[“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.]

[Hot Topics]

So-called Policy of Ban on Small Plot Farming: Little More Than a Mere Name
Protest at Soonchun by a Group of Women Prohibited to Peddle by Age

[Food]

Hoeryung City’s Uncertain Food Ration Outlook in August

[Economy]

Instructions to Each Farm: “Prepare for the Localized Heavy Rain”
Weeding Progress Slowly Because Workers are Hungry
Army Mobilized for Weeding in Yunbakbul, South Hwanghae Province
Ministry of Construction Orders Soonchun Cement Factory to Complete Renovation by End of July

[Politics]

Reinforced Surveillance on Families of Defectors to South Korea
Defiant Graffiti Message—“A Police Station that Oppresses People”—Causes Uproar in Yeonsa County

[Society]
Standard of Life is Unchanged Despite Claims of Growth in National Power
Soldiers Arrested after Selling Wandering Cow

[Women/Children/Education]
*Chungjin* Instructed Double, Triple Surveillance of *Kkotjebi*

[Accidents]
Explosion at Gasoline Storage Inside *Yoduk* Prison

[Hot Topics]
**So-called Policy of Ban on Small Plot Farming: Little More Than a Mere Name**
As of June, instructions were issued from every city and county party to prohibit small plot farming. However, the orders have not been followed. *Kim Hak-rim* (40s), *Anjoo* City, *South Pyongan* Province said, “Since last year, small plot farming has been banned. It was announced that all the small plot farms would be confiscated by the cooperative farms nearby. However, I have not seen anyone without a small plot farm. I would guess that there are more small plot farms than last year, not less. Poor residents who do not get any food rations rely mainly on the small plot farms. Giving up the small plot farm is tantamount to giving up life.” *Baek Jong-hye* (40s), *Danchun* City, made similar comments. “Forest supervisors are everywhere, but their presence is in name only. They are powerless. Nobody pays attention to their instructions to abandon small plots. This is true, not only to the ordinary residents but also to the party leaders. The party leaders have a hard time understanding the instructions about abandoning small plots and are even hostile to the instructions,” he said. A party leader in *Anjoo* City said, “No inspections could prevent fires on the hills. Nor could they prevent new crops of corn, soybean and red bean. Inspections are useless when the residents are adept at secretly planting and growing.”

**Protest at *Soonchun* by a Group of Women Prohibited to Peddle by Age**
*Last June 30* in *Soonchun* City, *South Pyongan* Province, officials made announcements regarding specific regulations in market management to a group of women prohibited to peddle because of their age. When the officials were emphasizing that women under the legal age to sell should not be in the market, the gathering was interrupted by shouts of protest here and there. *Gye Myung-hee* (age 39), who was present at the gathering, said, “Women, as if organized by someone, started shouting curses at the officials. Some woman shouted, ‘How could my family be fed if I don’t come to the market to peddle?’ I don’t remember who said it, but the officials at the gathering seemed to be surprised.” *Han Jung-sook* (40s) said of the atmosphere, “Every woman without exception requested to be assigned a job if prohibited to peddle. On that day, all everyone was talking about was ‘We need a way to make a living if we are prohibited to peddle.’ This is how high the level of complaints against the specific regulations in market management became.”

[Food]
**Hoeryung City’s Uncertain Food Ration Outlook in August**

Food rationing in Hoeryung city in North Hamgyong Province is not promising. In June last year’s harvested whole corn was distributed. Mine Machinery Factory and the 2nd class unit distributed a mixture with a ratio of 7 to 3 unhusked rice and whole corn. In July each factory and enterprise distributed new crop potatoes that they harvested from their subsidiary farm. However, the food source for August food rationing is not yet confirmed. Some factories and enterprises already notified their employees saying, “Assume that you will not receive food rations in August, and you need to live on whatever you have in hand so adjust your food consumption accordingly.” The city party made a new policy that says, “In order to guarantee a successful outcome for the 150-day battle the city party needs to release food rations in early August even if that means releasing entire city party’s food storage. On the other hand, in April the Hoeryung city government announced that “Early month food rations will be distributed from the month of April to July, potatoes will be distributed in August and September, and newly harvested grains will be distributed in October.”

**[Economy]**

**Instructions to Each Farm: “Prepare for the Localized Heavy Rain”**

As the July rainy season starts, the Provincial authorities, including the South Pyongan and South Hwanghae Provinces, instructed each farm to “prepare for the localized torrential rainfall.” It said, “The successful farming of this year will open the door to a Strong and Prosperous Nation. Contingency plans should be prepared for the farms at risk, and every effort should be made to prevent any damage to or loss of grains. After heavy downpour in the week of July 7 through 15, the South Pyongan Province immediately ordered damage recovery actions.

