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1. DPRK Defections

The Korea Times ("RANKING N. KOREAN OFFICIALS DEFECTED TO SOUTH", 2010/12/03) reported that a regional leader of the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League, a nationwide political organization in the DPRK, has defected to the ROK, a local newspaper reported Friday. The Chosun Ilbo said that it had confirmed Seol Chung-sik, 40, first secretary of the league in Yanggang Province, fled the DPRK in June last year, and is now living in the ROK, confirming a recent WikiLeaks revelation. According to WikiLeaks diplomatic documentation, in January this year former ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan told Robert King, U.S. special representative for DPRK human rights, that a few high-ranking DPRK officials abroad have recently escaped to the ROK. Yu mentioned that it was an example of how social circumstances in the DPRK were gradually failing.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/12/116_77427.html

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2. Inter-Korean Relations

New York Times ("SOUTH KOREA OUTLINES MUSCULAR MILITARY POSTURE", 2010/12/03) reported that outlining what could be a muscular new military posture in the ROK, the four-star general selected last week to become the new defense minister said on Friday that the ROK will use airstrikes against the DPRK if there are further attacks by the DPRK. The minister-designate, Kim Kwan-jin, also criticized the military because it had "failed to carry out its basic duty" in defending against DPRK's shelling of Yeonpyeong Island on Nov. 23. "If the enemy attacks our people and territory again, I will use force to punish the enemy to make sure it doesn't even dare think about it again," said Mr. Kim, 61, a former infantry commander who headed the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He said more aggressive rules of engagement were being prepared to allow for quicker and deadlier responses, including giving more authority to commanders in the field.

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/04/world/asia/04korea.html?_r=1&ref=asia

Yonhap News ("S KOREA EASES RESTRICTION ON INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORTS TO N. KOREA", 2010/12/03) reported that the ROK relaxed its quota on industrial transports to the DPRK on Friday after its companies operating in the communist state complained of difficulties in production, officials said. A Unification Ministry official said the restriction was relaxed from 50 to 70 vehicles Friday because the ROK firms struggled to meet production demand due to a lack of raw materials. "We've heard various complaints from the companies," the official told reporters on customary condition of anonymity, adding the quota will be "flexibly" adjusted on a daily basis.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2010/12/03/16/0401000000AEN20101203003200315F.HTML>

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3. Sino-DPRK Relations

The Institute for Far Eastern Studies ("DPRK-PRC TRADE UP 26.7 PERCENT", 2010/12/03) reported that DPRK trade with the PRC has jumped 26.7 percent during the first eight months of the year, with the bulk of its imports made up of crude oil, and its largest export being coal. Despite the increasingly severe food shortages in the DPRK, food imports from the PRC were actually down 7.5 percent, while on the other hand, fertilizer imports shot up by 162 percent. The Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) looked into the PRC government's import and export figures and determined that DPRK exports to the PRC during the first eight months of the year were worth 650,000 USD, 20.6% more than during the same period last year, while DPRK imported 1.345 billion USD-worth of goods (30% increase), for trade worth a total of 1.995 billion USD, 26.7 percent more than 2009. "Mineral fuel and mineral oil" topped the list of DPRK imports (321,000 USD), with crude oil (229,000 USD) and oil (63,000 USD) making up 90.7 percent of imported goods. The second- and third-largest imports were listed as "nuclear reactor, boiler, and machinery" (127,000 USD) and "electromagnetic machinery, sound and video equipment" (106,000 USD). A KOTRA official stated that while "nuclear reactor" was listed among the goods imported by the DPRK, there is no way to verify the PRC statistics. The DPRK's grain import expenditures increased by five percent, to 34,000 USD, but overall grain imports fell 7.5 percent, to 102,000 tons, due to increased costs.

<http://ifes.kyungnam.ac.kr/eng/m05/s10/content.asp?nkbriefNO=399&GoP=%201>

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4. Sino-Japan Relations

The Epoch Times ("CHINA, JAPAN CONFRONTATION ON DIAOYU ISLANDS RENEWS", 2010/12/03) reported that the Japanese Coast Guard reported that its aircraft sighted an 'advanced' PRC fishing boat 23 miles northwest of the Senkaku Islands on the morning of Nov. 20. The Japanese Coast Guard immediately dispatched patrol boats including a large patrol ship and issued warnings to the PRC fishing boats, requesting they do not enter Japanese waters. The PRC fishing boats responded, "We are currently executing normal surveillance missions in our own waters." According to the Japanese Coast Guard this was a long-lasting confrontation. The two PRC fishing boats changed course and gradually left. They did not enter "Japanese waters."

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/content/view/46855/>

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5. PRC on Japan-US Military Drills

Financial Times ("SLIGHTED CHINESE HIT AT US-JAPAN DRILL", 2010/12/03) reported that the PRC has criticised a Japan-US military exercise and said its efforts to resolve tensions on the Korean peninsula were being condemned unfairly. The foreign ministry said: "Brandishing force cannot solve the issue. Some are playing with knives and guns, while China is criticised for calling for dialogue. Is that fair? The talks we propose are not a formal meeting so this dialogue should not be difficult." Meanwhile, Wu Bangguo, head of the PRC legislature and number two in the hierarchy of the Communist party, told DPRK officials that Beijing continued to support a close relationship with Pyongyang.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4c4325c8-fe07-11df-853b-00144feab49a.html#axzz174EWVK9v>

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