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1. Six Party Talks

Yonhap ("SIX-WAY NUCLEAR TALKS TO RESUME SEPT. 27-30 IN BEIJING", 2007-09-21) reported that the latest round of multilateral talks aimed at shutting down the DPRK's key nuclear facilities has been set for next week, Beijing officials said. "The sixth round of the six-party talks will be held in Beijing from September 27 to 30," the PRC foreign ministry announced on its Web site.

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2. Alleged Syria-DPRK Nuclear Deal

Korea Times ("NK SHOULD NOT PROLIFERATE FOR SUCCESS OF 6-PARTY TALKS", 2007-09-21) reported that US President George W. Bush said that the DPRK should not proliferate nuclear weapons if it wants the six-party denuclearization talks to succeed. "And to the extent that they are proliferating, we expect them to stop their proliferation, if they want the six-party talks to be successful," he said at a press conference.

(return to top) Washington Post ("ISRAEL, U.S. SHARED DATA ON SUSPECTED NUCLEAR SITE", 2007-09-21) reported that Israel's decision to attack Syria on Sept. 6, bombing a suspected nuclear site set up in apparent collaboration with the DPRK, came after Israel shared intelligence with President Bush this summer indicating that the DPRK nuclear personnel were in Syria, US government sources said. The quality of the Israeli intelligence, the extent of DPRK assistance and the seriousness of the Syrian effort are uncertain, raising the possibility that the DPRK was merely unloading items it no longer needed. Syria has actively pursued chemical weapons in the past but not nuclear arms -- leaving some proliferation experts skeptical of the intelligence that prompted Israel's attack. (return to top) The Associated Press ("NKOREA, SYRIA HOLD TALKS AMID SUSPICIONS", 2007-09-21) reported that the DPRK and Syria held high-level talks Friday in Pyongyang, the DPRK's state media reported, amid suspicions that the two countries might be cooperating on a nuclear weapons program. The talks took place between Choe Tae Bok, secretary of the Central Committee of the DPRK's ruling Workers' Party, and Saaeed Eleia Dawood, director of the organizational department of Syria's Baath Arab Socialist Party, the official Korean Central News Agency reported. The two sides discussed ways of improving friendship and cooperation and other issues of bilateral interest, KCNA said without elaborating. (return to top)

3. DPRK Floods

Yonhap ("FLOOD-STRICKEN N. KOREA LIKELY TO SUFFER FROM CONTAGION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES", 2007-09-21) reported that the DPRK is at serious risk from contagious diseases following damage from recent floods, an official from the DPRK's Red Cross told a newspaper in Japan. In an interview with the Chosun Sinbo, a pro-DPRK newspaper in Japan, Kim Eun-chul, a vice secretary-general at the Red Cross Society of the DPRK, said, "What we are most concerned with now is the spread of infectious diseases in the severely damaged areas."

(return to top) Yonhap ("WHO: 'NORTH KOREA COOPERATES IN DISTRIBUTING AID'", 2007-0--20) reported that the director of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Pyongyang Office, Tej Walia, said that DPRK officials greatly cooperate with relief activities for the flood damage so that the WHO can observe "exactly" whether the aid is distributed properly or not. "There has not been any problem yet in distribution. The DPRK has exactly shared the aid with people who suffered the most damage." Furthermore, he emphasized the necessity for more support because the DPRK already was lacking basic equipment and medical supplies, and this situation got worse due to the flood disaster this time. Translated from Korean. (return to top)

4. Inter-Korean Summit

Yonhap ("DJ: POSSIBILITY TO AGREE ON KAESUNG PRODUCTS AT THE INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT", 2007-09-21) reported that former ROK president Kim Dae-jung told the US Congress, "In this second inter-Korean meeting, the issue of economic cooperation will be discussed a lot." He added, "Although North Korea gets economic support from other countries, the US chose North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism and prevented South Korea from investing to North Korea. But since North Korea has a lot of resources, we should care about North Korea." Furthermore, he commented, "Now the US and ROK should cooperate with each other on the North Korean economy so that North Korea doesn't only rely on the Chinese." Translated from Korean.

(return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("ROH VOWS TO CREATE JOBS DURING INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT", 2007-09-21) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun said during the second inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang on Oct. 2-4, the two sides will agree on developing an industrial complex and a port in the DPRK. He made the remark at a ground-breaking ceremony for an "innovation city" in Gimcheon, North Gyeongsang Province. "I'm visiting the North soon,' he said. "And I'm going to create many jobs for the Korea Land Corporation and the Korea Expressway Corporation. I think there'll also be a lot of jobs for the construction of a port." (return to top) Joongang-Ilbo ("SUMMIT SCHEDULE WILL INCLUDE WEST FLOODGATE", 2007-09-21) reported that during his three-day stay in the DPRK, President Roh Moo-hyun will tour the West Sea Floodgate in Nampo, an economic landmark for the DPRK, buttressing Seoul's hope that economic cooperation will be the key item in the inter-Korean summit from Oct. 2 to 4. The floodgate, completed after five years of intensive labor in 1986, is a multipurpose embankment. The floodgate allows larger ships to enter Nampo, which used to be in shallow water. As of now, 50,000-ton vessels can enter the port. (return to top)