**Weeding Progress Slowly Because Workers are Hungry**

The weeding season began in July, but the progress has been slow. Ko Seung-chul (50s), who lives in Yangduk, South Pyongan Province, said, “Workers don’t have the energy because they haven’t eaten properly due to food crisis, so they are forcing themselves to work. It is common to see most of the workers lying on their backs unless the higher officials or managers urge them to work.” He also said that the situation would be similar in every farm. Kang Bok-hee (40s), who lives in the North Hwanghae Province, said, “The Work Unit 2 at our farm gives us a specific amount of work for the day without letting the officials know about it. If we finish our portion early, we are allowed to leave. However, when we check the field where the workers said they finished clearing weeds, we can still see weeds in the middle of the field because they only clear weeds on the edges of the farm”. The officials worry greatly because they can’t find a way to clear the weeds even with a propaganda campaign during the weeding season.

**Army Mobilized for Weeding In Yunbakbul, South Hwanghae Province**

Beginning June 25, soldiers were dispatched to South Hwanghae Province, including Yunan County, Baechun County, Chungdan County and Yunbakbul, to help out farms. They are
regular soldiers in active duty from the regiments of the 4th Army Corp. They built temporary shelters and infirmaries about 20-30 Li (7.86km-11.79km) away from the farm. The commanders and divisional commanders of the 4th Army Corps and the political members commanded the units to work until July 30, saying, “Our society is working hard during the 150-day Battle and the army cannot sit still, doing nothing.” To prevent any harm to the farms, the commanding officers are to oversee all their units and inspect for any inappropriate activities. Every day there is a meeting for the commanding officers and the political party members were repeatedly requested to do a successful job. They issued strict warning that, “If there is any activity that is harmful to the Army/Civilian relationship, we are going to punish all soldiers, their squad leaders and the political commanders within the unit.” Therefore it was decided to dispatch soldiers with their own rice and salt. However, farmers don’t seem too keen on military help, as it is difficult for them to secure the supplemental foods for the soldiers. A farmer commented, “It is better to have factory workers, enterprise associates or students for the weed-clearing combat.” They do not require as much attention as soldiers and there are fewer burdens.

Ministry of Construction Orders Soonchun Cement Factory to Complete Renovation by End of July
Ministry of Construction (MOC) ordered Soonchun Cement factory to complete renovation by the end of July. The workers from MOC came to the factory on June 27 and emphasized repeatedly that; “We must finish renovation by the end of July and start producing cements using the expanded facilities on August 1. We must construct residential houses for industrialized cities on the West coast during the 150-day Battle period and secure cements needed for various types of construction.” Factories responded by encouraging the workers, “Let’s start a battle to finish this as early as possible.”
At the same time, one staff member from Pyongyang said, “The biggest cement factory in our country is Soonchun cement factory. This factory produces 3,000,000 tons of cement annually. The quality of the cement is the best, so we used it to construct our 50MW nuclear reactor in Youngbyun and 200MW nuclear reactor in Taechun. Despite such a good reputation, the condition of the facility is very poor -- the windows have vinyl or flax fabric instead of glass. We’ve been talking about renovation for ten years, but it’s just begun. As the facilities are too dilapidated, we are almost rebuilding it. This is not supposed to be a work of MOC.”

[Politics]
Reinforced Surveillance on Families of Defectors to South Korea
The National Security Agency instructed its officials at a meeting that, “families of defectors to South Korea among the residents along the national border area must be placed under strict surveillance.” During the meeting it was emphasized that “Even the most trivial treasonous act threatening the security of the Great Leader and the construction of a strong and prosperous nation will not be tolerated. This year, the security of the great General and the border must not be overlooked at any moment. Anyone who commits a treasonous act will be punished.” The agency specifically pointed out the families of defectors. The agency
expanded the boundaries of its surveillance to include even the workplaces of each member of the family that was left behind by the defector so that any incident of spying or bribery could be discovered.”

One of the officers of the Central Party said, “As the 150-day battle progresses nationwide, the National Security Agency must also produce some results, but the rumor is that it has not produced much so far. Since the National Security Agency too, must go through recapitulation at the end of the 150-day battle, it attempts to watch the national border area with greater vigilance.” From January to June of last year in North Hamgyong Province, approximately 20 people were arrested for having some connections with South Korea and among them; about 15 people were sentenced to life imprisonment.

**Defiant Graffiti Message—“A Police Station that Oppresses People”—Causes Uproar in Yeonsa County**

Last June, graffiti was discovered near the Yeonsa County police station in North Hamgyong Province one day after police officers fined 50 peddlers who were conducting business outside of the market and confiscated their goods. The peddlers who could not afford to pay the fine begged for mercy at the police station, but they were each told that the goods would not be returned without paying the penalty. Several peddlers have begged until the closing hour, but it was no use. Then the graffiti was discovered the following morning. Using a sharp nail, someone had written on the walls of the hallway in the police station, ‘A Police Station that Oppresses People’. Han Kyung-Koo (Pseudonym, 50s) who saw the graffiti in the police station said, “several Xs were also drawn on the red pentagram which is in the center of the iron gate at the entrance of the police station. ‘A Police Station that Squeezes the Blood of the People’ was written next to it.” In response, the security authorities immediately began searching for the culprit by summoning all the peddlers who came to retrieve the goods the day before and interrogated them. The security authorities have encouraged the suspects to examine the handwriting and to report the culprit if he is known. However, as of July 13th, they still do not have any clues as to who committed the violation.

