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2. DPRK on ROK Naval Ship Sinking

Reuters ("N.KOREA URGES UN COUNCIL TO BACK NEW CHEONAN PROBE", 2010/06/30) reported that the DPRK has asked the U.N. Security Council to support its call for a new investigation into the sinking of a ROK warship in March that Seoul has blamed on Pyongyang. "We are of the view that the most reasonable way of settling this incident is that the north and south of Korea sit together to probe for the truth," DPRK U.N. Ambassador Sin Son-ho said in a letter to Mexican U.N. Ambassador Claude Heller, current president of the council. Sin said the 15-nation Security Council should "take measures that can lead the U.S. and South Korea to receive the inspection group of the National Defense Commission as already proposed by the DPRK, the victim, to help verify the 'investigation result' and find out the truth."

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3. ROK on Naval Ship Sinking

Chosun Ilbo ("CHEONAN INVESTIGATORS PRESENTED WRONG TORPEDO DIAGRAM ", 2010/06/30) reported that a team of experts that investigated the sinking of the Navy corvette Cheonan have admitted showing a diagram of the wrong DPRK torpedo when they presented their findings at a press conference on May 20. When queried by journalists about discrepancies between the CHT-02D torpedo that attacked the Cheonan and the one depicted in the diagram, investigators said that the pictured torpedo was of the model PT-97W and that the error was due to "a mix-up by a staff member while preparing for the presentation."

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("N. KOREAN ENVOY IN SOUTH AFRICA MAKES MENACING REMARK TO S. KOREAN ENVOY", 2010/06/30) reported that the DPRK's ambassador in South Africa hurled a menacing remark at his ROK counterpart earlier this month in anger over Seoul's push to censure the DPRK for the attack on a ROK warship, a diplomatic source said. "If (the South) keeps acting like this, we won't just let things pass, either," the DPRK's ambassador, An Hui-jong, told the ROK's Ambassador Kim Han-soo while holding Kim by the arm after following him into the bathroom, according to the source who requested anonymity. The DPRK's envoy "spoke in a threatening way," the source said.

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5. DPRK Espionage

Yonhap (Kim Eun-jung, "N.KOREAN SPIES GET 10-YEAR TERM FOR ASSASSINATION PLOT", Seoul, 2010/07/01) reported that a Seoul court Thursday sentenced two DPRK spies to a 10-year jail term for attempting to assassinate Hwang Jang-yop. The Seoul Central District Court said that confessions and statements from Kim and Tong regarding motives for their fake defections, planned crimes, infiltration routes and personal careers are all convincing enough to convict them of violating the National Security Law. "It is also acknowledged that the residence of Hwang is a classified information and the figures contacted by Kim and Tong in China are members of North Korea or other anti-state organizations," said the court. The court also noted that Hwang's defection to the ROK is "a symbol of South Korean system's superiority" and should they succeed in settling down here, it could have been a major threat to the safety of Hwang considering their military training.

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6. DPRK Government

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA TO INCREASE RULING PARTY'S POWER IN SEPTEMBER: REPORT", 2010/06/30) reported that the DPRK will expand the power of its ruling Workers' Party when it holds a meeting of core party delegates in September for the first time in 44 years, its official media said. The editorial by the party's daily newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, comes as the political body increasingly becomes the center of attention as the likeliest venue for leader Kim Jong-il's third son's rise to power. "The upcoming party delegate meeting is a show of comrade Kim Jong-il's will to bolster the leadership role and functions of the party," the paper said.

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7. Russo-DPRK Relations

Voice of Russia ("MOSCOW, PYONGYANG BOLSTER AGRICULTURAL TIES", 2010/06/30) reported that in a traditional show of warmer ties, DPRK-based Russian diplomats have paid a visit to an array of agricultural cooperatives on the outskirts of Pyongyang, where locals are now bracing for the 2010 harvest campaign. The Russian diplomats contributed to the matter by notably handing over several tanks of diesel fuel to the DPRK farmers.

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8. ROK Afghanistan Dispatch

Korea Times ("KOREA'S RECONSTRUCTION WORK IN AFGHANISTAN DUE", 2010/06/30) reported that the ROK's provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in Afghanistan will begin its official mission in Parwan Province in a commencement ceremony there today. A send-off ceremony for troops to protect civilian aid workers took place at a military base in Incheon. The troops are the main part of the 321-member "Ashena" unit tasked with guarding ROK reconstruction workers. The aid team will be composed of 90 reconstruction workers and 40 police officers.

