



GOODFRIENDS



Weekly Newsletter

No. 314 Hot Topics December 2009

[“Good Friends” aims to help the North Korean people from a humanistic point of view and publishes “North Korea Today” describing the way the North Korean people live as accurately as possible. We at Good Friends also hope to be a bridge between the North Korean people and the world.]

[Hot Topics No. 314]

New Flu is Spreading Rapidly in *Sinuiju*

Sinuiju City Party Official, “Heard the death toll hit forty, but there must be more.”

Strict Inspection of Sanitary Disinfection Certificate at Every Checkpoint in North Hamgyong Province

Still No News about the Price Announcement after Currency Revaluation

[Hot Topics No. 314]

New Flu is Spreading Rapidly in *Sinuiju*

Since the beginning of November the number of people infected by the new flu is increasing rapidly in *Sinuiju*, North *Pyongan* Province. In *Sinuiju*, cases of people having fever and collapsing after getting infected by the flu are reported everyday. According to one medical worker, “All the patients can barely open their eyes and suffer from headache and high fever, which hit higher than 39°C. I visited one apartment complex, and patients from several households were suffering from the same symptoms. It looks like the new flu is spreading much faster than I thought.” There is no medicine for H1N1 at the hospital. As such, they are prescribing an antibiotic called Revosacine as a substitute measure. It is a Chinese medicine developed in Beijing reported to be effective. So, everyone is looking for this medicine. However, this medicine is already sold out in *Sinuiju*. The lower class people are suffering immensely from lack of medicine. Meanwhile, on December 4, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education issued an order of early winter break to schools throughout the country based on the number 1 report.

***Sinuiju* City Party Official, “Heard the death toll hit forty, but there must be more.”**

According to a *Sinuiju* City Party official, North *Pyongan* Province, he was informed that more than forty people died from H1N1 in several cities and counties in the province, including *Sinuiju*, and

Pyonsung in South *Pyongan* Province. However, he stated that the death toll would be more than double the reported number. He added that “the number probably would have been reduced to avoid announcing bad news in consideration of the public sentiment.”

Strict Inspection of Sanitary Disinfection Certificate at Every Checkpoint in North Hamgyong Province

North Hamgyong Province has issued an order saying, “Maintain strict control over passenger traffic to other provinces, cities, and counties” to each city, county, and social agencies. Starting from December 10, they will issue sanitary disinfection certificate to those who received vaccination, and allow passage after inspecting the certificate.

Still No News about the Price Announcement after Currency Revaluation

Public notice on the prices of goods and services was supposed to be announced at 5pm on Wednesday, December 9. However, the announcement has not been made yet. People are feeling uneasy because the official notice of the prices are continued to be delayed. The prices have gone up a lot compared to the beginning of currency reform. The prices in Sinuiju show that on November 28 the price of rice was 1,700 *Won* and it was 17 *Won* on December 2 which is still the same price after the conversion to new currency. However, today’s price is 40 *Won* which is more than double. Corn price, which was 7 *Won* (700 *Won* in old currency), has gone up to 25 *Won* which is about 3 and a half times higher. Wheat flour price has gone up twice as much from 15 *Won* (1,500 *Won* in old currency) to 30 *Won*. The price of egg has quadrupled from 2 *Won* per egg to 8 *Won* today. The merchants think that the prices are going up rapidly because of psychological factors contributed by the delay in the public notice of the prices. 🌸

Table: Recent Food Prices in Sinuiju (Unit: NKW/kg)

	Nov. 28	Dec. 2	Dec. 9
Rice	1,700	17 (1,700)*	40 (4,000)
Corn	700	7 (700)	25 (2,500)
Wheat Flour	1,500	15 (1,500)	30 (3,000)
Egg	250	2 (200)	8 (800)

Price in old currency is in parenthesis



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.

Currently, Good Friends is making efforts to improve humanitarian and human rights situation of North Korean people and to inform this situation to the international community by:

- 1) Collecting information on food shortages, public health conditions, education, the basic necessities situations and inform humanitarian organizations so that they can support North Korean people effectively.
- 2) Reporting the current human rights situation in North Korea where rights duly protected by law are being violated; assessing incidents of human rights violations in the process of arrest, punishment, and imprisonment and informing international communities; and requesting that the North Korean Government act to improve human rights.
- 3) Investigating the current situations of North Korean refugees in China, and providing protections and aid for them and their children in particular.

For these purposes, Good Friends USA publishes the weekly newsletter North Korea Today (English edition) to inform the international public.

You can make a difference by donating to **Good Friends USA, Inc.** Contributions to the Good Friends USA, Inc. (a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code) are tax deductible.

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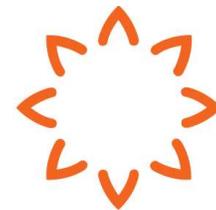
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