[Society]

**Standard of Life is Unchanged Despite Claims of Growth in National Power**

Laborers partaking in the 150-day battle use every spare moment during their workday to talk amongst themselves mostly about the problems they face in their everyday lives. “In light of the nuclear experiments and the missile-launchings, it is claimed that the national power is growing and we are on the cusp of entering the world stage as a powerful nation; but why haven’t our lives changed at all?” Residents in Hamju County of South Hamgyong Province said. “Every cloud has a silver lining but there appears to be no end to our hardships. We can’t see the shining future at all.” Voices are rising in complaints such as these. Some have even claimed that, “This world is for those who have money and power. Powerless people like us are dying with nobody there to care. However, we carry on despite the hard labor, constantly breaking out into sweat thinking only about how we are to feed
our children tomorrow.” pointing out further that the wealthy and the powerful become richer through illegal means.

**Soldiers Arrested after Selling Wandering Cow**
Soldiers were arrested after selling a wandering cow in Whasung County, North Hamgyong Province. There is a company in charge of military materials in Hawaii-li, Hwasung County that is reportedly experiencing food shortages. Two soldiers in that company found a lost cow towards the end of June. They had no clue about whether it belonged to a nearby farm or to an individual, so they finally decided to alert a platoon leader who ordered them to put on civilian clothes and to sell the cow, later splitting the proceeds. However, one of the soldiers, who had ambitions to become a party member, handed his part of the money to the company commander and confessed to him about the incident. The company commander then notified the high-ranking officers about the case. Later the platoon leader and the two soldiers were arrested.

**[Women/Children/Education]**

**Chungjin Instructed Double, Triple Surveillance of Kkotjebi**
Chungjin City, North Hamgyong Province, issued an order that during the 150-day Battle period, each organization should keep double, triple surveillance on Kkotjebis (homeless people). Subsequently, police officers, inspectors of railroad, the Anti-Socialist Conscience Investigators of Youth Union and the regulators on the market operations have gathered Kkotjebis and sent them to Welfare Institutions or their hometown. Specifically, young Kkotjebis are sent to Welfare Institutions or Elementary Institutions while adult Kkotjebis are sent to the mobilization program of companies or enterprises coordinated with the Provincial Department of Labor. In addition, Chungjin city first sends Kkotjebis who are not from Chungjin to travelers gathering center, then after verifying their original hometown, conveys them to the police station in that area. The Province Party announced, “During the 150-day Battle, even a single Kkotjebi or hoodlum must not be in Chungin. At the end of 150-day Battle, not only Chungjin but the whole country will be evaluated based on the number of Kkotjebis supervised and relocated.” Some officials grumbled saying, “Are there so many Kkotjebis that the Central Party has to issue orders all over the country?”

**[Accidents]**

**Explosion at Gasoline Storage Inside Yoduk Prison**
In early June a big explosion occurred at the gasoline storage inside Yoduk County prison. At the time prison people were unloading the gasoline transported from oil production facility in Baekma County, North Pyongan Province. The gasoline was transported in about 60 drums carried by regular trucks rather than in a tanker truck. The Support Bureau employees were all gone for the day when the gasoline arrived late at night. So, they mobilized 5 prison inmates for the work. Even though they summoned the inmates in cooperation with the correctional officer who was on night duty it was a violation of the prison rule. The accident occurred when the work was almost over. A gasoline drum exploded all of a sudden and other gasoline drums got on fire one after another and
exploded, turning the whole place into an inferno in no time. Two inmates died because of fire and two other inmates were shot to death by correction officers. The receiving employee at the scene and the correctional officer on night duty were in coma with 3rd degree burn in the whole body, but the receiving employee died soon after. Two Support Bureau freight trucks burned completely and twenty-two tons of whole corn harvested last year was damaged because of the accident. The correctional officer, who barely survived the accident, is going to be executed. The prison authorities alleged that the eldest inmates (age 56) among the chosen five spilled a large amount of gasoline and ignited the fire. He is an inmate in solitary confinement and he committed arson because of depression and vengeance after repeated extensions of his sentence. The police reported that he set the fire on purpose to commit a suicide as he thought he wouldn’t be able to get released from the prison. According to the witnesses, while moving the gasoline drums to the storage the arsonist hit the drums with a hammer as if he tried to make sparks. One of the witnesses said, “When people tried to stop him there was a spark and fire erupted. The correctional officer shot him with a gun, but the gasoline spill on the floor got on fire and spread to other drums. They closed the door of the storage right away when the fire broke out. However, fire erupted with an explosion. The fire was extinguished barely by blocking the entrance of the tunnel with a storage tank and by putting soil on top. Fortunately, it rained a lot that night.”

In the mean time, the National Security Agency emphasized that the control on the inmates will be further reinforced in prisons around the country and the prison rules to be observed more strictly. At the same time, they will dispatch inspection teams to each prison in order to check on the status of prison management and operation.

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

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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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