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I.NAPSNet

1. Inter-Korea Relations

Bloomberg (Heejin Koo, "NORTH KOREA WILL LIFT BORDER RESTRICTIONS, SOUTH KOREA SAYS ", 2009/08/20) reported that the DPRK will lift restrictions on its border with ROK starting tomorrow, allowing ROK workers freer access to the Gaeseong Industrial Complex, ROK Unification Ministry spokeswoman Lee Jong Joo said. The decision means the movement of ROK employees and vehicles to and from the complex in DPRK won't be limited to specific times.

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREAN VISIT MARKS A NEW STAGE IN RELATIONS", 2009/08/20) reported that DPRK's decision to send a delegation to the funeral of former President Kim Dae-jung carries considerable symbolic weight in inter-Korean relations, which have been going through a new ice age. Moreover, coming at the time of joint ROK-U.S. military exercise, which the DPRK considers as "an invasion exercise," the gesture must be considered a maximum courtesy.

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "N. KOREAN DELEGATION ARRIVES TODAY TO PAY RESPECTS", 2009/08/20) reported that a six-member DPRK delegation will arrive in Seoul today for a two-day visit to pay respects to the late former President Kim Dae-jung. The delegation includes Kim Ki-nam, a secretary of the Workers' Party Central Committee; Kim Yang-gon, a party department director in charge of inter-Korean affairs; and Won Tong-yon, a ranking member of the (North) Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, which handles inter-Korean affairs. The three other people in the delegation are Maeng Kyong-il and Ri Hyon, both officials of the Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, and Kim Un-ju, an official of the National Defense Commission.

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "NORTH KOREANS PAY RESPECTS TO KIM DAE-JUNG", Seoul,

2009/08/21) reported that a high-level delegation of DPRK officials paid their respects Friday to late ROK President Kim Dae-jung . Dressed in black, they laid a wreath emblazoned with the name of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il at the altar for the former president. Chief delegate Kim Ki-nam then burned incense, and the six-member delegation bowed before a large portrait of Kim Dae-jung before greeting his family. Kim Ki Nam told the ROK vice unification minister that his delegation expressed its willingness to meet with ROK officials, Yonhap news agency reported, citing opposition lawmaker Park Jie-won, who attended the session.

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2. US-DPRK Relations

CNN ("N. KOREA FEELS 'OWED' DIRECT TALKS WITH U.S., RICHARDSON SAYS", Santa Fe, 2009/08/19) reported that the DPRK believes it's owed bilateral talks with the United States after the DPRK released two detained American journalists this month -- a notion that senior Obama administration officials quickly rejected. "They feel, the North Koreans, that by giving us the two American journalists, that they've made an important gesture," New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson told CNN after meeting with two DPRK diplomats. "And now they're saying the ball's in our court." But senior Obama administration officials said six-party talks are still the proper venue for such a dialogue, and stressed that Richardson was not negotiating on the president's behalf.

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. NOT READY TO DECLARE THAW IN N.KOREA RELATIONS", 2009/08/20) reported that the Obama administration says it welcomes a series of seemingly-conciliatory gestures from the DPRK in recent days but says it is not ready to say relations with Pyongyang have begun to thaw. State Department officials say the Obama administration facilitated the meeting between Richardson and the two DPRK officials, but they say the governor was not asked to convey any message to Pyongyang and that it is too early to say if the troubled relationship is beginning to thaw. At a news briefing, State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said the goal of U.S. policy continues to be the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, and a return by Pyongyang to the six-party talks.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap (Hwang Doo-hyong, "REP. BERMAN CALLS ON N. KOREA TO RETURN TO 6-WAY TALKS WITHOUT CONDITIONS ", Washington, 2009/08/20) reported that a senior U.S. Congressman called on the DPRK Thursday to return to the six-party talks on ending its nuclear ambitions without conditions. Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA) made the point while meeting with senior PRC officials in Beijing, his office said in a statement.