Yonhap (Chang Jae-soon, "SOUTH KOREA PRT BASE IN AFGHANISTAN COMES UNDER ROCKET ATTACK", Seoul, 2010/07/01) reported that Unidentified assailants mounted a rocket attack on the construction site of the base of South Korea's reconstruction team in Afghanistan, but there were no casualties, the foreign ministry said Thursday. Two rockets were fired toward the construction site in Charikar, the capital of the northern Afghan province of Parwan, around 10:10 p.m. Security guards protecting the base fired back two rockets. Officials said that one of the two rockets fired by attackers landed about 200-300 meters away from the base, but it was unclear whether the other landed on the base.

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10. ROK Environment

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA LIKELY TO FACE WATER SHORTAGE BY 2060", 2010/06/30) reported that the ROK could face a water shortage and major knock-on effects by 2060 due to climate change. A special committee of experts on climate change and water said in a report that the ROK will experience a water shortfall of 3 billion tons in 50 years. Claiming that the nation could go years without rain, the report added that the nation's river flow could fall by more than half in the future.

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11. ROK Civil Society and Migrant Labor

Yonhap News ("CIVILIAN WATCHDOG TO MONITOR RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST MIGRANT WORKERS", 2010/06/30) reported that a civilian watchdog has been launched to monitor human rights violations against migrant workers ahead of the government's crackdown on unregistered foreign workers, a representative for the body said at a press conference. "Cats-Eye," launched jointly by NGOs such as the Migrants' Trade Union (MTU) and the Korea Confederation of Trade Unions, will launch a campaign to raise public awareness about the rights of migrant workers. It also hopes to publicize cases in which human rights have been violated and also invite ordinary citizens to become monitors.

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12. ROK-Japan Cultural Exchange

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN TAPS SOUTH KOREA'S BRAIN DRAIN", 2010/06/30) reported that the ROK has built itself into one of the world's most dynamic economies, selling everything from cars to semiconductors and nuclear power stations, but recent economic troubles have opened a new line of exports: young people. Young, well-educated South Koreans are increasingly looking beyond domestic employers for career opportunities. Japanese companies are among the most eager recruiters. IHI Corp., the Japanese heavy machinery manufacturer and shipbuilder, has been holding events to explain its business to potential recruits in the ROK since 2008, when it introduced a policy of recruiting people from more diverse backgrounds.

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13. Sino-US Military Relations

Associated Press (Scott McDonald, "CHINA WELCOMES GATES VISIT AT APPROPRIATE TIME", Beijing, 2010/07/01) reported that said Thursday that U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates is welcome to visit at an appropriate time. Xinhua News Agency quoted the deputy chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army Ma Xiaotian as saying, "We still welcome him to visit China at a time which is workable for both sides."

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14. Sino-Russian Relations

The New York Times ("AT RUSSIA-CHINA BORDER, BEAR PAWS SELL BEST", 2010/06/30) reported that closed for decades, the border between Russia and the PRC has been creaking open in recent years, allowing more trade and travel but also clearing the way for a peculiar cross-border criminal enterprise in animal parts for PRC medicine and cooking. "It is very widespread just now," Aleksei L. Vaisman, a senior coordinator for Traffic Europe-Russia, a group sponsored by WWF that monitors trade in wild animals, said of the illicit trade in animal parts in the Far East. The real problem with the bear paw trade, the authorities say, is that it creates smuggling channels for two other species — the Amur tiger and the Far Eastern leopard — that are highly endangered. Those channels come in many forms, and are growing busier every year, experts say.

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15. Sino-Indian Relations

Press Trust Of India ("INDIA, CHINA CAN COLLABORATE IN MANY AREAS: SWAMY", 2010/06/30) reported that observing that India and the PRC share a very unique set of characteristics, former Union Law Minister Subramanian Swamy has said that the two Asian giants can collaborate in many areas, including IT sector. "India and China can collaborate in various areas including IT, alternate fuel development, thorium based nuclear energy research etc. A collaborative attitude will be a winning game for both India and China," Swamy said. "We in India need to evolve a policy to preserve the ancient relationship between both the countries without sacrificing their national interests," the Janata Party president said.

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16. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA PACT PROVING HARD TO SELL IN TAIWAN", 2010/06/30) reported that after reaching a sweeping trade agreement, Taiwan and the PRC face the challenge of persuading the island's 23 million people that Beijing has no ulterior political motives, analysts said. The Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) signed Tuesday in the PRC is ostensibly about commerce but many on Taiwan -- which has ruled itself for six decades -- fear it could undermine their hard-won de facto independence. "It's very difficult for the public not to harbour political concerns over ECFA," said Tung Chen-yuan, a Taipei-based author of several books on Taiwan's economic ties with the PRC.

