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1. Sino-DPRK Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINESE PRESIDENT HU JINTAO REITERATES SUPPORT FOR NORTH KOREAN LEADERSHIP", Beijing, 2010/10/03) reported that the PRC's president welcomed the DPRK's election of a new slate of Communist Party leaders and promised to maintain close ties - an expected but important affirmation by the DPRK's principal ally. Hu Jintao said China's Communist Party will work with the DPRK's ruling party to "strengthen communication and coordination in regional and international affairs and continue endeavors for the region's peace, stability and common development," according to the state-run Xinhua News Agency. "The Chinese backing will empower Kim Jong Eun in the succession process," said Kim Yong-hyun, an expert on North Korea at Seoul's Dongguk University.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/02/AR2010100203218.html>

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2. DPRK Nuclear Program

Telegraph ("NORTH KOREA 'RESUMES BUILDING AT NUCLEAR REACTOR SITE'", 2010/10/03) reported that new construction is under way at the DPRK's main nuclear reactor, near the site of a cooling tower destroyed in 2008, a private US research institute has said, citing a satellite photo. The Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) said on its website that tracks made by heavy machinery and construction or excavation equipment were visible in the photo. ISIS said there appeared to be the ongoing construction of two small buildings next to the site of the cooling tower at Yongbyon - which the DPRK blew up in June 2008 in front of foreign media to dramatise its commitment to nuclear disarmament.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/8036280/North-Korea-resumes-building-at-nuclear-reactor-site.html>

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3. Japan Energy Supply

The Asahi Shimbun ("WASHINGTON FORCES JAPAN'S RETREAT FROM IRAN OIL FIELDS", 2010/10/03) reported that Tokyo's decision to withdraw from a key oil drilling project in Iran after threats from Washington to impose sanctions is being interpreted as a major defeat for Japan's attempts to balance its own interests with its alliance with the United States. Inpex Corp. announced that it would withdraw from development of the Azadegan oil field in southwestern Iran. One senior Foreign Ministry official commented that the decision meant: "We have given up the independent line of diplomacy." Many Iranians seem nonchalant when asked about Japan's withdrawal, saying that Tehran can always look to Beijing.

<http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201010010358.html>

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4. ROK Nuclear Technology Exports

Beijing News ("SOUTH KOREA TO BUILD NUCLEAR PLANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA", 2010/10/03) reported that just days after finalising a landmark deal to build a nuclear power plant in the United Arab Emirates, the ROK and South Africa are putting the finishing touches on a deal for the development of several nuclear power plants in the African powerhouse. South Africa's Deputy President, Kgalema Petrus Motlanthe, arrived in the ROK for a two day trip during which the agreement will be finalised, according to the Yonhap news agency. The ROK has in the past expressed significant interest in entering the South African nuclear energy market, which has vast potential for growth amid an economy growing faster than the electricity grid can accommodate.

<http://www.beijingnews.net/story/692537>

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5. PRC Space Program

Global Times ("CHINA SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHES 2ND LUNAR PROBE", 2010/10/03) reported that China launched its second unmanned lunar probe, Chang'e-2, inaugurating the second phase of a three-step moon mission, which will culminate in a soft-landing on the moon. At 6:59:57 pm, the satellite blasted off on a Long March 3C carrier rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwest China's Sichuan Province. "Chang'e-2 lays foundation for the soft-landing on the moon around 2013 and further exploration of outer space," said Wu Weiren, chief designer of the PRC's lunar orbiter project.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/www/english/sci-edu/china/2010-10/579211.html>

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