Yonhap (Hwang Doo-hyong, "NEW MEXICO GOV. CALLS ON OBAMA TO BEGIN TALKS TO N. KOREA ", Washington, 2009/08/20) reported that New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson Thursday called on the Barack Obama administration to begin a dialogue with DPRK for its denuclearization. "My point here is this is the time to negotiate with them, in a tough way, possibly bilaterally, face-to-face, but within the six-party talks, which is consistent with our policy," Richardson, former U.N. ambassador, told the Fox News Channel.

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4. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Times (Ines Min, "GINGRICH CALLS FOR NEW NORTH KOREA APPROACH", 2009/08/20) reported that Newt Gingrich, former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, said Thursday that the international community needs to rethink its approach to the DPRK regime, which he believes could endure for the next 20 to 40 years. The DPRK's continual race for nuclear weapons also needs to be handled, he said, noting that the nation has spent the past decade developing research, using scarce resources and efforts for their endeavor. Gingrich does believe that further isolation of the country through trade restrictions could help bring the DPRK to a weak point ? although that could result in a "last act of survival" that could lead to an "attack on Seoul as the only thing they see left."

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5. US Sanctions on the DPRK

Agence-France Presse ("US ENVOY URGES VIGILANCE ON NKOREA MONEY TRAIL", Singapore, 2009/08/20) reported that a top US diplomat Thursday urged Southeast Asian financial institutions to remain vigilant in monitoring transactions that could boost DPRK' s nuclear and ballistic missiles programme. Ambassador Philip Goldberg, the US coordinator for the implementation of recent UN sanctions on Pyongyang, said there is now a greater awareness among banks of the need for transparency.

Honolulu Advertizer ("FORMER NEGOTIATOR: UN SANCTIONS WILL BRING NORTH KOREA BACK TO TALKS", 2009/08/20) reported that a leading U.S. specialist on DPRK security issues predicts that Pyongyang eventually will return to the six-party nuclear talks as a result of stiff sanctions mandated in the UN Security Council resolution passed in June. "I think sooner or later North Koreans are going to start asking to come back to negotiations," said former White House advisor on the DPRK Victor Cha. "One thing I've learned in studying the country and working on negotiations is when they feel the pinch of international sanctions that's often when they want to come to talks."

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6. US-DPRK Energy Cooperation

Agence-France Presse (Tom Sharpe, "NKOREA-US TALKS SHIFT TO CLEAN ENERGY", Santa Fe, 2009/08/20) reported that a DPRK delegation held talks Thursday on renewable energy in New Mexico after pushing hard in earlier discussions for one-on-one nuclear talks with the United States. The DPRK diplomats will tour a bio-mass plant and hear from experts at Santa Fe Community College about clean energy initiatives, including wind energy and solar panel technology, the governor's office said.

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7. DPRK Tourism

DPA ("TAIWAN TRAVEL AGENCY TO SEND TOURISTS TO NORTH KOREA ", Taipei, 2009/08/20) reported that with DPRK re-opening its door to foreign tourists following a period of tension with the West, a Taiwan travel agency said Thursday it plans to send tourists to the communist state for sightseeing and to attend its trade fair. "The first tour will depart on September 17. They will fly to Beijing, and catch a Koryo Air flight to Pyongyang for the six-day tour," a Sky Joy Travel Company executive, who only gave her surname Liu, said by phone. The tourists will visit Pyongyang's subway, Children's Palace, the Arirang Performance, the Pannmumjom Village in the Demilitarized Zone and Kungang Mountain, she said. Joy Sky is organizing another tour to send Taiwan businessmen to the 5th Pyongyang International Trade Fair, held in Pyongyang September 21-24.

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8. ROK-PRC Relations

Yonhap ("SENIOR CHINESE OFFICIAL VISITS S. KOREA TO PROMOTE BILATERAL TIES", Seoul, 2009/08/20) reported that a senior PRC Communist Party official arrived in ROK Thursday as part of an exchange of high-profile visits between the two neighboring countries, Seoul's foreign ministry said Thursday. He Yong, member of the Secretariat of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and also deputy-secretary of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, visit "is expected to contribute to cementing the two nations' strategic cooperative partnership and promote friendly relations."

