplies, leaving it all messed up." The police searched for evidence of theft and arrested some vendors. The investigation for the stolen goods is under way. An official at the police office said, "We are determined to eliminate such criminals and criminal groups."

### **More People Consume Alcohol Under Higher Financial and Mental Stress During 150-Day Battle**

Those who want alcohol have increased during the 150-day battle. One restaurant waitress said, "Although the sale of alcoholic drinks is restricted, more and more people ask for them these days. Originally we were not allowed to sell alcoholic drinks in our restaurant, but we are selling them anyway. Expensive ones are more popular." *Kim Hye-Eun* (30's), who makes and sells alcohol at home, said that her business is going well. "People are mobilized to work in collective farms and get stressed out due to the hard labor. Maybe that is why I get more customers than usual," she said.

*Pyongyang* seems to be in the same situation even though it is not in a rural area. Taverns and bars around universities such as *Kim Il-Sung* University are packed with

students and the school staff everyday. An official said, "I think people have been financially and mentally stressed out so much due to the worst economy ever since the Arduous March (the massive famine of the mid 1990's) and tried to relieve their stress by drinking alcohol. Now many of them seemed to be addicted to it. It is really serious especially during the 150-day battle when they get extremely stressed."

### [Women/Children/Education]

#### ***Kkotjebi* (Street kid) Stealing Coal Sustain Severe Injuries**

This past July, *kkotjebies* in the *Songpyong* District of *Chungjin* City, North *Hamgyong* Province, were seriously injured after an accident in an attempt to steal coal. The seven orphans climbed on top of a coal train headed for the *Gimchaek* Iron Mill when one of them fell off. The nine-year-old boy lost his balance and fell to the ground when the train suddenly started to shake. After the train stopped, adults nearby ran over to help the boy who couldn't use his limbs because of the damage they sustained. Fortunately he survived, despite getting caught underneath the wheels of the train. At the time of the accident, bystanders were heartbroken when it was realized he would lose the use of his arms and legs permanently.

### [Accidents]

#### **Enlisted Soldiers and Cadets Fight over Potatoes**

July 2<sup>nd</sup>, an incident of violence among soldiers over potatoes in *Jurye-dong*, *Pyongsung* City of South *Pyongan* Province. Cadets based in the vicinity of *Pyongsung* City and the enlisted soldiers of a nearby army base went to the same farm to obtain potatoes. Quarreling over the available harvest, the dispute turned violent, resulting in serious injuries to forty people. In another incident, three guards of a vegetable farm that belonged to the military academy stole supplies. The guards, who were students of the military academy, stole three rabbits and 30kg of rice from farmers' houses to throw a party for one of their friends' birthday. When the farmers reported the theft to the military academy, the dean expelled the three students for impairing the military-civilian relationship, sending them to a labor training center for a six-month term.



Good Friends: Center for Peace, Human Rights and Refugees



## Please become a good friend of the Good Friends

### Good Friends– An International NGO for Peace, Human Rights and Refugees

Good Friends provides relief works for international refugees to become all lives' friends, peace movement to fundamentally resolve disputes and conflicts that human beings face, and human rights movement to protect human rights

Good Friends has been providing information on food shortages in North Korea, raising funds for humanitarian assistance, dispatching activists to national border areas between China and DPRK and having them investigate local situations, and publishing reports on food shortages in North Korea.

Now Good Friends USA intends to improve humanitarian and human rights situation of North Korean residents and to inform this situation to the international community by

- 1) collecting information on severe food shortages and bad situations in health, education, and transportation and providing them to other humanitarian aids organizations so that they can support North Korean people effectively.
- 2) investigating current situations of North Korean refugees in China, and providing protections and aids for them.
- 3) assessing human rights violations occurring in North Korea, informing them to the international societies, and requesting the North Korean government for improvement on human rights and living conditions.

Also, Good Friends USA publishes the newsletter North Korea Today (English edition) to inform the international public.

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