[“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. 309]
Cabinet Resolution on Currency Revaluation Issued
Price of One Full Measure (Doe) of Rice Went up to 300,000 won at One Point in Sinuiju
One Full Measure (Doe) of Rice is Traded at 250,000 won in Chulsan County North Pyongan Province
Residents Close Their Mouth When They Face Strangers
Public Notice Banning Foreign Currency was Announced in Pyongyang

[Hot Topics No. 309]
Cabinet Resolution on Currency Revaluation Issued
The cabinet resolution No.423 of currency revaluation has been issued. No.423-1 is for "stabilization and improvement of people’s livelihood" and No.423-2 is for "establishment of economic management system and order. In the meantime, the authorities handed down an order requesting the maximum punishment to be given to those who violate the rules of the currency exchange. Unlike the past currency reform in 1992, the implementation of the currency reform is executed under total control of the Party this time.

Price of One Full Measure (Doe) of Rice Went up to 300,000 won at One Point in Sinuiju
On December 1, one full measure (Doe) of rice was once traded at 300,000 won at Namsong market in Sinuiju, North Pyongan Province. The farmers from the nearby countryside came
to **Namsong** market and sold the rice at 300,000 **won**. Beside, a pair of cotton-filled cloth was traded at 250,000 **won**, one bottle of bean oil at 250,000 **won**, and 1 kg of sweet potato at 60,000 **won**. The price for 100 lumps of coal was $4 USD, a bundle of 10 ballpoint pen size candles was sold at $1 USD. Those were the arbitrary prices that were set by merchants based on the market exchange rate of 400,000 **won** for 1 USD previous day. One kilogram of corn noodle was traded with 2 kg of corns instead of 1.3 kg previously. At **Chaeha** market in **Sinuiju** prices of goods skyrocketed as 1 kg of pig foot was traded at 100,000 **won**, one pack of cigarette at 10,000 **won**, one cabbage at 5,000 **won**, and 1 kg of candy at 10,000 **won** respectively. There were many people who came with a sack full of money and buy up things indiscriminately. Signs of depression are apparent on people’s face, yet nobody is speaking up. Women laborers who work hard at the bottom of society can only weep in disbelief. In one occasion, an old lady who sells drawers on the street passed out at the news of currency revaluation. The elderly woman worked very hard to support her family and saved every penny by not spending any money on herself and the amount of money she has allegedly saved was as much as 4,000,000 **won**.

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**One Full Measure (Doe) of Rice is Traded at 250,000 **won** in Chulsan County North Pyongan Province**

The marketplace at **Chulsan-eup, Chulsan** County, North **Pyongan** Province was relatively calm until December 1. However, today (December 2) farmers from the nearby farm village, apparently being aware of the news, were selling one full measure (**doe**) of rice at 250,000 **won**. They set aside 100,000 **won** for currency exchange and used the rest of money to buy clothing. The farmers who did not have a chance to make money were busy selling rice in order to get 100,000 **won** for currency exchange.

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**Residents Close Their Mouth When They Face Strangers**

Security agents throughout the country went into a stakeout mode as residents come up with various ways of disposing the currencies that they can neither discard nor keep, and some of the agents are clandestinely gathering intelligence on people’s movement. The residents who noticed it are warning their close friends and family members saying “Close your mouth completely when you face strangers.” Kim Keum-sook (alias) who was selling fruits in **Chaeha** market in **Sinuiju** deplored that, “Residents are lamenting bitterly that this was the disaster they were talking about when people mentioned that this is the year of disaster. I would not complain about it if they provide food rations. Nothing can stop people after starving for three days. I get depressed when I think of a bleak future. My family will have to make living with 2,000 **won**. How am I going to do that?”

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**Public Notice Banning Foreign Currency was Announced in Pyongyang**

Today, the city of **Pyongyang** delivered a public notice banning foreign currency. All sales display booth including the appliances display stand at foreign goods stores became empty at the news. In some occasions, there were incidents of some rich people buying up all electric goods in panic. In **Sinuiju** there were people who went to Korean-Chinese people’s house and traded $100 USD with Chinese Yuan at 40% of market exchange rate. That’s
because of a rumor that Chinese Yuan will still be allowed while the U.S. Dollar will be banned. The wealthy are extremely anxious about how things will unfold.

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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.

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