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9. ROK Military

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "MILITARY SEMINAR DUE ON JEJU ISLAND", 2009/08/20) reported that about 700 representatives from local universities, defense research institutes and firms will meet from Aug. 27 to 28 on Jeju Island to discuss ways of developing the country's military science and technology. The gathering will, in particular, focus on developing environmentally-friendly "green growth" naval technologies, Hong Hae-nam, said a senior researcher at the ADD. The Lee Myug-bak administration is promoting a "green growth" strategy aimed at increasing energy self-sufficiency through overseas exploration from the current 5 percent to more than 50 percent by 2050. Efforts will also be made to raise the use of new and renewable energy from the current 2 percent to more than 30 percent by 2050, with increased research funds for "green technology."

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10. ROK Space Program

Korea Times (Kim Tong-hyung, "ROCKET LAUNCH MAY BE DELAYED TO NEXT MONTH", Goheung, Korea, 2009/08/20) reported that ROK attempts for its very first space launch may be delayed to September, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology said Thursday. In a news conference at the Naro Space Center, Vice Science Minister Kim Jung-hyun said a software malfunction related to a high-pressure tank regulating valves inside the rocket engine caused the countdown to be aborted.

Yonhap (Lee Joon-seung, "S. KOREA RESCHEDULES FIRST ROCKET LAUNCH FOR AUG. 25",

Seoul, 2009/07/21) reported that the ROK has rescheduled its first space rocket launch from its own territory for Aug. 25 after a technical glitch halted the countdown minutes before blastoff, the government said Friday. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology said the new date reflects weather conditions and time needed to prepare the Korea Space Launch Vehicle-1 (KSLV-1) and its scientific satellite for a safe launch.

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11. ROK Influenza Outbreak

Yonhap (Koh Byung-joon, "FOUR HIGH SCHOOLS SHUT OVER FLU FEARS", Seoul, 2009/08/21) reported that four ROK high schools have decided to delay their opening or remain temporarily closed due to growing concerns that influenza A might be spreading fast as students return after summer vacation ends, health authorities and education ministry officials said Friday. ROK health authorities earlier confirmed an additional 258 cases of influenza A overnight, bringing the total tally to 2,675, including 708 students.

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12. US-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("ROOS, YABUNAKA AFFIRM IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING U.S.-JAPAN TIES", 2009/08/20) reported that new U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos and Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka on Thursday affirmed the importance of strengthening bilateral ties. Noting that U.S. President Barack Obama has made clear "the huge responsibility" he has over reinforcing the ties, Roos told Yabunaka in Tokyo a day after his arrival in Japan, "It's very exciting, and I'm deeply, deeply honored to be the ambassador to Japan."

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13. Russo-Japanese Relations

Kyodo News ("JAPANESE, RUSSIAN MAYORS CALL FOR ENHANCED ECONOMIC TIES", 2009/08/20) reported that mayors of Japanese and Russian Far Eastern cities called for both countries to enhance their efforts to promote economic exchanges and growth in tourism in the Far East. The mayors of 18 Japanese cities, mostly on the Sea of Japan coast, and 10 Russian cities made the call in a joint statement adopted at the end of a two-day "coastal city" meeting, while expressing hopes for a solution to the decades-old territorial row between the two countries. The mayors shared the view that Japan and Russia should jointly adopt measures for environmental protection in the development projects Moscow is advancing in the Far East and Siberia.

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14. Japan Politics

Reuters (Linda Sieg, "JAPAN OPPOSITION COULD WIN BY A LANDSLIDE: MEDIA", Tokyo, 2009/08/20) reported that Japan's opposition Democratic Party may be headed for a landslide election victory, trouncing the conservative party that has ruled for most of the past half-century, a leading newspaper said on Thursday. The Democrats could win 300 of the 480 seats in parliament's lower house while the long-ruling Liberal Democrats may see their strength halved to around 150 seats, said the Asahi newspaper, based on a detailed survey of electoral districts ahead of the August 30 poll. But the paper also said around 30 to 40 percent of voters in its survey of electoral districts had not revealed how they would vote while 25 percent might change their minds, so results could shift significantly in the final days.