5. Inter-Korean Agriculture Cooperation

Korea Herald ("S. KOREA MULLS AGRICULTURE SUPPORT FOR N. KOREA", 2007-09-21) reported that the ROK government is considering a wide range of agriculture support programs for DPRK that could boost the country's ability to feed its own people, a senior official was quoted as saying. Agriculture Minister Im Sang-gyu told reporters that the planned summit meeting between the two countries could open new channels of dialogue that may lead to mutually beneficial opportunities. "Seoul plans to propose a formal agriculture ministers meeting, independent of existing talks led by the Unification Ministry, so farming issues can be discussed in depth," the policymaker said.

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6. ROK on DPRK Collapse

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA SHOULD CONSIDER ONE-NATION-TWO-SYSTEMS PLAN", 2007-09-21) reported that the most important DPRK policy facing the next administration will be to prepare for an unexpected collapse of DPRK regime, Professor Lee Dong-bok of Myongji University said at a seminar on Thursday. The ROK should consider a one-country-two-systems formula as a transitional policy to cope with a sudden change. Translated from Korean.

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7. ROK Broadcasts in the DPRK

DailyNK ("SOUTH KOREAN NEWS ON BROADCAST IN PYONGYANG", 2007-09-21) reported that

DPRK high officials and PRC emigrants have been using the satellite antennas in Pyongyang and major cities in the DPRK to get access to ROK TV. In the DPRK, if one is caught watching ROK TV for a long time, they may be put into jail or receive harsh punishments. However, it is the experts' general analysis that with the expansion of foreign cultures, it will be more difficult for DPRK to control this trend. Translated from Korean.

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8. DPRK Economy

NK Brief ("CLASS DIVERGENCE ON THE RISE AS MARKET ECONOMICS SPREAD IN DPRK", 2007-09-21) reported that the recent growth in the private-sector economy in DPRK markets and other areas of society has brought with it some significant social changes worth noting. In the DPRK society, there are reportedly five identifiable social classes. The first of these classes is the ruling class, made up of those elite surrounding Kim Jong Il. The second class is made up of business traders with access to foreign capital. The third class is made up of organized thugs who make their money through public trading and markets. The fourth class scrapes by on government rations. The fifth distinct class in the DPRK is made up of commoners who support their way of life through farming private plots and selling goods in markets.

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9. Japan Government

The Asahi Shimbun ("FUKUDA WELL AHEAD OF ASO IN LDP PRESIDENT ELECTION", 2007-09-21) reported that Former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda appears headed toward a decisive victory in Sunday's Liberal Democratic Party presidential election. The survey found that Fukuda, 71, had gained the support of about two-thirds of LDP lawmakers. Eight of the nine LDP factions have already come out in support of Fukuda.

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10. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Japan Times ("SPECULATION GROWS JAPAN GAVE KITTY HAWK MORE OIL THAN DECLARED", 2007-09-21) reported that a peace group said it believes that Japan gave a US naval ship involved in the Iraq war much more fuel than it initially declared, effectively providing illegal logistic support for the war. Peace Depot said that the logbooks of the US oil ship Pecos show it had received nearly 800,000 US gallons of fuel from Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force replenishment ship Tokiwa on Feb. 25, 2003, although the Japanese government earlier said the amount was 200,000 gallons.

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11. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN SAYS WON'T HOST TORCH, DECISION FINAL", 2007-09-21) reported that the Olympic torch will not stop in Taiwan en route to the Beijing Games in 2008, Taiwanese officials said on Friday after talks broke down with the PRC which considers the self-ruled island its sovereign territory. Beijing organizers later confirmed they had received a letter from Taiwan "unilaterally closing the doors on the talks" and another from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) saying the relay would have to go ahead without a stop in Taipei.

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12. PRC Bishop Appointment

The New York Times ("QUIET SIGNALS CLEARED NEW BEIJING BISHOP", 2007-09-21) reported that the selection of the Rev. Joseph Li Shan, who is to be installed as the new Catholic bishop of Beijing, was no surprise to those who closely follow religious affairs in this country. Neither in Beijing nor Rome is there any sense that the new bishop's elevation to lead the capital's most prominent parish was a fundamental breakthrough. Instead, what has drawn notice and stirred optimism is the discreet way the matter has been handled, with no open disputes.

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13. PRC AIDS Issue

China Daily ("HIV/AIDS CASES SOAR IN BEIJING IN FIRST HALF YEAR", 2007-09-21) reported that the number of new HIV/AIDS cases reported in Beijing in the first half of the year was almost as high as the total for 2006, a spokesman for the Beijing Association of STD and AIDS Prevention and Control said. The number of new HIV/Aids cases being reported in Beijing has been growing by an average of 50 percent a year, he said.

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