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17. PRC Naval Exercise

Xinhua News ("PLA NAVY STARTS LIVE-AMMUNITION TRAINING IN WEST PACIFIC ", 2010/06/30) reported that PRC military authorities announced Wednesday the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy has begun an annual routine live-ammunition training in the East China Sea. The No. 91765 unit of the Navy's East China Sea Fleet commenced the training off the coast of southeast China's Zhejiang Province Wednesday, a statement released by the ministry said. The training involves naval vessels shooting targets in the PRC's eight fishery zones that are within the PRC's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and also where the US military has repeatedly sent ships and aircraft for reconnaissance missions.

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18. PRC Anti-Piracy Operations

Press Trust Of India ("CHINA SENDS SIXTH NAVAL ESCORT FLOTILLA TO GULF OF ADEN", 2010/06/30) reported that the PRC dispatched its sixth Naval flotilla to Gulf of Aden whose top priority would be to rescue 19 PRC sailors aboard an India-bound ship hijacked by Somali pirates. The flotilla left as officials in Beijing said the 19 sailors aboard the hijacked ship were safe. Li Jingzhong, spokesman of the Shanghai Dingheng Shipping Co which owns the ship said the company was able to contact the captain of the hijacked ship on Monday. "The captain told us the crew was all safe. But we have not heard from them again since. It seems the pirates may have unplugged the telephone on board, and we haven't been able to reach them," Li told the official China Daily. "Our company will try our best to ensure the safe release of the Chinese sailors onboard," Li said.

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19. PRC Internet Control

The New York Times ("GOOGLE TO STOP REDIRECTING CHINA USERS", 2010/06/30) reported that Google plans to stop automatically sending users in the PRC to its uncensored Hong Kong site, in an effort to appease Beijing as it seeks to renew its license to operate in the PRC. The action, experts on the PRC say, amounts to a symbolic gesture that Google hopes will placate the PRC government, which may be feeling pressure from citizens who are demanding continued access to Google's search engine. Google may also be hoping the PRC government wants to avoid another showdown over Web censorship on the eve of a coming visit to the United States by President Hu Jintao.

Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "GOOGLE SAYS CHINA PARTIALLY BLOCKS SEARCH SERVICE",

Beijing, 2010/07/01) reported that a Google search feature was blocked in the PRC on Thursday, the company said. "It appears that search queries produced by Google Suggest are being blocked for mainland users in China," said Google spokeswoman Jessica Powell in an e-mail. "Normal searches that do not use query suggestions are unaffected."

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21. PRC Environment

The Asahi Shimbun ("CHINA TO MOVE TENS OF THOUSANDS FOR HUGE WATER SCHEME", 2010/06/30) reported that the PRC will move 345,000 people, mostly poor villagers, within about two years to make way for a vast scheme to draw on rivers in the south to supply the increasingly dry north, an official newspaper said. The forced resettlement for the South-to-North Water Transfer Project will be the biggest PRC has undertaken since building the Three Gorges Dam, the world's biggest hydroelectric scheme, said the People's Daily. The project involves an eastern route to take water from the lower reaches of the Yangtze River and a central route to tap rivers flowing into the Danjiangkou Dam in central PRC.

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22. US Missile Defense System

The Associated Press ("US INTERCEPTS BALLISTIC MISSILE IN TEST OFF HAWAII", 2010/06/30) reported that the U.S. military says it successfully shot down a short-range ballistic missile in a test off Hawaii. Soldiers of the 6th Air Defense Artillery Brigade from Fort Bliss, Texas, fired the interceptor from the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai. It shot down the target, which was fired after 9:30 p.m. Monday from a decommissioned amphibious assault ship positioned offshore, during the target's final stage of flight. "Preliminary indications are that planned flight test objectives were achieved," the U.S. Missile Defense Agency said in a statement.

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24. PRC Environment

Xinhua News ("CHINA AWARDED INT'L WATER PRIZE FOR YELLOW RIVER MANAGEMENT", 2010/06/30) reported that Yellow River Conservancy Commission (YRCC) received the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize for its outstanding accomplishments in integrated river basin management on Tuesday. The Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize is the highlight of the Singapore International Water Week, which is held from June 28 to July 2.

Qingdao News Net ("QINGDAO LAUNCHES THIRD-LEVEL EMERGENCY RESPONSE OF ALGAE", 2010/06/30) reported that Qingdao government has launched a third-level emergency response of treating algae Tuesday in Qingdao of Shandong province. The foul-smelling green algae, called enteromorpha by scientists, has formed a strip which is reported to be two to three meters wide and hundreds of meters long on beaches. The local government has dispatched 66 vessels to clean the algae and four other boats to monitor the movement of the algae mass.

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