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15. Japan Energy

Bloomberg (Megumi Yamanaka, "JAPAN POWER BILLS TO SWELL AS UTILITIES PASS ON SOLAR COSTS ", 2009/08/20) reported that Japanese businesses stand to pay as much as 9 billion yen (\$95 million) more in monthly electricity bills under a new plan to encourage solar-power generation. Starting in November, the government will compel utilities to buy surplus solar power generated by households and factories and pay twice the regular rate as an incentive for installing solar panels. The program is meant to halve the cost of installing solar panels within three to five years and help Japan reach a target of increasing solar output 40-fold by 2030.

DongA Ilbo ("KOREAN ASS'N TO BACK OPPOSITION IN JAPAN ELECTIONS ", 2009/08/20) reported that Mindan, a group of ethnic Korean residents in Japan, is expected to back the opposition Democratic Party of Japan in the Aug. 30 general elections. The group yesterday said it will favor candidates who support suffrage for ethnic Koreans, the first time it will participate in national-level elections since its establishment in 1946. In an emergency meeting of chapter heads in Tokyo, Mindan decided to mobilize not only its central and province-based offices but also its affiliates to support candidates who support voting rights for ethnic Korean residents. The decision implies Mindan's endorsement of the opposition party. The party said it will keep its policy of granting suffrage for foreign residents.

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16. Japan Influenza

Kyodo ("NEW-FLU ENTERS EPIDEMIC STAGE IN JAPAN AS NO. OF PATIENTS RISES", Tokyo, 2009/08/21) reported that the number of influenza patients reported by about 5,000 designated medical institutions across Japan during the week of Aug. 10-16 stood at 7,750, or 1.69 per facility, topping the 1.00 figure that is deemed the beginning of an epidemic, the National Institute of Infectious Diseases said in a preliminary report released Friday. Most of the flu patients in the reporting week are believed to be infected with the new H1N1 strain of influenza A, institute officials said.

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17. PRC Military

Associated Press ("CHINA'S SECRETIVE MILITARY LAUNCHES WEB SITE ", Beijing, 2009/08/20) reported that PRC 's Defense Ministry launched its first official Web site Thursday, part of an effort by the normally secretive military to be more transparent. A notice on the Web site said it is "designed to let the outside world have a better perception of China 's national defense policy ." The site will also help PRC's drive to modernize its military, it said. The Web site includes sections on PRC's defense policies and laws and news about military exercises , peacekeeping roles and international military exchanges.

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18. PRC-Australia Relations

Reuters (James Grubel, "AUSTRALIA TRIES TO HALT SLIDE IN CHINA TIES", Canberra, 2009/08/20) reported that Australia tried to halt a slide in ties with PRC on Thursday by denying support for autonomy for the restive PRC region of Xinjiang as Beijing media accused the country of leading an "anti-China chorus". Foreign Minister Stephen Smith told parliament that allowing Kadeer to visit Australia did not mean support for her views on Uighur autonomy. Rio, which has said the four detained staff have done nothing wrong, also moved to soothe tensions, saying the company was committed to building a stronger relationship with PRC. Australia's ambassador to PRC returned home for consultations on Wednesday, but Canberra denied it signaled a protest.

Agence-France Press ("RIO TINTO WELCOMES CHINA ESPIONAGE MOVE", London, 2009/08/20) reported that Anglo-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto on Thursday welcomed the downgrading of espionage charges against four employees under arrest in PRC , as the group unveiled slumping half-year profits. In Rio's most high-level comments to date on the PRC arrests saga, chief executive Tom Albanese said the four men had been treated well, were in good health and had family and legal support at hand.

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19. PRC-Pakistan Relations

Reuters ("PAKISTAN LEADER BACKS CHINA OVER XINJIANG", Beijing, 2009/08/21) reported that Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari backed the PRC's policies in Xinjiang. "We are glad that the situation in Urumuqi has been brought under control. We believe that China's policy of social harmony and development is producing great results for all Chinese people ," Xinhua News Agency quoted Zardari as telling Chinese journalists before his departure from Islamabad . "China is Pakistan's all-weather and time-tested friend. We greatly value our cherished friendship," said Zardari.

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20. PRC Public Health

Associated Press (Alexa Olesen, "2ND LEAD POISONING CASE HITS CHINA, 1,300 SICK", Beijing, 2009/08/20) reported that the PR C detained two factory officials after 1,300 children were poisoned by pollution from a manganese processing plant, state media said Thursday, days after emissions from a lead smelter in another province sickened hundreds. The latest incident involves

the Wugang Manganese Smelting Plant in Wenping township, central Hunan province. It opened in May 2008 without the approval of the local environmental protection bureau, within 500 yards (meters) of a primary school, a middle school and a kindergarten. A Wenping township government official who declined to give his name said the numbers of children with lead poisoning are expected to rise as more children are tested.

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21. PRC Climate Change

Agence-France Presse ("GLOBAL PACT TO PUSH CHINA TO LOW-CARBON ECONOMY: BLAIR", Beijing, 2009/08/20) reported that PRC's efforts to build a low-carbon economy would accelerate if world powers agree to a "practical" global climate change pact later this year, former British prime minister Tony Blair said Thursday. "What we need is getting a solution in Copenhagen that is practical, realistic and objective," Blair told journalists in Beijing. He said the PRC, which is competing with the United States for the title of world's top emitter of greenhouse gases, has made great strides in its efforts to develop clean fuel technology in recent years.

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22. PRC Environment

Forbes (Vivian Wai-yin Kwok, "BEIJING TO COMPANIES: CLEAN UP CHINA", Hong Kong, 2009/08/20) reported that when the whole world is blaming PRC for polluting the earth, Beijing, on the other hand, pointed fingers at factories run by Coca-Cola and Pepsi in the capital as major water polluters and named Beijing Benz- DaimlerChrysler, and a joint venture of German Gerresheimer Glass, as major energy consumers responsible for carbon emissions. The city government of Beijing is setting an example to show other local authorities how to speed up their efforts to force the private sector to fulfill the green targets laid down from PRC's central leaders.

Bloomberg ("AREVA'S CHINA NUCLEAR PROJECT WILL GET ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVAL", 2009/08/20) reported that PRC's environment ministry plans to approve Areva SA's nuclear plant project in Taishan in Guangdong province. The plant will cost 52.8 billion yuan, the ministry said in a statement posted on its Web site. The plant will have two reactors, each with a capacity of 1,750 megawatts.

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II. PRC Report

23. Cross Strait Relations

Qianlong Net ("MAINLAND DONATES 176 MIL. TO TAIWAN", 2009/08/20) reported that Fan Liqing, spokeswoman of Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said on the morning of August 19th that the mainland has donated 176 million RMB to Taiwan, and disaster relief materials worth of

25 million RMB. The mainland also expressed that it could send helicopter, rescue teams, medical experts to Taiwan at any time.

Xinhua Net ("HU JINGTAO MEETS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF TAIWAN MINORITIES", 2009/08/19) reported that General Secretary of CPC Central Committee Hu Jintao met with Taiwan minority delegation lead by Gao Jinsumei on the afternoon of August 19th in the Great Hall of People, Beijing. Hu said the mainland will continue to provide disaster relief assistance to Taiwan compatriots and support Taiwan post disaster reconstruction.

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24. PRC Climate Change

Xinhua Net ("GLOBAL WARMING IN QINGHAI-TIBET PLATEAU TO THREATEN ALL ASIA", 2009/08/20) reported that this summer, extreme high temperatures frequently appear in Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Both domestic and foreign experts point out that retreat of glaciers and permafrost degradation will be a serious threat to water resource security and ecological environment protection of the whole Asia.

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